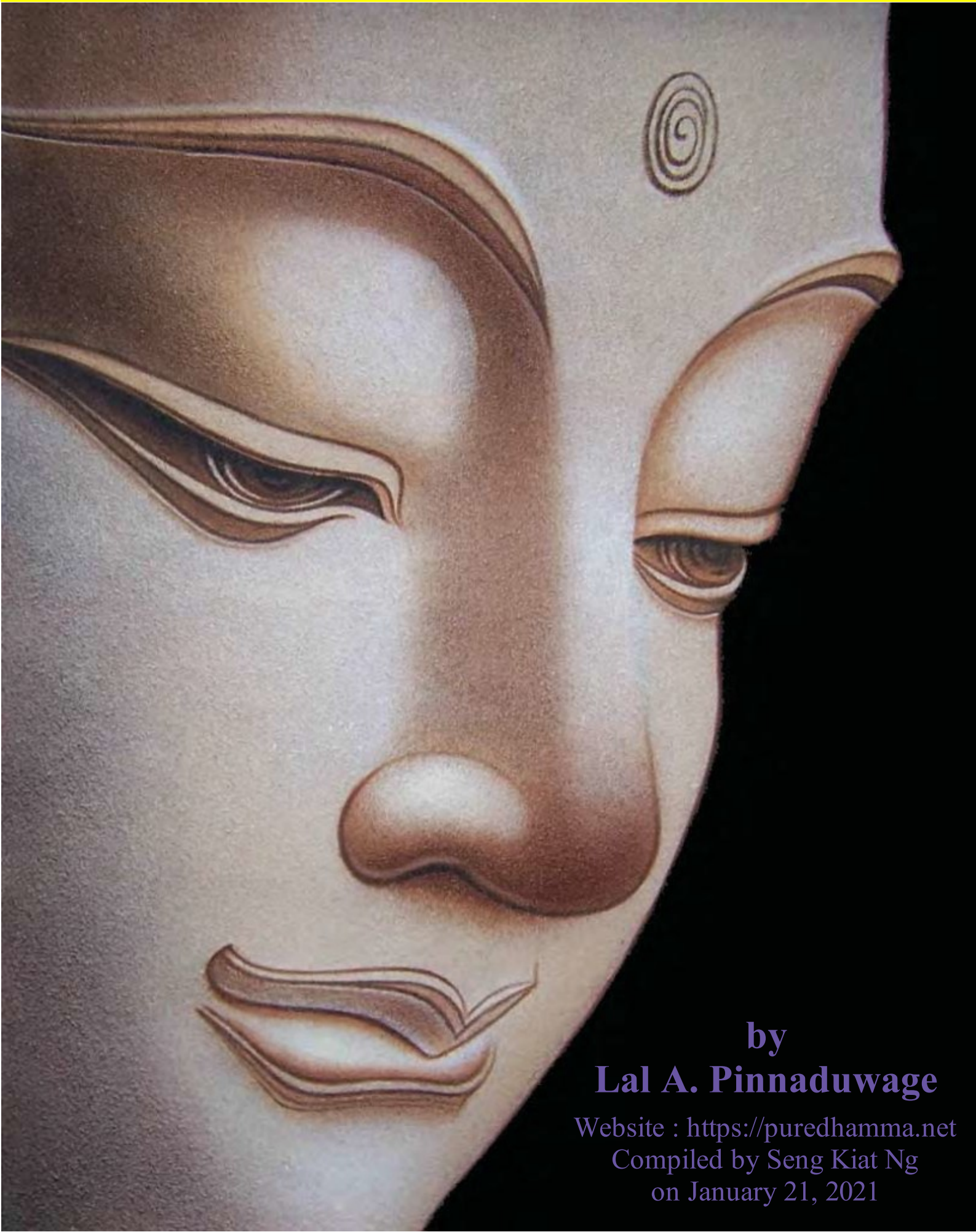
Pure Dhamma

A Quest to Recover Buddha's True Teachings



by

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1 Home

Pure Dhamma

A Quest to Recover Buddha's True Teachings

Website: https://www.puredhamma.net/

- Buddha Dhamma
- Key Dhamma Concepts
- Living Dhamma
- Dhamma and Science
- Three Levels of Practice
- Tables and Summaries
- Paticca Samuppāda
- Comments/Reviews
- Dhamma and Philosophy
- Bhāvanā (Meditation)
- Abhidhamma
- Historical Background
- Buddhist Chanting
- Dhammapada
- Sutta Interpretations
- Myths or Realities?
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Welcome!

Revised August 12, 2019; August 16, 2020

Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) describes the "laws of nature" as discovered by the Buddha 2500 years ago. This website presents those teaching per the Pāli Canon, *Tipiṭaka*. Even though I am a Buddhist by birth, I never bothered to look into the question of why I was a Buddhist. When I retired several years ago, I first started reading widely on many subjects, including science, philosophy, and religion.

- When I started to glean the profound message of the Buddha, I realized that I had not known much about my own "religion." Furthermore, it had been "contaminated" over its long history. Since 2009, I

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have been trying to find the essence of the message of the Buddha. I wanted to share the results with the rest of the world.

- You can read about me at "About."

There seem to be three types of people who become interested in "Buddhism":

1. Those who have gone through hardships see that there is suffering "in this world," and seeking solutions.
2. Those getting to the old age are beginning to see that there are signs of possible problems looming in the future. That includes aging, various ailments, not been able to get satisfaction from those things that provided comfort before, etc.
3. Those who are intellectually motivated, and exposed to *Dhammapada* verses or some other types of sayings by the Buddha, could see a glimpse of a broader world view of the Buddha.

Some of those who have been to meditation retreats realize that there is indeed a second option compared to seeking material wealth and indulging in sense pleasures. Especially for those people in categories 1 and 2, it becomes clear that indulging in sense pleasures does not have staying power. On the other hand, the sense of well-being achieved via insight meditation (not breath meditation) has the staying power and does not go down as one gets old.

- I believe that for people in any category, it is a good idea first to understand what the Buddha's message was. Those who are intellectually motivated will be able to get a complete picture, and thus a better intellectual satisfaction. For those in categories 1 and 2, a much better idea of how to focus their efforts will become apparent with an insight into why focusing efforts on purifying the mind will be beneficial.
- **January 30, 2019:** For those who are new to Buddha Dhamma (or just want to look at the essential fundamentals, see, "Essential Buddhism."

I believe that anyone could benefit in some way by first getting a more complete overview of the Buddha Dhamma, which is about a "world" that is much more expansive and complex than the one we perceive with our senses. The mind is the precursor to everything in this world: "Manopubbangamā Dhammā..."

This website was launched in early January 2014. As of August 2020, it has around 600 posts. You may want to look at some new sections listed at the end of this post. Some early posts may need revisions.

- I discuss many "scientific aspects" to illustrate that Buddha Dhamma is a complete world view that has withstood all scrutiny for 2500 years. However, my main goal is to convey the benefits of actual practice.

I have experienced much of what I discuss here. The reason that I started this website is to share that experience with anyone interested. The "practice" part will come out as I lay down the basic ideas. To practice something, one needs to know what to practice. (Note added May 29, 2014: I have posted the first few essays on meditation under "Bhāvanā (Meditation)." November 6, 2014: The first 12 posts provide a meditation program that one could follow systematically; my own experience is in the 10th and 11th posts).

- Buddha Dhamma is NOT a religion to be followed by following rituals or blindly following a few precepts. It describes laws of nature that need to be "grasped" and "lived." Dhamma means "to bear"; to bear something, it needs to be understood. Then it becomes clear WHY one must live life in a certain way.
- This website is not a blog but a Content Management System (CMS). The material does not belong to me, but the Buddha. What I try to do is to keep the information accurate to the best of my ability. I will be making changes to the format and even the contents either to revise as needed or to present better. So, please make sure to go back and read "old topics" once-in-a-while.
- Also, one needs to contemplate the ideas presented; just quickly going through may not yield many benefits.

Another aspect that I try to highlight is the CONSISTENCY of Buddha Dhamma. You will see links from any given area to other sections. The Buddha is called "Bhaghavath" [*bhagava*] because he analyzed the

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same thing in many different ways. They are all consistent internally, as well as with the primary axioms such as 31 realms of existence, the concept of *kamma*, and rebirth.

- As science has progressed mainly over the past hundred or so years, consistency with science is becoming apparent as well. But science has not grasped the importance of the mind (over matter) yet. In some of the posts, I am making predictions on what will be discovered by science in the future. To have a time-stamp, I started putting the date of publication of new posts beginning in late October 2015.
- Please send your suggestions/comments/questions and also let me know of any technical issues with the site using the "Comments" tab. I do not plan to have a discussion forum, so your comments will not be published.
- I usually write four to five essays a month, and they are in the "New/Revised Posts" in the menu on the bottom of each page. Engaging/relevant news articles are also in that menu.
- I started posting the date of publication in new posts starting on October 23, 2015. Thus, if a web post is not dated, it must have been published before October 23, 2015.

The Buddha said, "*Sabba dānaṃ Dhamma dānaṃ jināti*," or "Gift of Dhamma excels all other gifts." Please inform others about this site if you benefit from it. [*Sabba-rasaṃ dhamma-raso jināti*. All taste(s) the dhamma-taste excels.]

- However, we should only inform others. Humanity has suffered enough from those who have tried to force their views on others. As the Buddha said, "Come and see for yourself!."

The Buddha also said, "*Sabba ratin Dhamma ratin jināti*," or "Taste of Dhamma excels all other tastes (pleasures)." I hope you will have the patience to look around the site to learn enough pure Dhamma to start enjoying its taste.

Note added/revised December 7, 2016: I have added a "Font Size Selector" on the top right so that any reader can control the font size.

- There are two other possible tools: 1. Each post can be printed using the PRINT button below that post. 2. All the posts at the site can be downloaded using three eBook formats. One can read them on electronic readers like Amazon Kindle: Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format.

Note added June 8, 2017: As of today, there are over 450 posts on the website. Recently, I have been getting inquiries on "where to start?." I just added the following post to summarize various sections and how to locate posts of interest: "User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website."

April 14, 2018: Discussion forum initiated in December of 2017: "Forum." Updates and new posts are posted at "New / Revised Posts."

March 2018: New section on "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

November 20, 2018: I have disabled comments on individual posts. You can make comments at the "Forums," or send me an email: lal@puredhamma.net.

July 10, 2019: New section on "Origin of Life."

July 31, 2020: New section on "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

It is important to know that there is a special convention to write Pāli words: "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1." There is also a "Pāli Glossary – (A-K)."

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II Buddha Dhamma

- User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website
- Buddhahood Associated Controversies
- Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach
  - Introduction – A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma
  - Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview
  - Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis
  - Sensual Pleasures – The Hidden Suffering
  - Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness
  - Brain and the Gandhabba
    - Mind Is Not in the Brain
    - Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy
    - Persistent Vegetative State – Buddhist View
    - Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory
    - Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body
    - Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta
  - Our Two Worlds – Rupa Loka and Nāma Loka
    - Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka
    - Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta
    - Response to a Sensory Stimulus – Role of Gati/Anusaya
    - Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event
    - Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka – Two Parts of Our World
  - Tipiṭaka – A Systematic Approach
    - Tipiṭaka – The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma
    - Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation
    - Vinaya Piṭaka – More Than Disciplinary Rules
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  - Antarābhava and Gandhabba
    - Antarābhava – No Connection to Gandhabba
    - Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu – Not Relevant to Gandhabba
    - How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba
    - Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka – Gandhabba Example
  - Buddhahood Controversies – Introduction
  - Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part I
  - Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part II
- What is Buddha Dhamma?
- Foundation of Dhamma
- The Importance of Purifying the Mind
- **Subsection:** The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma
  - The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma – Introduction
  - Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial

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- 31 Realms Associated with the Earth
- Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms
- Body Types in Different Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya
- Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body
- Nibbāna in the Big Picture

- Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency
- Saṃsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory
- Evidence for Rebirth
- **Subsection:** Power of the Human Mind
  - Power of the Human Mind – Introduction
  - Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna
  - Power of the Human Mind – Anariya or Mundane Jhānā
  - Power of the Human Mind – Ariya Jhānā
  - Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā?
- Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How Does it Happen?
- First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering
- Vinaya – The Nature Likes to be in Equillibrium

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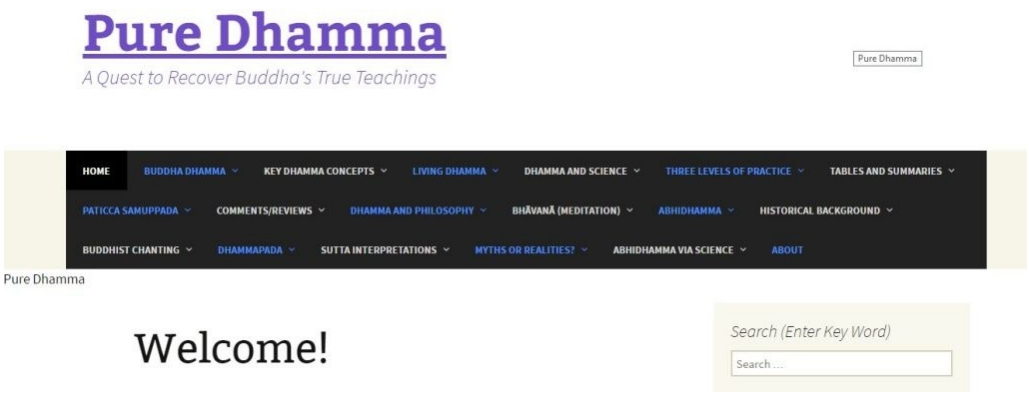
2.1 User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website

June 8, 2017; revised October 1, 2017

As of early 2020,, there are over 550 posts on the website. Recently, I have been getting inquiries on "where to start?" when one first comes to the website.

1. First, there are a few general tools that can be used to navigate the website:

- Following is how the home page of the site should look like.



- If you do not see it like that with the menu system, you should update your browser (Google Chrome, Microsoft Explorer, Firefox, etc) so that you would be able to see the menu as shown above.
- Another way to look at the whole menu is "Pure Dhamma – Sitemap." All posts are categorized under sections and subsections there. One could scan through it to locate relevant posts of interest.
- The "Search" button at top right is also good at extracting relevant posts for a given keyword or keywords.
- I have added a "bread crumbs" link at the top of each page so that you can see which section/subsection the page belongs to. You can go to that section/subsection and read more on that topic.
- **January 30, 2019:** For those who are new to Buddha Dhamma (or just want to look at the essential fundamentals, see, "Essential Buddhism."

2. First, for those who are familiar with Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism), I like to point out that three main misconceptions are prevalent today. They not only block the path to *Nibbāna* but are *micchā diṭṭhi* that could be responsible for rebirth in the *apāyā*. I am not trying to scare anyone, but "making *adhamma* to be *dhamma* is a serious offense."

- Misinterpretation of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*: "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."
- Misinterpretation of breath meditation as *Ānāpānasati*: "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."
- Insisting that the *gandhabba* (*manomaya kāya*) is a Mahāyāna concept: "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipitaka."
- These misconceptions are not the fault of current *Theravādins*; they have been handed down for many hundreds of years as explained in the "Historical Background." **However, it makes no sense to adhere to them when solid evidence is presented, per the above posts and many others on this website.**
- Of course, no one should be able to insist, "this is the only truth, and nothing else is the truth", but the truth can be verified to one's satisfaction by critically examining the evidence. I am open to discuss any valid contrary evidence. We need to sort out the truth for the benefit of all.

3. Now, let us discuss which sections could be of interest to people with different backgrounds on their exposure to Buddha Dhamma.

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- The "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section is a good start for anyone since the fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma are discussed. In particular, the subsections, "Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism" and "Dhamma Concepts" could be informative.
- The subsection on "Working Towards Good Rebirths" broadens the concepts discussed in the above subsection, to indicate how one's actions need to tailored to seek rebirths in higher realms, and to avoid births in the lower realms (*apāyā*), in case one is unable to attain any stages of *Nibbāna* in this life.
- Even those who have had exposure to "Buddhism" may realize that some fundamental aspects have been misrepresented in many textbooks as well as in various websites.

4. The "Buddha Dhamma" section is a bit more advanced version of the above-mentioned section. It discusses the basis of the Buddha Dhamma, i.e., the importance of purifying one's mind in the first few posts.

- The Buddha described a wider world of 31 realms of which we are aware of only two: the animal and human realms: "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- Then it discusses how the Buddha was able to see that "bigger picture" in the post, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."
- The two posts "Sansaric Time Scale" and "Evidence for Rebirth" discuss how we have been going through the birth/death/rebirth process from a beginning-less time.

5. Those who have had exposure mainly to "*Mahāyāna* Buddhism", the following two posts will provide an idea of why *Mahāyāna sutrās* are very different from the *suttā* that the Buddha delivered: "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis" and "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?."

- Further details on how various "schools of Buddhism" — like *Mahāyāna*, *Vajrayāna* (Tibetan), *Zen*, etc — evolved within the first 1000 years after the Buddha, can be found in the "Historical Background" section.

6. Even *Theravāda* Buddhism — which is supposed to be closest to the original teachings of the Buddha — has been contaminated over the years, mainly due to three key reasons. We will first list those three and discuss a bit more. The **first reason** is to do with losing the true interpretations of ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong views).

- There are two types of Eightfold Paths: mundane and transcendental (*lokuttara*). One needs to first get into the mundane Path by getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- One of the ten *micchā diṭṭhi* is "*para loka* ("*paralowa*" in Sinhala) or the world of *gandhabba* does not exist." Many people think that *gandhabba* is a Mahāyāna concept, but that is a big mistake; see below.
- One cannot even get into the mundane Eightfold Path if one believes that *para loka* and *gandhabba* are not real.

7. **Second**, various Hindu meditation techniques — including wrong interpretations of *kasina* meditation and *Ānāpānasati* (as breath meditation) — were incorporated into *Theravāda* teachings especially after Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis," and the posts referred to there.

8. **Third and most important reason** is the incorrect translation of key *Pāli* words like *anicca* and *anatta* by the Early European scholars in the 1800's, see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

- Let us discuss each of those three briefly next, and point to a few more relevant posts.

9. Many people don't realize that the concept of *gandhabba* (mental body) is a critical component in explaining how life functions in human and animal realms.

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- First, it is a misconception that *gandhabba* is a Mahāyāna concept; see, "Antarabhava and Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka."
- Without the concepts of *gandhabba*, it is not possible to explain so many rebirth stories and out-of-body experiences that have been widely reported in recent years; see, "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."
- The main opposition to the concept of *gandhabba* in current *Theravāda* circles is the misconception that it is an "*antarābhava*," i.e., in between two *bhava.* But a human *gandhabba* is in the same "human *bhava*."This is clarified in, "Antarabhava and gandhabba."
- The critical role of the mental body (*gandhabba*) in giving rise to multiple births (*jāti*) within human and animal existences (*bhava*) has been disregarded. However, not believing in the existence of *gandhabba* is a *micchā diṭṭhi*, and is a hindrance to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage; see, "Miccā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- Because of the high importance, *gandhabba* is discussed in two main sections: "Mental Body – Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."

10. Regarding the problems with Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga* — published 1500 years ago — the two issues mentioned above are:

- Regarding *kasina* meditations discussed in the *Visuddhimagga*, there is not a single *sutta* in the *Tipiṭaka* that discusses *kasina* meditation.
- Regarding the breath meditation discussed in the *Visuddgimagga*, there are no *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* that discusses BREATH MEDITATION. Those *suttā* have been mistranslated. Furthermore, there is a *sutta* in the *Tipiṭaka* that specifically says breath meditation is not *Ānāpānasati* meditation, see, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

11. The critical problem of incorrect translation of *anicca* and *anatta* has prevented so many people from making progress over the past 200 years. I strongly recommend the post, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

- More posts on that can be found in the section, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." Correct interpretation of many relevant key *suttā* are discussed in that section.
- The introductory timeline on those historical developments is given in "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline," and all relevant posts are in the "Historical Background" section.

12. Now let us turn to an issue of relevance to many who are new to Buddha Dhamma. Many people — especially in Western countries — have a hard time in believing in rebirth; see, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?."

- The section, "Living Dhamma," is specially designed for one to start following Buddha Dhamma even without believing in the concept of rebirth.
- The first two subsections there are good to be read by everyone. One can experience a real "cooling down" even without having belief in rebirth.
- The latter subsections gradually take one to advanced concepts, and latter sections are appropriate even for people with advanced background on Buddha Dhamma. One would be able to clarify advanced concepts in later subsections.

13. Once one starts looking into Buddha Dhamma seriously, it is a good idea to learn a few basic things about the *Pāli* language. The *Pāli* Canon, which was first transmitted orally and then was written down 2000 years ago, still has all the *suttā* as composed by the Buddha and memorized by Ven. Ānanda.

- See, "Preservation of the Dhamma" and other relevant posts in the "Historical Background."

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- While the Buddha encouraged delivering Dhamma to others in their native language, there are some advantages in learning at least some key *Pāli* words, see, "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?."
- In particular, learning the meanings behind some key roots like "*san*" makes a huge difference in gaining understanding of key words like *saṃsāra* and *sammā*, see, the subsection on "San."

14. Learning the correct meanings of the *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* is an essential part of learning Buddha Dhamma. Most existing literature, even on *Theravāda*, have incorrect translations.

- The section "Sutta Interpretations" discusses some key *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- It is a good idea to first read two important posts in that section, "Sutta – Introduction" and "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?."
- Short and succinct sayings of the Buddha in the *Dhammapada* provide deep insights in short verses. Some of these are discussed in the "Dhammapada" section.

15. Meditation (both formal and informal) is an essential part of following the Path of the Buddha. The "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" provides a series of posts on the fundamentals of meditation and also on advanced topics.

- A critical misconception that is prevalent today is *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā* is breath meditation. There are several posts that discusses the correct version and the post, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?" discusses evidence from the *Tipiṭaka* that breath meditation is not *Ānāpāna*.
- The *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* is discussed in the subsection, "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."

16. Buddha Dhamma is based on the principle of causation (cause and effect), which in *Pāli* is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. The principles are discussed in the section, "Paṭicca Samuppāda."

- While the meaning of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is clear from its name itself, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"," the main concepts are discussed in plain English at: "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English."
- Just because causes exist, does not necessarily mean that effects (results) will follow. There must be suitable conditions present to about those results (also called *vipāka*). This is discussed in detail in the subsection "Paṭṭhāna Dhamma."

17. Chanting of *suttā* and reciting the virtues of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha can prepare one's mind to be receptive to learn Dhamma, and thus could be an important part of the practice, see, "Buddhist Chanting."

- The section on "Myths or Realities?" is also important, since it discusses many concepts and practices that are considered by some to not belong to Buddha Dhamma.

18. Those who would like to see how compatible Buddha Dhamma is with modern science, "Dhamma and Science" section is a good resource.

- That section points out both consistencies and inconsistencies with modern science.
- Modern science has had to revise or come up with new theories to explain many phenomena over the past 500 years, but Buddha Dhamma (in the *Tipiṭaka*) has remained the same over 2500 years.
- My prediction is that in the end the remaining inconsistencies will also be resolved in favor of Buddha Dhamma.

19. The section on "Tables and Summaries" is an important collection of posts summarizing bits of information or "data" that are not necessary to be memorized, but could be needed to explain things in detail.

- There are several posts with listings of types of *citta*, *cetasika*, 28 types *rūpa*, etc. in this section.
- There is also a *Pāli* glossary with pronunciation: "Pāli Glossary – (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary – (L-Z)."

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- The section on "Comments/Reviews" has two subsections on "Discussion of Comments" and "Book Reviews."

20. There are some who either have already learned *Abhidhamma*, or would like to learn. For them, the "Abhidhamma" section could be useful. There are several subsections in this section on various topics.

- The section on "Inconsistencies with Science" highlights some overlaps between *Abhidhamma* Science.
- One of my favorite subjects is *Abhidhamma*. When one has proceeded along the Path to some extent, it could be useful to learn *Abhidhamma*, which will help gain a deeper understanding.

21. Finally, but most importantly, there are three important subsections that discusses issues involved in attaining *magga phala* (stages of *Nibbāna*). The primary goal of this website is to provide enough material for one to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.

- First, the concept of *Nibbāna* is a puzzle to many. It is discussed in several posts in the subsection: "Nibbāna."
- Some critical points to consider by those who are making an effort in that direction are discussed in the subsection: "Seeking Nibbāna."
- The first goal of those who seek *Nibbāna* is the *Sotāpanna* stage. Many concepts are requirements for achieving that goal are discussed in the subsection: "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."
- The section, "Living Dhamma," is especially designed for one to start following Buddha Dhamma even without believing in the concept of rebirth, all the way to the *Sotāpanna* stage. People with the more advanced background can start at later subsections, skipping the early ones.

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2.2 Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach

July 31, 2020

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- Brain and the Gandhabba
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  - Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka – Two Parts of Our World
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  - Tipiṭaka – The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma
  - Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation
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- Antarābhava and Gandhabba
  - Antarābhava – No Connection to Gandhabba
  - Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu – Not Relevant to Gandhabba
  - How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba
  - Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka – Gandhabba Example

2.2.1 Introduction – A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma

July 31, 2020; revised August 2, 2020

A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma

1. Buddha Dhamma is the Grand Unified Theory (a theory that explains everything about this world) that scientists are seeking. They do not realize it because the correct version of it, with its deeper aspects, has not been available in English. There are two major relevant points.

- First, scientists will never get to a Grand Unified Theory until they realize that mental phenomena must be a part of such a theory. Modern science only focuses on just "material phenomena." The reason is the following incorrect assumption by them: Psychological (mental) aspects arise from matter. The Buddha

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taught that it is the other way around: **Mind is the forerunner of ALL phenomena, mental and material.**

- The second point is the following. **When scientists propose a brand new theory, they just use a set of assumptions.** Some assumptions (axioms) are revolutionary and opposed by other scientists at the beginning. We will discuss such a prominent case below. The point is that they are not starting off with a truly essential set of axioms that cover mental as well as physical phenomena.

I will use the standard scientific method in this series of posts. I will start with a set of "assumptions," even though those are NOT ASSUMPTIONS for a Buddha. Upon attaining the *Buddhahood*, a Buddha DISCOVERS those fundamental laws of Nature.

What Is a Scientific Approach?

2. Most of the time, science makes progress in a gradual step-by-step way. An existing scientific theory is "tweaked" to get a better agreement with new experimental results.

- **However, In some cases, scientists come with "previously unheard" theories to explain new observations.** Most other scientists are first skeptical about such a drastically new approach. But if it turns out to be able to explain observations, then it becomes accepted over time.
- Such a "revolutionary change" is a paradigm change. A good example is theories on atomic structure. There, paradigm changes happened twice within the past 100 years, as we will see below.

Western Theories of the Atom Started with Democritus

3. Around the time of the Buddha, Democritus (400 B.C.E.) proposed that all matter is made of indivisible particles called atoms. But nothing much was known about atoms at that time.

- Democritus just assumed that if one keeps cutting in half a piece of a given material (say, an aluminum foil), it will reach a stage where it would not be possible to cut. That ultimate "indivisible" unit, he called an "atom."
- That picture has changed drastically over the years, especially within the past 150 years or so.
- Of course, Buddha's ultimate unit of matter was a *suddhaṭṭhaka*. It is also electrically-neutral, just as Democritus' atom. **However, a mind can create a *suddhaṭṭhaka*** with *javana citta*. A *suddhaṭṭhaka* is a billionth times smaller than an atom in modern science. See, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

Modern Theories of the Atom

4. John Dalton, in 1803, proposed a modern theory of the atom. He suggested that different materials are made of different atoms and that a given atom cannot be broken down into smaller parts.

- For example, an oxygen atom would be eight times bigger than a hydrogen atom, but an oxygen atom CANNOT be made by combining eight hydrogen atoms. Hydrogen and oxygen have different types of "building blocks" or different atoms.
- Dalton was able to make some progress with his model.

Plum-Pudding Model of the Atom by J. J. Thomson

5. In the late 1800s, there were many experiments on electrical discharges. J. J. Thomson discovered that negatively-charged electrons could be removed from an atom. Since atoms are electrically neutral, in 1904, he proposed that an atom is made of a positively-charged material with electrons embedded in it.

- That is analogous to plums embedded in a pudding. Thus, it came to be known as the "plum-pudding model" of an atom. See, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Plum Pudding Model" for that model of an atom.

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The following video illustrates this point:

WebLink: youtube: Discovery of the Electron: Cathode Ray Tube Experiment

- Therefore, the indivisibility of the atom was no longer accepted. Yet, Thomson's model still preserved one aspect of the original model of Democritus. An atom could be visualized as a "single unit" with two kinds of particles packed together. Later on, the positively-charged component was found to be due to protons, and a neutral particle (neutron) was also found to be inside an atom.

Rutherford's Discovery of Mass-Concentrated Nucleus

6. Soon after that another English physicist, Ernest Rutherford, directed small alpha particles (much smaller than an atom) to a thin gold foil. He observed that most particles went right through the foil. However, some got deflected and a few even bounced back. It appeared that the atoms were mostly empty space, but there was something dense and small in there that bounced off some of the projectile particles.

- Based on those experiments, Rutherford, in 1911, proposed a radically new theory of the atom. He proposed that the positively-charged component of an atom be in a tiny volume in comparison to the rest of the atom. That central volume also contained the bulk of the mass of the atom. This region would be known as the "nucleus" of the atom. Negatively-charged electrons would be outside that nucleus, but Rutherford did not propose a model for that "outer layer" of the atom with electrons.

Bohr's Planetary Model of the Atom

7. In 1913, Niels Bohr came up with another paradigm change for atomic structure. He purposed that the electrons "revolved around" a tiny nucleus, a small core that contained all the protons. That is similar to the structure of the Solar System, where the planets revolve around the Sun.

- Thus, some called it the "planetary model" another name for the "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Bohr Model." That planetary model of the atom was able to explain many experimental observations.

  WebLink: youtube: Discovery of the Nucleus: Rutherford's Gold Foil Experiment

- Atoms of different materials have different numbers of protons (and electrons). For example, a hydrogen atom has one proton in the nucleus and one electron moving around it. An oxygen atom has eight protons and eight electrons, etc.
- However, Bohr's planetary model unable to explain a growing number of other observations.

Quantum Mechanics

8. In the end, the planetary model of the atom was replaced by another change of paradigm. That was the modern quantum mechanical treatment of the atom. It was first postulated by Wolfgang Pauli in 1925, using Heisenberg's matrix mechanics.

- Many other scientists including Einstein, Max Planck, Niels Bohr, and Erwin Schrödinger contributed to the development and refinement of the new quantum theory. They postulated the occurrence of energy in **discrete quantities (quanta)** in order to explain phenomena such as the spectrum of black-body radiation, the photoelectric effect, and the stability and spectra of atoms. **Thus the name "quantum mechanics."**
- In quantum theory, the position of an electron in an orbital cannot be specified. One could only calculate the likelihood of an electron being at a given location. It is known as the Copenhagen interpretation of quantum mechanics. See, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Copenhagen interpretation."
- That is the accepted theory at present. However, there are still many unresolved issues in quantum mechanics. Even though it is able to calculate the results of ANY experiment, it is "too abstract" for many, including Einstein. The current position is summarized by the sentence "Shut up and calculate!" as

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discussed in "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Copenhagen interpretation." I have discussed a new interpretation of quantum mechanics, "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma – Introduction."

Ability to Explain Observations – Primary Requirement of a Scientific Theory

9. **The determining factors of a scientific theory are the ability to explain observations and self-consistency**. It does not matter how crazy the new theory appears to be, as long as it meets those two criteria. As we saw above, quantum theory is accepted today despite not being an "understandable" theory.

- In fact, as long as a theory fulfills those criteria, objections by even the most prominent scientists cannot prevent a good theory from taking hold.
- For example, Einstein opposed quantum theory. He tried to come up with a "better explanation" until he died. Despite his objections, quantum theory became firmly established.
- Quantum theory, in its current form, is incomprehensible to even many scientists. The problem is that it is just a mathematical tool to make calculations. Even physicists do not have an "intuitive grasp" of the underlying aspects of quantum mechanics.

Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma

10. In this section, we will use the above discussed "scientific approach." We will start with the "new theory about the world" put forth by the Buddha. It was a revolutionary theory 2600 years ago and still remains a revolutionary theory today.

- Just like even Einstein was unable to come to terms with the quantum theory, many people today find it difficult to comprehend Buddha Dhamma.
- However, much of the current confusion lies in the fact that many people are not aware of the "full and complete theory" of Buddha Dhamma. They have seen only parts of Buddha's theory and conclude that those ideas are too "esoteric" or "mystical."
- **Yet, unlike quantum mechanics, anyone can understand Buddha Dhamma, if the basic principles are understood.**
- I hope that by presenting a "complete theory" using a "bottom-up approach" we can take a fresh perspective of some concepts like *kamma*, rebirth, and *Nibbāna*.

The Necessary Components of Buddha Dhamma

11. We need to convince ourselves of the validity of the basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma before being able to comprehend the deeper teachings like *Paṭicca Samuppāda, Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*,) and the Four Noble Truths.

- Those basic concepts (equivalent to "assumptions" or "axioms" in scientific theories) are the laws of *kamma*, the existence of 31 realms, and the rebirth process within those realms.
- **However, those concepts are not assumptions. They are laws of Nature, discovered by a Buddha.** When one starts understanding (and practicing) Buddha Dhamma, one will see the truth of that statement.

References

1. Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Scientific method"

2. Here is another video that provides a somewhat different perspective of the evolution of theories of atoms:

WebLink: youtube: The History of Atomic Chemistry: Crash Course Chemistry #37

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2.2.2 Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview

August 9, 2020

We will first briefly discuss three main theories of our world. Then we will start a broader discussion of Buddha's description of this world.

Theories of Our World – According to Modern Science

1. Western science has been studying our world since the time of the ancient Greeks. But its focus has been on the material world. There have been investigations on TWO fronts. **The structure of matter and the origin of life.**

- Investigations on the structure of matter started with Socrates and Aristotle. As discussed in the previous post, Democritus proposed the first atomic theory, and it has evolved into current studies on quantum physics. See, "Introduction – A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma" and Ref. 1 below.
- The second front is on the origin of life or the study of the living world. That includes plants and conscious life. See, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: History of biology." Modern science believes that living cells evolved FROM inert matter ("abiogenesis.") See Ref. 2 for more details.
- Both conscious and non-conscious (plant) life have **living cells as the basis**. See, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."
- There is a separate area of research looking into the question of how consciousness (or mental phenomena) can arise from inert matter. See "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Consciousness." As discussed there, modern science CANNOT explain the origin of **conscious life**.

Theories of Our World – Religious Explanation

2. Of course, the other prevailing explanation of the origin of life is that a Creator created the whole world, including all the stars, planets, our Earth, and the first forms of life on Earth.

- Even though easiest to state, this explanation has no factual basis. One HAS TO accept it based purely on the faith of a Creator.
- See, for example, "WebLink: answersingenesis.org: Evidence for Creation."

Theories of Our World – Buddhist Explanation

3. Even though Buddha Dhamma (commonly known as Buddhism) is normally considered a religion, it is NOT a religion in the sense described in #2. It can be treated as a scientific theory, as we will do in this series of posts.

- Buddha Dhamma provides a complete description of our world.
- However, the Buddha did not try to provide detailed descriptions of material phenomena. He taught that finding out such details will only take precious time away from the urgent need to find the truth about the unimaginable suffering associated with the rebirth process.
- Therefore, much of the *Sutta Piṭaka* and the *Vinaya Piṭaka* focus on the "problem of suffering" and how to stop future suffering in the rebirth process.
- As we know, Buddha's teachings are contained in three *Piṭaka* or *Tipiṭaka*. The third one, *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, describes in great detail the building blocks of our world. **That includes both material (*rūpa*) and mental (*citta* and *cetasika*) aspects.** If one is interested in figuring out those details, not in the other two *Piṭaka*, one needs to understand the *Abhidhamma* material.

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- However, it is not necessary to go to great depths of *Abhidhamma* to get an idea about the underlying principles. In the upcoming posts, we will do such a simplified analysis. That discussion will augment the series of posts on "Origin of Life."

Overview of Modern Science

4. **The focus of modern science is on figuring out the origin and the behavior of matter. Scientists consider mental phenomena to be secondary and to arise from inert matter!** Most scientists believe that mental phenomena arise in the brain.

- There are several proposals on how the mind (or thoughts) can arise from matter. But there is no credible theory that comes even close to begin to explain it. See "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Consciousness."
- A critical outcome of this approach is that modern science falls under the "annihilation view" (*uccheda diṭṭhi*.) **That wrong view says that life ENDS at the death of the physical body.**

Evidence Against Proposed Scientific Theories of the Mind

5. Since mental phenomena are supposed to arise in the brain, that conclusion (in red in #4) leads to two critical implications.

- The death of the brain — thus the death of a human — is the ABSOLUTE end of that life. There no way to "transfer" the memories of one life to another. **Thus, the rebirth process is COMPLETELY ruled out in modern science.**
- Furthermore, it also **RULES OUT the possibility of Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE) including Near-Death Experiences (NDE.)**
- Let us briefly discuss evidence regarding those three areas.

Evidence from Rebirth Accounts

6. I will just provide one account here. In their book, "Soul Survivor: The Reincarnation of a World War II Fighter Pilot", by Bruce and Andrea Leininger detail the amazing story of their son's recount of a past life.

Here is a recent youtube video on it:

WebLink: youtube: Boy Remembers His Past Life As a World War II Pilot!!

- More rebirth accounts discussed in, "Evidence for Rebirth."

Evidence from Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE)

7. In his book, "Travels," the famous author of the Jurassic Park, Michael Crichton (1988, p. 307) mentions his ability to "shift my awareness out of my body and move it around the bedroom," and he says, "..I didn't think anything about it… I assumed that anybody could do it..".

- A similar account has been given by a woman recently who also thought that "everybody could do it": https://abcnews.go.com/Health/woman-body-experiences/story?id=22825927
- The book "Consciousness Beyond Life", by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies by a renowned cardiologist.
- A series of books, including "Journeys of the Body," has been written by Robert A. Monroe based on his experiences.

Evidence from Near-Death Experiences (NDE)

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8. Only a few people have the ability to experience OBE at will. Typically, OBE happens under stressful conditions, most commonly during heart operations. These have a special name of near-death experiences (NDE.) The following video provides a good summary of NDE accounts.

WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experiences & Evidence of the Afterlife

- There are many books on NDE. "Consciousness Beyond Life" by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of NDE experienced by people undergoing heart operations.
- A recent book, "Dying to be me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing," by Anita Moorjani (2012), describes the NDE experience of her in detail.

Current Philosophical Ideas on Consciousness

9. When science is unable to make much progress, philosophers put forth their ideas. In fact, physics evolved from philosophy.

- There are many ideas in philosophy about consciousness, including one (for example, by Daniel Dennett) that says consciousness is not real!
- The following video is a presentation by David Chalmers, a leading philosopher on consciousness. He makes much more sense and gets to the heart of the issue.

WebLink: youtube: Hard Problem of Consciousness — David Chalmers

Consciousness Is a Fundamental Aspect of Nature

10. In the following video presentation, David Chalmers makes some points that are important.

- Around 8 minutes, he explains that current theories of our world cannot accommodate consciousness.
- Then he proposes to investigate the possibility that consciousness is a fundamental aspect of nature that CANNOT be derived from other entities (such as matter.)
- Another philosopher who also believes that consciousness cannot be derived is Thomas Nagel. He discusses that in his book in Ref. 3. **That is indeed what the Buddha explained, as we will discuss in the next post.**

WebLink: youtube: How do you explain consciousness? | David Chalmers

Further Information

1. The scientific effort on a single theory to explain material phenomena, "Grand Unified Theory."
2. Scientific studies on the emergence of life from inert matter, "Abiogenesis."
3. Thomas Nagel, "Mind & Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature Is Almost Certainly False" (2012).
4. There is evidence emerging from several investigations that a brain is not necessary to have conscious experiences. **I encourage watching the following video.**

WebLink: youtube: Is There Life After Death? moderated by John Cleese - 2018 Tom Tom Festival

2.2.3 Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis

August 15, 2020; revised August 16, 2020

Mind and matter go together in Buddha Dhamma. It is one meaning of "*nāmarūpa*." It starts at a level much finer than the atomic level in modern science. It is even below the elementary particle level.

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The Three Basic Building Blocks of Buddha Dhamma

1. **Everything in this world arises out of three building blocks: *citta*, *cetasika*, and *rūpa*.**

- An analogy in modern science is to start with electrons, protons, and neutrons (elementary particles would be even more fundamental). A tasty cake, an oak tree, or a nuclear bomb all have origins in those fundamental particles.
- In the same way, Buddha Dhamma (the theory) can start with those three fundamental entities. **They can describe all mental phenomena as well as material phenomena.**
- On the other hand, modern science can describe ONLY material phenomena. It just ASSUMES that mental phenomena come out of material phenomena. But that assumption has NOT been validated. See the previous post, "Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview."
- Modern science cannot explain how a living-being is born. It seems to say that "it just happens." We will discuss that below.

Connection Between Mind and Matter

2. **In Buddha Dhamma, analysis of *rūpa* directly provides the connection between mind and matter.**

- In *Abhidhamma*, there are 28 types of *rūpa*. However, there are only a few types of *rūpa* that are sufficient to start our discussion here.
- We will start with six types of *rūpa* directly related to the mind and are essential in sensing the external world. **First, there is *hadaya vatthu*, the "seat of the mind,"** where thoughts (*citta*) arise. **Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and body touching sensations are sensed at five *pasāda rūpa*: *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā*, and *kāya*.**
- We are accustomed to the idea that we see things with our eyes, hear with our ears, etc. But all those five physical sense faculties just have inert matter. Inert matter cannot "sense" or "feel" anything.
- Scientists go one step further and say that eyes, ears, etc. only capture the corresponding visual, auditory,..signals. They say that it is in the brain that those sensations are processed and "detected." But they have no idea how such a "feeling" or "sensation" can arise in a brain. After all, the brain itself is made of inert atoms and molecules!

Brain Sends Those Signals to the "Actual Sensing Units"

3. It is correct that the brain processes those sensory signals captured by eyes, ears, etc. However, there is nothing in the brain that actually "detect" or "experience" those signals.

- **As mentioned above, those actual sensing units are the *hadaya vatthu* and the five *pasāda rūpa*.** I will stick to these Pāli terms, and you will see that it is necessary to do so. The English vocabulary does not have corresponding words.
- Now, we need to discuss two issues. **Where are those six "sensing units" located? Also, how can they "feel" or "sense" those signals?** Let us consider the latter question first.
- It is *kammic* energy that creates those six elementary sensory units (***hadaya vatthu* and the five *pasāda rūpa* of *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya***) at the beginning of a new existence. **For simplicity, let us call those six entities "sensing units."** In some existences, there are less than six. For example, a *rupāvacara Brahma* has only three, and an *arupāvacara Brahma* has only one (just *hadaya vatthu*.)
- ONLY *kammic* energy can create those special types of *rūpa*. **They have a trace of matter (*suddhāṭṭhaka*) AND also the ability to "feel" or "experience" the sensory inputs.** That is the FUNDAMENTAL connection between mind and matter.

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Kammic Energy – Origin of Life

4. **It is the *kammic* energy created by a STRONG previous *kamma* that leads to a new existence as a result (*vipāka*) of that *kamma*.**

- For example, if person X kills another person, then that person X would have created a *kammic* seed (or a *kamma bija*) that can germinate and give rise to existence in hell. If the *kamma* were rape, that would create a *kammic* seed to be born an animal. **The *vipāka* (result) is according to the *kamma*.** That is described in detail in "Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- At the beginning of a new existence, *kammic* energy creates a set of "sensing units" appropriate for that existence. All living-beings in the *kāma loka* (six *Deva* realms, the human realm, and the four *apāyā*) have all six units listed in #3 above.

Examples of Various Existences

5. Without getting deeper into *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, let us try to get the basic idea of that process. It just says that an existence corresponds to the *kamma* that gave rise to that existence.

- Someone who cultivates one of the four highest *jhāna* (*arupāvacara jhāna*) will be born as an *arupāvacara Brahma.* Someone in such an *arupāvacara jhāna* does not experience any of five sensory inputs (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching). As a result (*vipāka*) of cultivating such a *jhāna*, one would be born in the corresponding *arupāvacara* realm (there are four such realms.) An *arupāvacara Brahma* cannot see, hear, smell, taste, or touch anything. **He has only a *hadaya vatthu*, and thus, can only think** (just like the experience in an *arupāvacara jhāna.*) A *hadaya vatthu* is the LEAST bit of matter that can sustain mind (mental activity.)
- Therefore, existence as an *arupāvacara Brahma* is the simplest. One is free of burdens of making a living to buy houses, cars, or even food. There is no need to eat. That "*Brahma* body" only has a *hadaya vatthu,* which is so small that a *Brahma* cannot be seen even with the finest microscope scientists have. ***Kammic* energy sustains that "body" with just an unimaginably small amount of "matter."**
- At the next higher level of "complexity" are the 16 *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms. As you can guess now, birth in a *rūpāvacara Brahma* realm is a *vipāka* of cultivating *rūpāvacara jhāna.* A human can get into a *rūpāvacara jhāna* by suppressing or removing the cravings for close-contact sensory pleasures (eating, smelling, and touching.) **The bottom line is that a *rūpāvacara Brahma* can only see and hear in addition to being able to think.** Thus, a *rūpāvacara Brahma* would have only *cakkhu* and *sota pasāda rūpa* in addition to *hadaya vatthu*. Thus he would have only three "sensing units."
- It is only in the ***kāma loka*** (six *Deva* realms, the human realm, and the four *apāyā*) **that living-beings have all six "sensing units"** listed in #3 above. Births in *kāma loka* are much more complex, and that is where one needs a better understanding of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* to describe various births such as animal and hell beings. **Of course, those births in the four *apaayā* are due to *akusala kamma*.**

A Human *Gandhabba* Is a Set of Six "Sensory Units"

6. At the beginning of human existence, *kammic* energy creates a human *gandhabba* (or a *manomaya kāya*) with a *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa*. That is the basic mind and matter overlap (*nāmarūpa*) in a human.

- Just like it is impossible to see a *Brahma*, it is not possible to see a *gandhabba*. A *gandhabba* is almost like a *Brahma*, but with a full set of *pasāda rūpa*.
- After created by *kammic* energy, a *gandhabba* stays with that "invisible body" may be for even many years. When a "matching womb" becomes available, it is pulled into that womb by *kammic* energy.

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- Modern science can explain the growth of a baby, starting with an embryo in a womb. But it CANNOT explain how that baby became CONSCIOUS.
- The conception of a human baby (i.e., creating an embryo from an inert zygote) happens when a *gandhabba* comes into the womb and merges with the zygote. For details, see "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

Many Physical Bodies For a Single Mental Body (*Gandhabba*)

7. Therefore, a human being does not start with a physical body, i.e., with physical eyes, ears, etc. or the brain. As the Buddha explained, a physical body is a temporary residence for a human *gandhabba*. Within a human existence (that may last thousands of years), a *gandhabba* may acquire MANY different physical bodies. See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- When the *gandhabba* is trapped inside a physical body, it has to get external sensory signals indirectly. The eyes, ears, etc. capture those sensory signals, which are then processed by the brain. We will discuss how the brain transfers that information to the *gandhabba* in a future post.
- It is a human existence (*bhava*) that is hard to get. But within a human *bhava*, one may be born many times with different human bodies. That is why we have so many rebirth stories where one is reborn within several years.
- For the duration of a human *bhava*, one will have ONLY ONE mental body (*manomaya kāya*), also known as *gandhabba*. Of course, that *gandhabba* may undergo some changes. But it will last the whole duration of that human *bhava*.

Pāli Word for Eye Is Not *Cakkhu* – It Is *Nayana* or *Akkhi*

8. Most people do not realize the following critical fact. Pāli words for eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body, are *nayana* (or *akkhi*), *kaṇṇa, nāsā* (or *nāsikā*), *jivhā*, and *sarīra* or *deha* or *kāya.*

- The Pāli words *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā*, *kāya* refer to the five *pasāda rūpa* associated with the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*).
- Thus, two words could be used in both ways either to refer to a physical sense faculty or a *pasāda rūpa* (*jivhā* and *kāya*).
- While inside a physical body, a *gandhabba* is shielded from the external world. We will discuss how *pasāda rupā* receive signals from the physical sensory faculties in the next post.
- In the *Abhidhamma* analysis of *rūpa*, the five *pasāda rūpa* are listed as **five fundamental types of *rūpa*.** Thus, it is clear that *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā*, *kāya* DO NOT refer to eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the physical body!
- On p. 236 of Ref. 1, they are listed as "sensitive phenomena". If you look at p. 237, the Pāli term is "*pasāda rūpa*". The five types of *pasāda rūpa* are #5 through #9 in Table 6.1 on p. 237. I tried to make that clear in the post, "Rūpa (Material Form) – Table."
- In Ref. 1, the description of *rūpa* is in Chapter VI (pp. 234-263.)
- By the way, I will use Ref. 1 as the standard text on *Abhidhamma* for this series of posts. I have provided a link to the free pdf version. Ref. 2 is good as well.

Summary – Special Types of *Rūpa* With Ability to "Sense"

9. There are six "sensing units" (created by *kammic* energy) that have the ability to "sense' or "experience." **That *kammic* energy is created with *citta* and *cetasika*.** Therefore, it is a cyclic process (and why the rebirth process has no beginning!). We will discuss that intricate mind and matter connection in upcoming posts.

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- We started the post by pointing out that *citta, cetasika*, and *rūpa* can describe EVERYTHING in this world.
- In the above, we went through a simple description of the arising of a living-being with a set of "sensing units." That particular living-being will then do more *kamma* and create the seeds for more future births.
- That is how the rebirth process continues.
- However, by understanding this relationship between mind and matter, we have the ability to avoid "bad births" and also to attain *Nibbāna*. We will get into details in future posts.

References

1. "Comprehensive_Manual_of_Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000.)

2. "Buddha Abhidhamma – Ultimate Science," by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon. Both are free publications. Click the link to open the pdf.

2.2.4 Sensual Pleasures – The Hidden Suffering

August 22, 2020

Sensual Pleasures (*Kāma Assāda*)

1. The word *sensual* means gratification of physical senses. It may have a sexual connotation, but not necessarily. We will use that word in that sense to represent the meaning of the Pāli word "*kāma*."

- Such sensory contacts occur in close proximity. The three main "close sensory contacts" involve eating, smelling, and body touches (including sex.) However, visuals and sounds also are used to enhance these three sensory experiences.
- Therefore, "*kāma rāga*" means craving for sensual pleasures (tasty foods, nice fragrances, bodily comforts, etc.) not just for sex. See, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex."
- All five sensory contacts are available in most of the lowest 11 realms (four *apāyā*, human realm, and six *Deva* realms.) Thus, *kāma loka* includes those 11 realms.
- However, those sensual pleasures (*kāma assāda*) come at a price. There is much suffering in *kāma loka,* as we will see below.

What Is a Body (*Kāya*)?

2. In the previous post, we saw that out of 31 realms in this world, living-beings in 20 realms **do not have physical bodies like ours.** *Brahmā* in those 20 realms have only a trace of matter. They cannot be seen even with the best scientific instruments available today. See "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis." **Therefore, we need to abandon our perception of "solid, dense" bodies like ours to be universal.**

- There is also the following related issue. We conventionally translate the Pāli word "*kāya*" as "body." Now, we are only used to "physical, dense bodies" like ours or animals. The idea of a living being with very little matter (and thus invisible to us) is strange to most of us.
- However, the Pāli word "*kāya*" means a "collection." As we know, a living being is a collection of five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) in Buddha Dhamma. An entity that can support those five aggregates has a "*kāya*."
- In English, also we sometimes use "body" as a collection or aggregate. Some examples are "body of water" and "body of evidence."

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- *Brahma* has a set of "bare minimum" (a trace of) *rupa* that can support the five aggregates, as discussed below. **A "*kāya*" of a living being is a collection of aggregates of mind and matter.**
- The Pāli word for a physical body is "*sarīra*" even though the word "*kāya*" is sometimes used.

Why Do Humans Need Dense Physical Bodies?

3. Then, a question comes up. Why do humans need physical bodies? We discussed that human life also starts with an "invisible body" (*gandhabba*), just like for a *Brahma*. A dense physical body arises later on. After that, *gandhabba* gets into a womb. See the previous post, "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis." Why doesn't the *gandhabba* stays with that invisible body?

- We need physical bodies to taste the food, smell nice odors, have sex, etc. Those sensory experiences REQUIRE dense bodies. We highly value those "bodily-contacts" and constantly think, speak, and work to get more.
- But there is a "hidden price to pay" for close-contact sensory pleasures. Such dense bodies **are prone to diseases, injuries, and body pains.** Unfortunately, such problems are not very evident at a young age, and for most people, by the time they realize these problems, it is too late. Their brains are getting weak too, and they may not be able to learn the deeper teachings of the Buddha.
- Most living-beings in the 11 realms of *kāma loka* have dense bodies. The bodies of *Devas* are a bit less dense but dense enough to experiences those three sensory inputs. The word "*kāma*" implies such close contacts.
- **Let us consider a different approach to see the "drawbacks" and "dangers" in sensual pleasures.** Let us look into how *Brahmā* in 20 realms (out of 31 realms in the world) overcome the desire for sensual pleasures and live for billions of years in "*jhānic* bliss" in those realms.

Sufferings Due to "Dense Bodies" Is Absent in *Brahma* Realms

4. Out of the 31 realms of our world, the higher-lying 20 realms of *Brahmā* are absent from any suffering (diseases like cancer, injuries, brain defects, or even body aches). As we discussed in #2, those *Brahmā* do not have dense bodies like ours.

- Their "physical bodies" have just an unimaginably small amount of "matter" that is a billion times smaller than an atom in modern science. It is better to call it an invisible "magnetic body" or an "energy field." Some people think these *Brahmā* have ONLY the mind, but that is not correct. The Buddha stated that the mind could not exist without a material base. These *Brahmā* have "bodies" with the least amount of matter in Buddha Dhamma, a *suddhāṭṭhaka*.
- Furthermore, there is no need to eat since there is no dense physical body to maintain. The subtle "body" of a *Brahma* is sustained by *kammic* energy.
- Of course, "bodies" that are invisible is a strange notion to many people. That is why the Buddha said his Dhamma has never been known to the world.
- How do those *Brahmā* get such "invisible bodies" that are not subject to any suffering (illnesses, injuries, hunger, etc.)?

Births in *Arūpāvacara Brahma* Realms

5. As briefly mentioned in the previous post, one can be born in those four realms by cultivating the four highest *jhāna*. **In fact, those who cultivate such *jhāna* enjoy the same life experiences of *arūpāvacara Brahmā* (with just the ability to think.)**

- *Anāriya yogis* get to such *jhāna* using various techniques, but **abstaining from sensual pleasures is a requirement.** Such *anāriya yogis* normally stay away from sensual attractions by living in forests, especially away from women. But Noble Persons (*Ariyas*) get to such *jhānā* by cultivating wisdom and

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comprehending the dangers of sensual pleasures. Once getting to *Ariya jhāna*, one could associate with even the most beautiful women without being tempted. For example, an *Anāgāmi* has no *kāma rāga*.

- The four *arūpāvacara Brahma* realms correspond to optimum levels of *mettā, karuṇā, muditā, upekkhā.*
- For details, see "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: The Four Sublime States" by Nyanaponika Thera. To quote from that article, "*Brahma* is free from hate; **and one who assiduously develops these four sublime states, by conduct and meditation, is said to become an equal of *Brahma*** *(Brahma-samo).* If they become the dominant influence in his mind, **he will be reborn in congenial worlds, the realms of *Brahma***. Therefore, these states of mind are called *God-like, Brahma-like.*"
- These *arūpāvacara Brahmā* (in the four highest realms) have the "smallest bodies" of all living beings. In the *Abhidhamma* language, they only have the "seat of the mind" (*hadaya vatthu*) for thinking. They do not have any of the five "physical senses" of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, or body touches.

Births in *Rūpāvacara Brahma* Realms

6. *Rūpāvacara Brahmā* have only a "bit more complex bodies" with the addition of two *pasāda rupa* of *cakkhu* and *sota*. They can see and hear, in addition to being able to think. As we know, the 16 *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms lie below the 4 *arupāvacara Brahma* realms. See, "31 Realms of Existence."

- Note that *rūpāvacara Brahmā* **can "see" and "hear' without having physical eyes and ears** like humans. I explained in the previous post ("Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis.") that we do not see or hear with our physical eyes and ears. Our physical eyes are like cameras that only "take pictures" of the external world for the *gandhabba* trapped inside the dense physical body. Also see, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."
- A human can be assured of birth in a *rūpāvacara Brahma* realm by cultivating *rūpāvacara jhāna*. The 16 realms in *rūpāvacara Brahma loka* correspond to the four lower *jhānā* at various "strengths."
- Even to get to the four lower *jhāna* corresponding to the 16 realms in *rūpāvacara Brahma loka,* **one needs to suppress at least the desire for sensual pleasures (or "*kāma rāga*") in addition to abstaining from immoral deeds (*dasa akusala*.)** That is why all *suttā* on *jhāna* have a verse with, "*vivicceva kāmehi, vivicca akusalehi dhammehi.*" or "withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from *akusala* thoughts." See, "Jhānic Experience in Detail – Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."

Why Do People Cultivate *Jhāna*?

7. Sensory pleasures due to "close contacts" (eating, smelling, sex, and other "bodily-comforts") come at a price, as we discussed in #3. Such "close-contacts" are possible ONLY with a complex, dense body. However, such a dense body is subjected to various types of ailments.

- **In addition**, the ability of the physical body to provide such sensory experiences GO DOWN with age. At old age, the taste buds don't work well. One may not be able to smell the roses as one used to. And, one's sexual capabilities go down as well. One can clearly see such drawbacks.
- **Furthermore, there is also a hidden danger in such cravings for sense pleasures.** The pursuit of sense pleasures INEVITABLY lead to immoral deeds sooner or later. People kill, rape, steal, and lie to get possession of "material things" that provide those sensory contacts. Such actions are *papa kamma* (or strong immoral deeds) that can lead to bad results (*vipāka*). In particular, they can lead to rebirth in the "bad realms' or *apāyā*.
- **Ancient *yogis* (even before the Buddha,) realized that sense pleasures (*kāma assāda*) have such bad consequences.** They saw that by staying away from such sense pleasures, one could GET INTO *jhānic* states. So, they went deep into forests, stayed away from society in general, and from women in particular. They focused their minds on "neutral objects" such as one's breath or a *kasina* object. With such techniques, they were able to get to both *rūpāvacara* and *arupāvacara jhānic* states.

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Why Are Such "Non-Buddhist" *Jhāna* Techniques Are Useless in the Long Run?

8. We remember that ascetic Siddhattha (before attaining the *Buddhahood*) learned such mundane *jhāna* techniques from two *yogis*, Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. The *Bodhisatta* realized that such techniques do not remove *kāma rāga* from one's mind, but can only SUPPRESS them.

- While cultivation of such a *jhāna* will lead to rebirths in a *Brahma* realm, the existence in that realm WILL END once that *kammic* energy runs out. Then one can be reborn in an *apāya* in the future. **The only PERMANENT solution is to end the rebirth process.** That DOES NOT mean extinction, because there is no "soul-type entity" going through the rebirth process. See, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream." For a deeper analysis, "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) – Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering."
- The *Bodhisatta* spent six more years pursuing the way to permanently REMOVE *kāma rāga* (and other defilements) from the mind.

The Permanent Solution Is *Nibbāna*

9. Upon attaining the *Buddhahood*, the Buddha realized that one must **first understand the unfruitfulness and dangers** in pursuing such sensory pleasures. That is the ONLY way to PERMANENTLY remove cravings for sensual pleasures and to avoid rebirths in the *apāyā* due to INEVITABLE temptations in *kāma loka*.

- Just with that **understanding of the *anicca* nature, one becomes a *Sotāpanna*** and be free of rebirths in the *apāyā*. That is when one ENTERS the Noble Path.
- Then, by following that Noble Path, one can become free of *kāma rāga* first, and stop rebirths anywhere in *kāma loka* at the *Anāgāmi* stage.
- The main point is that birth in ANY of the 31 realms of this world WILL end up in death. Even the "relatively peaceful" life in a *Brahma* realm will end in death. There is no refuge anywhere in the 31 realms. Therefore, the ONLY permanent solution is to stop any and all rebirths. Of course, that process starts with understanding the overall rebirth process among the 31 realms. That understanding is embedded in the Four Noble Truths (and *Tilakkhaṇa*.)
- We are going through this process to get a better understanding of that grand scheme of things.

2.2.5 Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness

August 29, 2020

Kammic energy leads to consciousness in all living beings. In this post, I am going not going to refer to a specific type of consciousness (like *cakkhu viññāṇa* or *mano viññāṇa*) but **just the ability to generate any types of *viññāṇa* in any of the 31 realms.** Let us first recap our discussion so far in the new section, "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach,"

Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness

1. In this new section, we discuss Buddha Dhamma using a novel approach. One critical point is that the essence of ANY living being is a set of "sensing faculties" created by *kammic* energy.

- As we remember from the previous few posts, the main difficulty with the scientific community's current efforts is identifying how feelings (consciousness) can arise in the brain made of inert matter. As some philosophers have pointed out, consciousness is NOT derived from matter. See, "Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview."

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- In simple terms, the Buddha said that there is **a set of elementary units of matter** with the ability to facilitate CONSCIOUSNESS. See "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis."
- **Those are the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of mind) and a set of five *pasāda rūpa* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya*).** These are UNIQUE bits of matter with the ABILITY to EXPERIENCE things in the world. **I cannot emphasize enough the importance of comprehending the uniqueness of these six entities.**
- *Kammic* energy leads to consciousness because *kammic* energy alone can create those six entities.

Why Life Cannot Be Created in a Laboratory

2. Those six "sensing faculties" (unimaginably small) can ONLY be created by *kammic* energy. That *kammic* energy is produced in THOUGHTS (specifically *javana citta*.) We will discuss this in detail in the future.

- That is why it will NEVER be possible to CREATE life (a conscious living being) in a laboratory. Consciousness does not arise in a chemical process or by increasing the processing power of computer chips.
- *Kammic* energy leads to consciousness, and our minds create *kammic* energy. **Thus, we create our own future lives!**

Seeds (*Kamma Bīja*) for New Existences

3. It is *kammic* energy that produces seeds (*kamma bīja*) that give rise to a new set of "sensing units" for future existences.

- "Good seeds" generated by good *kamma* (*puñña abhisaṅkhāra*) can give rise to good rebirths (in human and higher realms.) Births in the highest four *Brahma* realms are due to *āneñja abhisaṅkhāra*, a special kind of "good *abhisaṅkhāra*."
- Bad rebirths (in the four lowest realms or *apāyā*) arise due to "bad seeds" generated by immoral kamma (*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*)
- However, a seed cannot germinate and give rise to life if one has lost the craving for doing the corresponding *kamma*. Thus, one attains Nibbāna by cultivating *paññā* (wisdom) and getting rid of cravings (*taṇhā*.) We will discuss that later, but it has been discussed in other sections.
- First, let us discuss different types of *kamma bīja* with some examples.

Good Seeds and Bad Seeds

4. Person X likes to enjoy sensory pleasures to the extent that he/she is willing to do any immoral deed to enjoy them. If X kills a human, that mindset is very powerful and creates a *kamma bīja* that can lead to rebirth in hell. If X kills an animal that generates a "smaller *kamma bīja,*" but if X keeps killing animals regularly, that *kamma bīja* will get stronger and, at some point, will be strong enough to lead to rebirth in hell.

- There is a person Y who engages in good deeds. That person enjoys feeding those in need (*bhikkhus*, poor people, animals, etc.) He/she would instinctively help those who fall into hard times and is able to forgive actions by others. Such a person builds up strong good *kamma bīja* to give rise to rebirths in human and higher realms.
- Then there is person Z who has understood the drawbacks of sensory pleasures. He/she has a natural tendency to cultivate *jhāna* by minimizing engaging in sensory pleasures and *dasa akusala* in general. The first four *jhāna* fall under *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* and can lead to rebirths in the 16 *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms. The higher *jhāna* fall under *āneñja abhisaṅkhāra* and can lead to births in the 4 *arupāvacara Brahma* realms.

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- Those are a few examples of the types of *abhisaṅkhāra* (or *kamma*) that keep us bound to the rebirth process. They ALL fall under "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" in the *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* process. In the detailed explanation of that step, those *saṅkhāra* are described as "*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra, puñña abhisaṅkhāra*, and *āneñja abhisaṅkhāra*." See, #11 through #13 in "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – What Is "Intention"?."
- Our own *kammic* energy leads to consciousness (in future lives.) That consciousness may arise in any of the 31 realms.

The essence of a Living Being – The "Primary Sensory Units"

5. "Awareness" happens at *hadaya vatthu*, the seat of the mind. "Seeing" happens at the *hadaya vatthu* with the help of *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*. Similarly, "hearing" happens at the *hadaya vatthu* with the help of *sota pasāda rūpa.* The other three physical senses work the same way with *ghāna, jivhā,* and *kāya pasāda rūpa*.

- In addition, *hadaya vatthu* can recall past memories.
- Based on those six types of external signals, thoughts arise in the *hadaya vatthu*.
- That happens in EVERY living-being. Every living being has a maximum of six of those "sensory units."

Living Beings in Most Realms Have Only "Primary Sensory Units"

6. In the post, "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis," we noted that living beings in 20 of the 31 realms in this world have only such sensory units and nothing else (no physical bodies.)

- The 16 *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms have *hadaya vatthu* and two *pasāda rūpa*.
- The 4 *arūpāvacara Brahma* realms have only the *hadaya vatthu*. They all have just a "mental body" and no "solid body" like ours. But our *gandhabba* is similar to them.

Dense Bodies In *Kāma Loka*

7. The situation is the 11 realms of *kāma loka* is more complex. That complexity is necessary to accommodate "close sensory contacts" of smell, taste, and body touch. Such contacts are not possible for the mental body (*gandhabba*); see, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."

- A *gandhabba* needs to get into a womb and make a physical body to experience "close sensory contacts" of taste, smell, and touch. That process is described in "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- However, it is not the dense body that FEELS or EXPERIENCES those sensory contacts. Sensory experience happens ONLY at *hadaya vatthu* with the help of the corresponding *pasāda rūpa.*
- Depending on the type of the "physical body," there are different mechanisms to transfer the information generated in the "physical body" to the corresponding *pasāda rūpa* and then to the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind.)
- However, if the "mental body" (*gandhabba*) comes out of a human's physical body, it can see and hear without having eyes and ears. There are many verified accounts of such Out-of-Body Experiences. See, "Mental Body (Gandhabba) – Personal Accounts" and "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manōmaya Kāya."
- Also, see the Wikipedia articles, "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Out-of-body experience" and "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Near-death experience."

Our Dense Physical Bodies are Just "Shells"

8. Out dense physical bodies weighing tens of kg (or hundreds of pounds) DO NOT sense ANYTHING.

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- The crucial mental body (*gandhabba*) with the six "sensing units" is "trapped" inside the physical body. That allows it to experience the three additional senses of smell, taste, and touch. However, it also forces the *gandhabba* to experience "seeing" and "hearing" with physical eyes and ears.
- **Therefore, a *gandhabba* trapped inside a physical body cannot sense ANYTHING without the aid of the five physical senses AND the brain.**
- The (physical) sensory faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) can be considered mechanical instruments to capture external signals. For example, eyes are like two cameras taking pictures.
- It is the brain that analyzes the sensory signals captured by those five "sensing equipment." But the brain does not EXPERIENCE anything either. It breaks down those signals to a level that can be received by the five *pasāda rūpa*. Then each *pasāda rūpa* transfers that information to the *hadaya vatthu*. That is when we EXPERIENCE such a signal.
- Therefore, the brain is just a very fancy computer. We will discuss the role of the brain in the "Buddhist model" in a future post.

Complexity In the *Kāma Loka*

9. The simplest in the *kāma loka* are the 6 *Deva* realms. *Devas* are born with "full physical bodies." Such "bodies" are like ours but much more subtle. We can't see *Devas* either.

- On the other hand, we know a lot about how our physical bodies and brains work, thanks to many scientists' efforts over the past hundred years or so. Animal bodies work pretty much the same way.
- However, scientists have the wrong idea that such experiences are FELT in the brain, and it is the brain that generates our thoughts. Some scientists an philosophers are beginning to realize that, as we discussed to some extent in "Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview."

Summary

10. I am going through this slowly because it is critically important to understand the basic structure of "our world."

- "Our world" is much more complex than what we can directly experience. We can only "see" two realms: the human and animal realms.
- That "wider world view" can be seen ONLY by a Buddha with a highly-purified mind. It covers 31 realms in total.
- Kammic energy leads to consciousness (or life) in all those realms.
- It is necessary to understand how births occur in each realm. As we discussed above, the root causes are the types of *kamma* we commit based on how we think, speak, and take actions based mainly on *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*. We do not have DIRECT control over *mano saṅkhāra*. They arise automatically due to our *gati* (character/habits.) But we CAN control *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* and thereby control our *gati*. See, "Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births – Saṃsappanīya Sutta."
- We have discussed those aspects in other sections. But we will go through some of them as needed here. I will also refer to other sections since it is not possible to cover everything in one section.

2.2.6 Brain and the Gandhabba

September 6, 2020

- Mind Is Not in the Brain
- Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy
- Persistent Vegetative State – Buddhist View

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- Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory
- Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body

2.2.6.1 Mind Is Not in the Brain

September 6, 2020

The mind is not in the brain, but the brain is essential for the mind to work as long as the *gandhabba* is inside the physical body.

Relevant Summary of Previous Posts

1. In the previous posts, we discussed that only in the *kāma loka* that some living beings have physical bodies with brains. *Brahmā* in 20 realms do not have physical bodies or brains. See "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis," "Sensual Pleasures – The Hidden Suffering," and "Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness."

- Of course, modern science is not aware of realms other than the human and animal realms. That is one reason that most scientists believe that consciousness arises in the brain.
- Per Buddha Dhamma, humans and animals (and other beings in *kāma loka*) REQUIRE physical bodies to have access to close sensory contacts (taste, smell, and touch.) That, in turn, REQUIRES a brain to control the movement of heavy body parts. See, "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba."

  We will discuss that more in the next post.
- But let us first review the current status of scientific research on the efforts by scientists to explain consciousness to arise in the brain.
- We already discussed the following roadblock facing "materialistic science": How can **feelings** arise in inter matter? That is the "hard problem of consciousness" that philosopher David Chalmers discussed in the video in #9 and #10 of "Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview."

Mind Is Not in the Brain

2. The following video summarizes the current status of scientists' attempts to prove that consciousness arises in the brain. Many of them, who spent their whole lives looking into this issue, have concluded the following: **The brain does play a role in consciousness. But consciousness does not arise in the brain.**

WebLink: youtube: Neuroscientific Evidence: Irreducible Mind (Part 1)

- @ 3 minutes: Neuroscientist Wilder Pennfield argued that "**the causal force is missing** within the brain that can account for the **actions and intentions**." How can **intention** arise in inter matter?
- @ 4 minutes: There are correlations between the mind and the brain, but **correlation does not mean causation.** That is where science got stuck. However, it is fully explained in Buddha Dhamma. The brain is just a conduit facilitating body movements. A *gandhabba* does not have a brain. **The brain becomes necessary only where a solid physical body is required for close sensory contacts for sensory pleasures (*kāma assāda*.)**

More Comments About the Above Video

3. Around 5 minutes, the author explains the "Visual Binding Problem," which is a part of a broader "unified perception." This is important.

- Let me give you another example. Suppose you are in a restaurant and see someone entering the restaurant. It is an old friend you have not seen any many years. But how long does it take you to recognize who it is, and even recall some "good old memories"?

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- I discussed that in detail at #4 through #6 in "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- The mind is not in the brain and can work MUCH faster than the brain. In the above examples, recognition happens not in the brain, but in the mind. We will discuss details in future posts.

4. At 8 minutes: Instead of the brain giving rise to mind, the evidence is emerging that **the mind can affect the brain.** The brain has this property called "plasticity." That means our thoughts can make some brain changes, especially "re-wiring of neural connections" and even repairing some minor damages to the brain.

- The video in the following section a presentation by neuroscientist Dr. Schwartz mentioned here. He has successfully treated some patients with Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder (OCD.)
- In fact, the correct mindful meditation (*Satipaṭṭhāna* or *Ānāpānasati*; not breath meditation) can vastly improve brain function in all of us to help grasp deeper aspects of nature. That is what entails following the Eightfold Noble Path. We will get to that in the future.
- At 13:45 minutes: A study found that it is possible to control one's sexual urges by "applying the mind." They were able to control brain activity with "mind control."
- It is clear that the mind is not in the brain because it can affect brain activity.

You Are More than Your Brain

5. More and more scientists and philosophers realize that "you are more than your brain." A human the freedom and capability to change his/her destiny.

- Dr. Jeffrey Scwartz is a neuroscientist who has developed a novel program to treat OCD successfully. He has written several books on the subject of the mind, including Ref. 1 below.
- Here is a recent presentation of Dr. Schwartz on the subject:

  WebLink: youtube: Jeffrey Schwartz: You Are More than Your Brain - Science Uprising Extra Content
- Dr. Schwartz was one of the early scientists to become aware that we (our minds) are more than our brains. He did most of his studies in the 1980s and 1990s. Since then, there have been more studies conducted using new techniques for brain imaging.

More Evidence against Materialism

6. The current Western tradition of thinking is that the only things that really exist are the atoms and the void. Everything else, including the mind, is reducible to matter made of atoms. That world view is "materialism."

The following presentation by Dr. Michael Ignor provides a summary of evidence against materialism from recent research by many neuroscientists.

WebLink: youtube: Michael Egnor: The Evidence against Materialism

- At 5 minutes: Cutting a brain in half does not lead to significant changes in a person. If the brain gave rise to consciousness, one would expect such a drastic change would lead to a huge change in personality (and perhaps to two personalities). But the changes were insignificant (except that it relieved the patients of susceptibility to seizures.
- At 7 minutes: Research of Dr. Wilder Pennfield showed that probing various areas of the brain could not affect personal characteristics, such as intellect, political biases, habits, etc. There is a "core personality" that does not depend on the brain. But, of course, if the brain is dead, then such attributes cannot manifest.
- More evidence that the mind is not in the brain!

Those in Vegetative States May Be Fully Conscious

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7. Another notable fact from the video by Dr. Ignor is that some of the "brain-dead" patients in "vegetative states" could be fully conscious.

- At 9:30 minutes: People who are "brain dead" and are in vegetative states may be "alive inside." They are just not able to express their feelings because they cannot talk or move body parts. A discussion of Dr. Owen's brain scan studies (mentioned by Dr. Ignor) is in Ref. 2. **There are aspects of the mind that cannot be destroyed even with severe brain damage.** I will discuss this more in the next post.
- At 15:30 minutes: Libet experiments on free will that seemed to suggest that humans do not have free will. Also, see, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation!" More information providing evidence that humans do have free will in Ref. 3.
- At 19:30 minutes: The book by Bennett and Hacker referred to y Dr. Ignor is Ref. 4.
- At 22:20 minutes: Importance of intentionality that we touched on in #2 above. How can intentionality arise from the lifeless matter in a brain?

Teleology – Purpose of Things in the World

8. At 25 minutes, the discussion turns to teleology. Teleology is about "a reason or explanation for something to exist." See Ref. 5. An acorn grows into an oak tree and not to an apple tree. The blueprint for bringing an oak tree into existence is in that tiny seed. Of course, the acorn needs to germinate and extract all necessary material from the earth to grow into that huge oak tree.

- So, even scientists like Dr. Ignor cannot explain the ROOT CAUSES for either an oak tree or a human being comes into existence. Therefore, they assign that to a Creator. In their view, it is the Creator that designs EVERYTHING in this world. That is the "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Teleological argument" for the existence of a Creator. It sometimes goes as "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Intelligent Design."
- As Dr. Ignor asks around 26 minutes what the purpose of an eye is. He would say that it was created by the Creator for humans to see. He says that there is a "grand mind" (that of the Creator God) behind the universe. That is because Dr. Ignor is not aware of the "previously unknown theory of the Buddha."
- But the Buddha said that we create our own future eyes because we like to enjoy seeing things in this world! Again, this needs to be explained in a bigger picture.
- An acorn giving rise to an oak tree is very similar to a *gandhabba* giving rise to a human body. That *gandhabba* is unimaginably smaller than an acorn but has the blueprint for the human body. The *gandhabba* starts building the body while inside the mother's womb, by taking nutrition from the mother. Once born, the baby starts eating food, and that is how the body of a full-grown adult comes into being. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

If Mind Is Separate From the Body, What Happens to It at the Death of the Body?

9. Therefore, there is strong evidence emerging to support the idea that the mind is not in the brain, even though the brain helps facilitate the mind's workings. That gives rise to the following critical question. **If the mind is something more than the brain (and the physical body), what happens to that mind when the body dies?**

- For those who have not been exposed to true Buddha Dhamma, there could be only one option. That is the ASSUMPTION that the mind (stated to be "soul") must be going to either heaven or hell forever.
- But as we have already discussed, the mind creates "seeds" for future lives. Many such "seeds" exist for many future lives (some with physical bodies and brains) for ANY living being. That is why we all have been in this rebirth process from a time that cannot be traced back. See, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."

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- The "previously unheard Dhamma" is that living beings themselves are responsible for creating SEEDS for their future lives. Furthermore, living beings are also responsible for creating their environment to live in! That includes living things without consciousness (like vegetation) and the whole environment for all of that to exist. This is a VERY DEEP subject. But we will first address the issue of living beings creating the seeds their future lives.
- Both aspects are explained with *Paṭicca samuppāda*. We will, of course, first focus on human beings and other living beings.

References

1. Jeffrey Schwartz, "You Are Not Your Brain: The 4-Step Solution for Changing Bad Habits, Ending Unhealthy Thinking, and Taking Control of Your Life", (2012)

2. Dr. Owen's brain scan studies are discussed in the following video:

WebLink: youtube: This Neuroscientist Uses fMRI to Communicate With People in a Vegetative State | Freethink

3. Alfred R. Mele, "Free: Why Science Hasn't Disproved Free Will" (2014)

4. M. R. Bennett and P. M. S. Hacker, "Philosophical Foundations of Neuroscience" (2003)

5. Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Teleology."

2.2.6.2 Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy

September 11, 2020

Gandhabba in a Human Body Senses Differently Than When Outside

1. The six critical entities in the *gandhabba* (***hadaya vatthu* and the five *pasāda rūpa* of *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya***) are responsible for the **amazing feats of cognition.** See, "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis,"

- As we have discussed, a *gandhabba* has only a trace of matter and is invisible. It is essentially an invisible "mental body."
- **When outside the physical body, a *gandhabba* can hear and see by itself without having eyes and ears like us.** This idea of a living being without a physical body like ours is hard to imagine for us. But *Brahmā* in the higher 20 realms have such "invisible bodies."
- Of course, a *Brahma* or a *gandhabba* cannot taste, smell, or touch, since they do not have "dense solid bodies."
- **But when trapped inside a physical body, a *gandhabba* can experience all five sensory inputs. However, now the *gandhabba* depends on the brain to receive those sensory inputs.**
- One way to get the basic idea is to look at the following analogy. **This analogy works ONLY for the five physical senses.**

A Soldier in a Totally-Enclosed Military Tank

2. Visualize a soldier operating a fully-enclosed military tank. I do not even know whether such "totally-enclosed" military vehicles exist. But one can visualize it. Consider a tank that is essentially a big metal box without even a single window. It has video cameras and microphones mounted on it to capture the scenes and sounds. It also has guns mounted on it that can shoot heavy artillery shells over long distances.

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- Let us also assume that the tank's movement is also fully automated, i.e., the soldier cannot drive it manually.
- There is a sophisticated computer system that controls all those activities. The soldier makes the decisions on where to go, what to shoot at, etc.
- Now, suppose the computer system breaks down completely. The soldier is fully alive but he/she is incapable of knowing what is happening outside. He/she is also incapable of moving the tank or firing its guns. To someone looking from outside, it appears that the tank is "lifeless." It is no different from a nearby rock.

A *Gandhabba* inside a Physical Body

3. In the same way, a *gandhabba* trapped inside a physical body cannot see, hear, taste, smell, or touch anything without the aid of the brain.

- The physical body, just like the military tank, cannot "sense anything." But it has a set of five "instruments" to interact with the external world (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and body).
- Then there is a brain, just like the on board computer in the military tank, that controls those body parts. It performs two types of tasks. (1) Process external signals coming through those five body parts and pass them to the *gandhabba* inside. (2) It also carries out the instructions given by the *gandhabba* to control those body parts. Thus the *gandhabba* speaks and controls body movements with the aid of the brain.
- In the case of extensive brain damage, the *gandhabba* will not be able to get any information from outside the body. It will also not be able to speak or move body parts either because those tasks are also accomplished by the brain.
- That is why a "brain-dead person" in a "vegetative state" shows no sign of life, as we will discuss.

How Can a *Gandhabba* Move a Heavy Physical Body?

4. Again the "tank analogy" is helpful. The soldier does not have the energy to move the tank. That energy comes from the fuel in the tank. Therefore, the tank will become "lifeless" if fuel runs out. The computer system will also not have the power to run.

- The physical body, just like the tank, cannot move without energy. That energy comes from the food that the human eats.
- Furthermore, the brain cannot function either without having enough energy provided by the food human eats.
- It turns out that the brain consumes roughly 25% of the energy produced by food digestion. That gives an idea of the immense workload on the brain. It has to process all the information coming in through the five senses AND also to move body parts to speak and to carry out other bodily actions.

More Comparisons Of the Two Cases

5. More bodily actions can be visualized that way. For example, *gandhabba* cannot throw a stone. But *gandhabba* in a human body can get the physical body to throw a stone (with the help of the brain.) It takes a lot of energy to throw a stone. But that energy does NOT come from the *gandhabba*. that comes from the food consumed by the physical body.

- Correspondingly, the soldier cannot throw the heavy artillery. But he/she can set up the computer to aim and fire the guns. The energy to propel heavy projectiles comes from the fuel in the military tank.

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- If the computer breaks down, the soldier will be helpless and will not be able to see or hear what is happening outside. Furthermore, he/she will not be able to move the tank or shoot artillery shells. That is just like a "brain-dead person" in a vegetative state (see below.)

Why Can't the *Gandhabba* "See-Through" the Physical Body?

6. If a *gandhabba* outside a human body can travel through walls, and see/hear through walls, why cannot it see and hear without the physical eyes and ears while inside the physical body?

- That is a manifestation of *kammic* energy dictated by the purpose of the physical body. The physical body arises to provide a way for the *gandhabba* to experience close contacts of taste, smell, and touch. That NECESSITATES its entrapment inside the physical body.
- Again, the military tank analogy is useful. The soldier will be able to see and hear without the aid of that tank-mounted equipment when he is outside the tank. But while being INSIDE the tank, he CANNOT see outside without the use of the equipment. In the same way, the *gandhabba* is TOTALLY shielded once inside the physical body.

7. There is another aspect of why a *gandhabba* in a human body becomes isolated. *Kammic* influences block the *gandhabba* from "seeing through the physical body." That is a mechanism to make the physical body subject to *kamma vipāka*.

- Some people incur brain damage due to *kamma vipāka*. Being trapped inside one's own body and not being able to communicate with others is unimaginably harsh, as we will see below.
- In general, "being trapped inside a heavy body" is one mechanism for humans to "pay for the privilege" of having a physical body to enjoy sense pleasures. Without exception, those who have had out-of-body experiences describe a joyful feeling of "lightness."

What Happens if the Computer System (Brain) Malfunctions?

8. There are two possible scenarios in each of the cases. Let us consider the tank analogy first.

a) **If part of the on board computer-controlled circuitry malfunctions**, the soldier may be able to do only certain tasks. For example, suppose the circuitry that controls automated driving and the guns malfunctions. Then he would be unable to do anything with the tank (either to move it or to fire the guns.) But he may be still capable of seeing and hearing what is happening outside.

b) **If the computer completely breaks down**, then the soldier would be completely isolated. He will not see or hear what is happening outside, in addition to not being able to do anything with the tank.

9. In the case of a *gandhabba* in a human body, the above two scenarios are analogous to two possible situations for a person in a vegetative state.

a) **If only certain areas of the brain circuitry are damaged (especially the brain stem)**, that person may be able to see and hear but may be incapable of moving body parts to respond to them.

b) **If the brain is totally damaged**, that person may not see or hear AS WELL AS not be able to respond either.

- Yet, the gandhabba inside is alive and well in both those cases, just like the soldier in the tank.
- We will discuss the case of a person in a "vegetative state" in detail in the next post.

How Does A *Gandhabba* See/Hear When Outside a Physical Body?

10. Another possible question is: "How does the *gandhabba* see and hear when outside the human body?"

- It is only in the human (and animal) realms that beings communicate via speech (and bodily gestures). In other realms, living beings communicate directly via *saññā*, one of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*).

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- Not all living beings can communicate with all others via *saññā* (it depends on the realm.) When possible, communications take place via *saññā* generated in one's thoughts.

11. That mode of communication is similar to one's experience with dreams. **In a dream, we do not "hear" what others say in the same way when we hear speech normally, i.e., through the ears.** In a dream, we perceive what they are saying. We perceive *saññā*.

- **We also do not "see dreams" with our eyes, which are closed while we sleep.**
- Here, we need to remember that the "real sensing elements" are not the physical eyes, ears, etc., but the five *pasāda rūpa*: *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā*, and *kāya*. See, "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis."

The Blind Woman Who Could See With an Out-of-Body Experience

12. The following real-life account provides a good understanding of the working of the *gandhabba* in a human body versus outside.

- In some cases, people are born with the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* in good condition, but the optic nerve (or the physical eye itself) may be damaged. In that case, they cannot see because the brain is not getting a signal from the eyes.
- But if the *gandhabba* can come out of the body, it can see by itself. The following video clearly illustrates this situation.

  WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body

13. Note that she had "never seen anything" in her whole life. It seems that either her physical eyes or the optic nerve/visual cortex in the brain had been damaged at birth. But the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* was fully functional. That is why she was able to see when the *gandhabba* came out of her body.

- However, in other cases, one may be born blind because one may not be born with the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*. In that case, even if the *gandhabba* comes out of the body, it would not be able to see.
- All five sensory faculties are in the *gandhabba* or the *manomaya kāya*. Those signals are first processed by the brain before the signals arrive at the corresponding *pasāda rūpa*. Then that *pasāda rūpa* transfers the signal to the *hadaya vatthu* and it is the *hadaya vatthu* that really "sees", "hears", etc. See "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis."

All posts in this subsection at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

2.2.6.3 Persistent Vegetative State – Buddhist View

September 18, 2020; revised September 19, 2020

Some people in "persistent vegetative state" may have awareness per Buddha Dhamma. (1). As long as the physical body is alive, there is life. (2). Depending on the extent of brain damage, awareness of the external world may or may not be there.

What Is a "Vegetative State" or Unresponsive Wakefulness Syndrome?

1. A persistent vegetative state is when a person is awake but showing no signs of awareness for an extended time. Such a patient may have awoken from a coma, but still don't seem to have regained awareness (Refs. 1,2).

- Ref. 1 states, "A vegetative state is when a person is awake but showing **no signs of awareness**."
- According to Ref. 2, a person in a vegetative state "**completely lack cognitive function**."

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- The term "vegetative state" may have come from "vegetable-like" in the sense that the body is obviously alive, but does not show any sign of awareness. A vegetable is also "alive," but of course, does not have any awareness.
- But there is a clear difference between "**being aware**" and "**being able to communicate that one is aware**". Some people classified to be in a "vegetative state" may be aware but not able to communicate that they are aware. This difference is VERY CLEAR in the Buddhist explanation.

There Could be Awareness in a Person Classified to be in a "Vegetative State"

2. Scientists are beginning to realize that there is a **"thinking being" in a human body in a "persistent vegetative state."** In 2010, it was proposed to refer to this condition as *unresponsive wakefulness syndrome* or UWS (Ref. 3.)

- However, many still consider ANY person in a vegetative state to be "clinically dead." Disconnecting life-support is legally allowed.
- In Buddha Dhamma, the issues become much clear. **The *gandhabba* is fully alive inside.** Since the brain's areas controlling body movement and speech are disabled, it cannot show awareness. But depending on the condition of the other areas of the brain, **it may or may not be aware of the surroundings. That means a person in a vegetative state COULD BE fully aware of his/her surroundings just like a normal person.**
- Progress in neuroscience now makes it possible to check whether such a person is aware of the surroundings, even if he/she cannot express that via speech or bodily movements. We will discuss that below. Let us first discuss the general picture per Buddha Dhamma.

A Person in a Persistent Vegetative State – Buddhist Explanation

3. In the previous post, we described the workings of the *gandhabba* (mental body) and the physical body where the brain plays a significant role.

- One part of the brain (neocortex) provides the *gandhabba* with the sensory inputs coming through the physical sense faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body.)
- There is a separate brain circuit (brain stem) that controls speech and bodily movements. Per *gandhabba*'s instructions, that part of the brain controls the movement of body parts.
- We discussed those two aspects using an analogy of a military tank operated by a soldier. Here, an onboard computer has two circuits: One to bring in external video and audio to the soldier. The other part of the computer-controlled circuit drives the tank and fires the guns mounted on the soldier's tank per instructions. See, "Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy."

"Vegetative State" is Proper Terminology If the Brain Is Fully Damaged

4. If there is extensive damage to the onboard computer and all circuits under its control, the soldier is completely isolated. He/she would not be able to see/hear what is happening outside OR to drive the tank or fire its guns.

- Similarly, **if the brain is fully damaged**, the *gandhabba* will not be able to see, hear, taste, smell, or touch (It will also not be able to recall any past events as we will discuss later.) Furthermore, since the brain cannot help with speech or other body movements, the *gandhabba* cannot show any life sign.
- However, the soldier inside the tank is alive. Similarly, the *gandhabba* inside the physical body is also fully alive.

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- It is because that the *gandhabba* is alive that the physical body stays alive. **The physical body can be in that "persistent vegetative state" as long as the *gandhabba* stays inside AND the physical body is on life-support (food and water provided.)**
- **Thus, the term "vegetative state" is appropriate in this case**, since the *gandhabba* cannot respond AND is totally unaware of what is going on. **In *Abhidhamma* terminology, the mind is in the *bhavaṅga* state. There are no "active thoughts" or *citta vithi*.**

If Only the Brain Stem Damaged, *Gandhabba* May Have "Awareness"

5. Now, let us consider the second possible scenario. **If only the brain stem is damaged,** that person may see and hear but is incapable of moving body parts to respond to them.

- In the military tank analogy, this is similar to when the computer circuits for driving and firing of guns are damaged. The video and audio equipment are working, so that the soldier can see and hear what is going on outside, but is unable to move the tank or fire its guns. To someone looking from outside, the military tank appears to be totally disabled.
- Similarly, some people who appear to be in persistent vegetative states may be fully aware of what is going on. They have no abilities of body movements and cannot speak or move even a finger. Thus, they are unable to express anything with words or bodily movements.
- The following video is about a woman in a vegetative state for two years and was able to recover. **During those two years, she heard and saw what was going on.** However, there was "no sign of life" in her other than her vital signs.

  WebLink: youtube: Miracle Drug Wakes Up Woman In A Coma After 2 Years | My Shocking Story

Gandhabba of a Person in a Persistent Vegetative State is Fully Alive in All Cases

6. Therefore, as long as the body's vital functions are intact, the *gandhabba* inside is alive and well. In other words, the fact that the physical body does not decay MEANS that the *gandhabba* inside is alive.

- Of course, if life-support disconnected the physical body will die. Then the *gandhabba* would move out of the dead body.
- Some people in a "vegetative state" may not be able to think in addition to not being able to respond. That is a "strong vegetative state," as discussed in #4. That is similar to a living being in the *asañña* realm with no thoughts or perceptions.
- On the other hand, some who are classified to be in a "persistent vegetative state" may be fully aware of what is happening, as discussed in #5.
- The following amazing video describes the accounts of three people who were in vegetative states for years per #5. They recovered and say that they were able to see or hear everything. But they were incapable of even moving a finger, let alone talk, so they could not acknowledge that they knew what was happening.

  WebLink: youtube: This Guy Came out of a 12-Year Coma and What He Told Amazed Everyone
- Imagine being in a situation like that! Totally helpless. **That is one example of *anatta* nature!** This is why *anicca* means much more that just "impermanence." One can get into situations where one loses any control over one's situation. Most animals are like that throughout their lives. They have to bear whatever happens.

Is There a Way to Check if a Person In a Vegetative Stats Is Aware of Surroundings?

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7. It would be horrible to discontinue life-support for a person who cannot communicate but is fully aware of what is happening. As we saw in the above video, some people in persistent vegetative states CAN see and hear everything. They cannot speak or even make bodily gestures to indicate that they can see and hear.

- Imagine being in such a situation. In some cases, the medical staff and even the family members may be talking about taking away life support! That would be a cruel punishment even though not intended.
- But new imaging technology developments have made it possible to find out whether a given patient is aware, even though unable to communicate. The following video explains the technology. A Neuroscientist Used fMRI to Communicate With People in a Vegetative State:

  WebLink: youtube: This Neuroscientist Uses fMRI to Communicate With People in a Vegetative State | Freethink
- **According to this doctor, about 1 in 5 patients (from a sample of several hundred in his study) were fully aware!** Hopefully, this technique will be adopted in the future before deciding to remove life support.
- Note that the thirst person discussed in the video in #6 (@9.06) underwent this brain scan diagnosis.

The Buddhist Explanations Are Very Clear on Many Moral Issues

8. The prevalent "materialistic view" is making it difficult to understand some critical moral issues with clarity. What we discussed above is just one example.

- Another actively-debated issue is related to the fact that there is no clear understanding of the conception of a baby per materialistic view. The only thing that is universally accepted is that the conception STARTS with the formation of a single cell (zygote) when a sperm cell joins an egg cell in the mother's womb.
- But that zygote is inert. When does it become alive? Some people even say it is not alive until it is born! Yet, one can clearly see that the baby is alive in the womb with the heart pumping.
- In the Buddhist view, the situation is crystal clear. The inert zygote becomes alive when a *gandhabba* "descends to the womb" (*okkanti*) and merges with that zygote. That normally happens within a day or two of sexual intercourse. Thus, the time of conception is well-defined. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

References

1. Brain Foundation article: "Vegetative State (Unresponsive Wakefulness Syndrome)"
2. Wikipedia article: "Persistent vegetative state"
3. S. Laureys et al., "Unresponsive wakefulness syndrome: a new name for the vegetative state or apallic syndrome (2010)"
4. An insightful summary;

   WebLink: youtube: Brain Dead Patients May Not Actually Be Brain Dead
5. Here is a longer video on two subjects. One was in the vegetative state for 20 years before recovering. She recovered in 2004 but remembers others talking about the terrorist attack on 9/11/2001 (@34:30.)

   WebLink: youtube: Woman in a Coma For 20 Year Wakes Up (The Real Sleeping Beauty) | Only Human

All relevant posts at the subsection, "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach." Posts on the connection between the brain and gandhabba (mental body) at "Brain and the Gandhabba."

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2.2.6.4 Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory

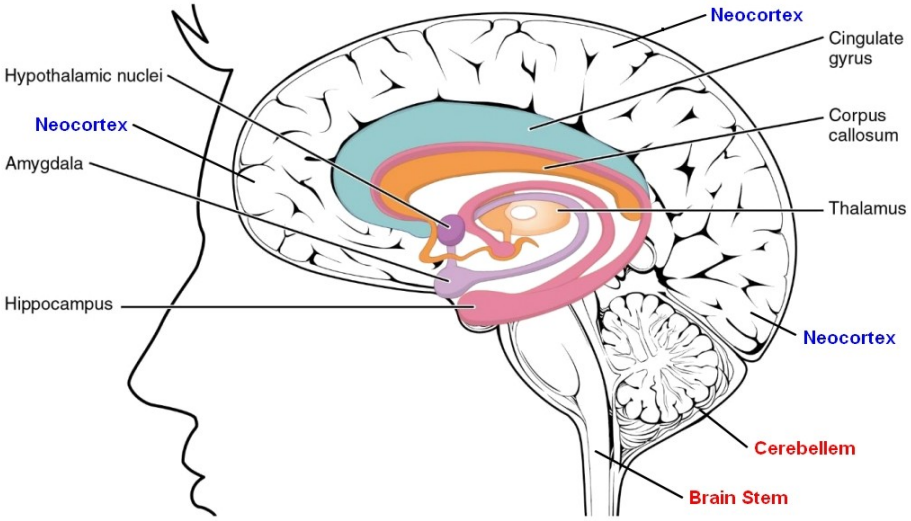
September 25, 2020

Patient H.M. provided a critical clue to the role of the hippocampus in memory preservation. Studies on him and a few other patients point to direct and indirect roles played by the brain in preserving memories. The Buddhist description and scientific descriptions are the same for habitual (procedural) memory but are different for autobiographical (declarative) memory.

Major Components of the Brain

1. The following diagram shows the brain divided into three regions. The following bullet points provide the KEY FUNCTIONS of each area. It is a crude description but provides a simple picture.

- The **cerebellum (indicated in red)** controls **body movements**. The cerebellum also helps with body balance and remembering repetitive tasks. If there is significant damage to the **brain stem**, one is likely to die. The brain stem controls vital functions like breathing.
- The **limbic system** plays a vital role in **memory.** It also deals with emotions. **Components of the limbic system are indicated in black.**



- The **neocortex (indicated in blue)** is the largest area of the brain and manages **sensory inputs such as vision and hearing**. It is also the "**thinking brain**." It wraps around the limbic system, starting from the edge of the cerebellum.

Click on the link to download the figure: "Major Components of the Brain."

Structural Information on the Three Regions of the Brain

2. The above figure shows a cut of the brain in the middle. **Some components of the limbic system have two parts on either side.** For example, the hippocampus and amygdala have two identical structures on the brain's left and right sides. [The **hippocampus** is a small, curved formation in the brain that plays an important role in the limbic system. The **hippocampus** is involved in the formation of new memories and is also associated with learning and emotions. The **amygdala** is a collection of cells near the base of the brain. There are two, one in each hemisphere or side of the brain. This is where emotions are given meaning, remembered, and attached to associations and responses to them (emotional memories). The **amygdala** is considered to be part of the brain's limbic system.]

- On the other hand, the brain stem and cerebellum are single structures.
- The neocortex, in contrast to both those, has different areas specialized for different tasks. Analysis of sensory inputs happens in the back (visual cortex and auditory cortex.) Parts of the frontal cortex manage planning, speech, and related motor control aspects. Neocortex accounts for 76% of the brain.

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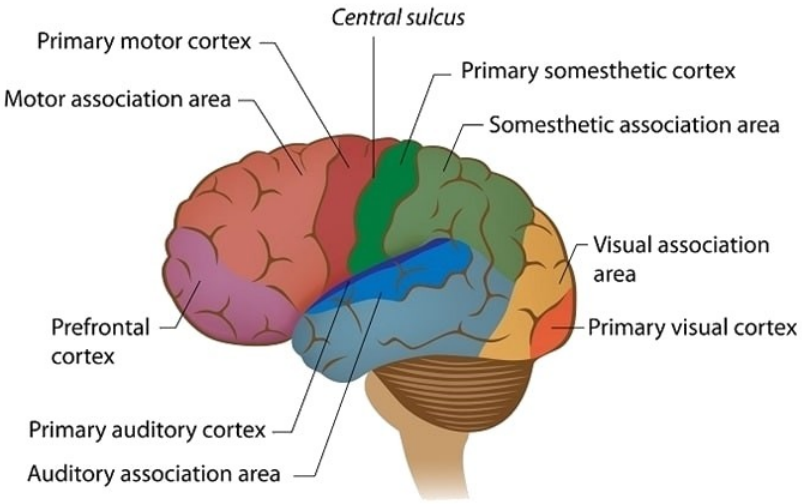
Overview of Our Discussion So Far

3. Now we can get a better visual of our discussion so far in the previous few posts, especially the post on "Persistent Vegetative State – Buddhist View." Let us first go over that post.

- The brain stem regulates breathing, heart rate, blood pressure. Therefore, it is likely that people in vegetative states do not have major damage to their brain stems.
- The loss of motor control (body movements) is likely to be due to damage the cerebellum.



- The visual and auditory cortexes are close to the cerebellum (left figure). Click to download the figure: "Neocortex Areas and Cerebellum." The limbic system is hidden in this view.
- That roughly matches what we discussed in the previous post about different situations of people in vegetative states. For example, suppose there is damage to the cerebellum area, but minimal damage to the visual/auditory cortexes. Such patients may be able to see/hear but not able to respond.
- On the other hand, if visual/auditory cortexes, as well as the cerebellum, are damaged then the patients would not be able to see or hear as well.
- We discussed those two situations in the previous post.

The Opposite of a "Vegetative State" – Living Without Memory

4. Now, let us discuss a few people who were unfortunate to face a different set of problems due to a third region of the brain located close to the middle of the brain. As we can see from the first figure above, the limbic system lies underneath the neocortex and sits above the brain stem/cerebellum area.

- The limbic system is the "emotional center" of the brain because it controls emotions. It has several components, including the hippocampus, amygdala, and thalamus.
- Our focus here is on the hippocampus. As we will see, it plays a major role in memory.
- There are two symmetrically-placed hippocampi on either side of the brain. Both those were surgically removed in a patient who went by the name "patient H.M."

The account of "Patient H.M." – Critical Role of Hippocampus

5. Patient H.M. (or Henry Molaison) suffered from frequent bouts of seizures. In 1953, a surgeon removed his hippocampi (on both sides of the brain) in a desperate attempt to solve that problem. It did solve seizures, but HM was left with a peculiar and devastating memory loss.

- His ability to retain NEW memories was lost. He could remember events up to the operation but could not remember anything for more than a few minutes AFTER the operation. The following video explains it in more detail.

  WebLink: youtube: What happens when you remove the hippocampus? - Sam Kean

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- After extensive studies on patient HM (he died in 2008) and on several other patients with memory loss, neuroscientists have concluded that the hippocampus is the component In the brain that strengthens short-term memories to long-term memories and "pass them over to the neocortex."
- However, they do not know how those memories can be "passed over to another brain region" or how such long-term memories can be kept for long times. In the next post, we will discuss some people's ability to remember past events in extensive detail. **For example, some people can remember what they ate for lunch on a specific arbitrary date several years ago!**
- The extensive study of patient HM is CRITICALLY important since it allows us to pinpoint one brain component responsible for long-term memories.

Nomenclature of Memory

6. There are some standard terms used by neuroscientists that we need to be aware of. That will help us understand the content in the following videos.

- **Autobiographical (or declarative or explicit) memory** is about remembering events, facts, etc. These memories are about dates, events, names, etc. They are the same as *nāmagotta* in Buddha Dhamma. In Buddha Dhamma, *nāmagotta* are not in the brain, but in the "*viññāṇa* plane." There is a "transmitter" in the brain that transmits memories to the "*viññāṇa* plane." Then there is a "receiver" in the brain that makes it possible to recall memories from the "*viññāṇa* plane." More on that in upcoming posts.
- The other is **habitual (or declarative or implicit) memory** or being able to do repetitive tasks like playing the piano, riding a bicycle, brushing teeth, etc. They are related to one's habits. These memories are "hard-wired" in the brain. It appears that the cerebellum in the brain is where such "memory connections" take place.
- **Anterograde amnesia** is the failure to store memories after trauma. **Retrograde amnesia** is the failure to recall memories before the trauma. The loss of the hippocampus leads to anterograde amnesia.

Further Details on Patient H.M.

7. The following video is a bit long. But it provides a lot of information.

WebLink: youtube: Patient HM and Jacopo Annese

- @ 4 minutes: Hippocampi on both sides of the brain surgically removed. After that, he couldn't remember anything that happened minutes ago. Of course, he could remember events before the operation.
- Imagine the hippocampi to be the "transmitter." Suppose it transmits new memories to the "*viññāṇa* plane" where they remain intact forever. Then suppose there is another component (yet unidentified) in the brain that can help recall memories. That "receiver" was working in patient H.M. since he could recall memories formed BEFORE removing the hippocampi.
- We will discuss this "theory" in the next post. But keep this in mind as we continue the discussion here.
- @4:40 minutes: "Declarative memory" is the same as the autobiographical memory mentioned above. "Procedural memory" is the same as "habitual memory."
- @5:40 minutes: The narrator says there is only one book on patient H.M., But there are two more. See Ref. 1.

8. The Nova clip @7 minutes says that memories are created and erased by chemical processes. But that is not consistent with either Buddha Dhamma or recent findings in science.

- @8:40 minutes: The account of H.M.'s medical problems that led to surgery.
- @10 minutes: Patient H.M. could remember everything that happened before his operation.

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- @10:30 minutes: Dr. Milner concluded that the hippocampus MAKES long-term memories. But we will see that there is a better explanation.
- @11:00 minutes: The drawing experiment showed that he could learn repetitive processes. As we will see below, that comes under "habitual memory" (learning a motor skill) controlled by the cerebellum. But, of course, he had no memory of going through those trial runs of drawing the star.
- @12 minutes: Current scientific explanation of memory formation. This explanation is also consistent with Buddha Dhamma. Formation of "habitual memories" or motor skills do appear to take place in the cerebellum.

The Account of Patient E.P.

9. The account of a different person, **patient E.P.** starts @14:30 minutes. In 1992, E.P. suffered a viral infection that seems to have damaged parts of the limbic system. This is very similar to the case of Clive Wearing that we will discuss below.

- @ 17 minutes: Patient E.P. also did not have the ability to retain memories of events AFTER coming down with the infection. But he remembered events before that. Thus, he does not have autobiographical memories of events AFTER the infection.
- @19:30: The virus destroyed areas around the hippocampus. After that damage, any NEW autobiographical information is not retained. But he remembers everything that happened BEFORE that virus-induced damage. This is similar to the case of patient H.M.
- @22 minutes: The narrator says the hippocampus helps "record the memories." But as we will see, the hippocampus transmits those memories to the *viññāṇa* plane.
- @ 24 minutes: Brief discussion of Clive Wearing.
- @25:40 minutes: The account on Dr. Jacopo Annese, who is compiling records of the brains of people with different backgrounds, including those with memory problems.
- @30:10 to 32 minutes: The brain of patient H.M. **The discussion relevant to our topic stops at 32 minutes.**
- @32 minutes to end: Work of Dr. Annese. He is planning to make a repository of complete brain scans of 1000 people.
- Next, we discuss a third patient who lost ALL his memories AND cannot make ANY memories.

Clive Wearing – Musician With Seven Second Memory

10. Clive Wearing was a reputable musician. A herpes virus damaged his brain (around the limbic system) just over a few days in 1985. Unlike patient H.M. and patient E.P., he cannot recall ANY memories. **He can remember only those events within the last seven seconds.** His situation is even worse than that of the previous two patients.

- Therefore, he cannot recognize anyone. Even though he cannot remember the name of his wife, he knows that she is a special person in his life.
- So, he virtually lives "just in that moment"!
- The following video is a bit long. But it provides a lot of information.

  WebLink: youtube: The Man With The Seven Second Memory (Amnesia Documentary) | Real Stories

Important Deductions from Clive Wearing's Case

11. Note in the beginning that he can play the piano, but cannot remember anything that happened even several seconds ago!

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- Therefore, his habitual memory is intact (consistent with his cerebellum undamaged.) But he has anterograde AND retrograde amnesia, i.e., total loss of autobiographical memory. Therefore, he seems to have lost both the transmitter (hippocampus) and "receiver" (cannot be identified yet.)
- @ 6:40 minutes: He says it is like being dead. No thoughts of any kind, except the one that passes by. In that sense, his state is a kind of a "vegetative state" even though he can maintain his physical activities.
- @ 9:30 minutes: The account of how he lost memory in several days in 1985.

12. Here are more notable things from the above video:

- @ 10 minutes: How he lost memory within several days. Apparently, the herpes virus crossed the blood-brain barrier and got into the brain. There is an only one-in-a-million chance of that happening!
- @14 minutes; He says he does not have anything to think about. That is why he initially cried all day long. He says it is like being dead.
- @19 minutes: Every moment is the beginning of consciousness! He repeats that at @43 minutes. No thoughts mean like being dead! He was fortunate to be able to play the piano. **As we mentioned, such "learned memories" remain hard-wired in the cerebellum. That is a notable difference from "episodic memories," which are not (and cannot be) "stored" in the brain.** We will discuss that in the next post. That is also why he can dress by himself, eat and do other "regular activities" by himself.

13. We can learn a lot about the working of the brain and the *gandhabba* by carefully analyzing the accounts of patient H.M., patient E.P., and Clive Wearing.

- We will continue the discussion in the next post.

References

1. **Books on patient H.M.:** Philip J. Hilts, *Memory's Ghost* (1996). Suzanne Corkin *Permanent Present Tense: The Unforgettable Life of the Amnesic Patient, H. M.* (2013). Luke Dittrich *Patient H.M.: A Story of Memory, Madness, and Family Secrets* (2017).
2. **Book on Clive Wearing:** Deborah Wearing, *Forever Today* (2005).
3. One could Google and find much more information on any of these topics. I have provided just enough material to get the basic idea.

All posts in this section at, "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

2.2.6.5 Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body

October 2, 2020; revised October 3, 2020

Memory preservation and recall involve two components in the brain per Buddha Dhamma. We identify the "transmitter" as the hippocampus. The "receiver" is tentatively identified to be in the posterior visual areas of the cortex possibly the precuneus.

Key Points From the Discussion So Far

1. **When outside the physical body**, a *gandhabba* can see, hear, and recall memories "directly." The invisible *gandhabba* sees and hears with the *cakkhu* and *sota pasāda rūpa* and recall memories directly in *hadaya vatthu*. *Kammic* energy creates up to six sensory units, including those three. See "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis."

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- **When inside a physical body**, a *gandhabba* is TOTALLY shielded from outside. But thanks to that solid, dense body, the *gandhabba* can taste, smell, and touch things too. But ALL six types of interactions with the external world now REQUIRE a functional brain.
- Using an analogy of a military tank, we discussed how the brain analyzes the sensory inputs coming through five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) and passes them to the *gandhabba*. See, "Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy."
- Now, let us discuss the critical role played by the brain in the memory preservation/recall process.

Memory Preservation/Recall for a *Gandhabba* Inside a Human Body

2. The sights, sounds, tastes, odors, and touchable objects are in the external world. In the same way, **our memories are also in the external world**.

- Of course, that Buddhist view differs from the scientific view that the memories are "stored" in our brains. See, "Mind Is Not in the Brain."
- The "physical world" or "*rūpa loka*" that is spread out in space (*ākāsa dhātu*) is only one part of our world.
- That physical world has a mental counterpart. **It is the "mental world" or "*nāma loka*" associated with the *viññāṇa dhātu*. Our memories or "*nāmagotta*" (as well as plans and our *kamma bija*) are in that *nāma loka*.**

3. Out of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*), the *rūpakkhandha* encompasses everything associated with the *rūpa loka*. The other four aggregates (*vedanakkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha*, and *viññāṇakkhandha*) are associated with the *nāma loka*. We will discuss that in more detail in upcoming posts.

- As discussed in the above-mentioned posts, eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the physical body brings in the five physical sensory inputs to the *gandhabba* trapped inside the physical body. The brain plays a key role in processing those sensory inputs and passing them to the *gandhabba*.
- Two brain components play critical roles in memory preservation/recall for the *gandhabba* trapped in a physical body. Let us discuss that now.

A Transmitter and a Receiver of Memory in the Brain

4. The five physical senses need to "bring in" external sensory inputs from the physical world. People, animals, and things in the *rūpa loka* can be seen with the eyes. Our physical bodies can touch those things, etc.

- On the other hand, records of our thoughts (*nāmagotta*) need to be first sent out of the physical body to the *nāma loka* (*viññāṇa dhātu*.) Those thoughts arise in the *gandhabba* inside the physical body. As thoughts arise in *gandhabba*, the "transmitter" in the brain transmits them to the outside.
- We can recall those records as needed, with the aid of the "receiver" in the brain.

The Critical Roles of the Transmitter and the Receiver

5. If the transmitter in the brain does not work, then records of one's thoughts cannot be transmitted out to the *viññāṇa dhātu*. That means those records WILL NOT be saved. **If someone's transmitter stops working, the recording of *nāmagotta* will stop.**

- **If the transmitter keeps working, but the receiver stops working, then one will not be able to recall ANY of the memories.** However, one's *nāmagotta* will continue to accumulate in the *nāma loka*.

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- **Of course, if both transmitter and receiver fail, then one's *nāmagotta* will not be saved, AND one will not be able to recall ANY memories.**

6. Now, let us see what happens when that person dies and is reborn with a human body again. If both the transmitter and receiver work in the new life, then the only problem w7uld be the following.

- **If the transmitter had not worked for a certain time period in the previous life, *nāmagotta* for that period would be missing FOREVER.**
- That last scenario would be similar to the case of *nāmagotta* missing for the time spent in the *asañña* realm. For that whole time spent in the *asañña* realm, there would be no thoughts, **and thus no "events" to record.**

Identification of the Transmitter of *Nāmagotta* as Hippocampus

7. In the previous post, "Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory," we discussed the case of patient H.M. As explained in #4 in that post, a surgeon removed H.M.'s hippocampus to treat a different medical problem.

- After the surgery, H.M. lost to the ability to recall anything that happened AFTER the operation. But he was able to recall events that took place BEFORE the operation.
- The fact that he was able to recall some memories means that the receiver was working!
- The second clue is that he cannot recall new memories made AFTER the operation, which means the transmitter was removed in operation. Only one small part of the brain (hippocampus) was removed in operation. **Thus it is a clear-cut case that the hippocampus is the transmitter!**
- By the way, patient E.P. discussed in #9 of that same post had the same issue of not recalling only those memories created AFTER an incident. In that case, a virus attacked E.P.'S brain area that contained the hippocampus. Thus his account is also consistent with the hippocampus being the transmitter.

Loss of the Receiver Leads to Complete Loss of Episodic Memories

8. What would happen if the receiver is damaged? Of course, one would not be able to recall anything at all.

- We discussed the case of Clive Wearing in that same post starting at #10. Clive did lose ALL memories. **Thus, it is clear that Clive lost the receiver.**
- However, he lost his memories due to a viral attack just like patient E.P. It was not a specific brain component like for patient H.M.
- There was much more damage to Mr. Wearing's brain than for patient E.P.'s brain. **Some areas in the frontal and temporal lobes and the area around the hippocampus were damaged.** There are many small components around the hippocampus (like the amygdala.) I could not find more specific information on the damaged areas of Mr. Wearing's brain.
- On the other hand, his cerebellum (located in the back of the head) did not have any damage. Thus, he was able to do routine tasks using habitual memory. He was even able to play the piano, as we discussed in that post. As discussed in #12 there, **"learned memories" remain hard-wired in the cerebellum.** His cerebellum did not have any damage
- But he would not recall playing the piano a minute after he finished playing! He could not recall ANY **"episodic memories"** because his "memory receiver" was damaged. His transmitter (hippocampus) was also damaged.

Tentative Identification of the Receiver

9. A recent study monitored various regions of the brain when a subject was asked to recall a past event. I just came across this publication today, October 3, 2020.

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- The authors of the publication state, "..Results showed that initial access was very fast, did not activate the hippocampus, and **involved activation of predominantly posterior visual areas, including the precuneus**."
- As we discussed above in #7, we believe that the hippocampus is the transmitter. Thus, this study is consistent with that.
- The publication is available for free distribution: WebLink: PDF download: Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory-The role of the precuneus-Mazzoni-2019.

Connection to the Ability to Recall Past Lives – Why Scientists Are Wrong

10. Since memories (*nāmagotta*) remain preserved in the *nāma loka* (*viññāṇa dhātu*), they will NEVER be lost. That is why some children can recall their past lives.

- On the other hand, if memories are "stored in the brain," as some scientists speculate, recalling a past life would be impossible. Thus, even if just ONE one numerous past life accounts is correct, that model has to be discarded.
- Of course, those who cultivate *abhiññā* powers can recall MANY past lives. The Buddha recalled how he received "*niyata vivarana*" to become a Buddha from many previous Buddhas who lived billions of years ago! See, "Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?"
- Further evidence is building up from numerous Near-Death-Experience (NDE) studies conducted by heart surgeons. We discussed those problems with the "memories stored in the brain" theory in the post, "Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview."

Buddha Dhamma Is Self-Consistent and Compatible With Scientific Findings

11. Buddha Dhamma is fully self-consistent. See, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency." All the posts at this website are self-consistent and are consistent with the *Tipiṭaka*.

- Over the years, scientific theories kept changing to be consistent with new findings. I predict that science WILL discard the idea that memories remain stored in the brain. It is just a matter of time.
- Another piece of recent evidence is the following. Some people can remember what happened in any ARBITRARILY selected day, even several years ago. It Is as though their memories were digitally recorded.
- Our brains are not digital, as proven in recent years. They do not work the same way as digital computers. It is impossible to "record" events in such detail in our brains.
- We will discuss accounts of some of those people with "perfect memories" in the next post.

All posts in this section at, "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

2.2.7 Our Two Worlds – Rupa Loka and Nāma Loka

October 9, 2020

- Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka
- Rupa and Rupakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta
- Response to a Sensory Stimulus – Role of Gati/Anusaya
- Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event
- Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka – Two Parts of Our World

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2.2.7.1 Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka

October 9, 2020; revised October 10, 2020 (added the video in #7)

Autobiographical memory (*nāmagotta*) remains preserved in *nāma loka* (mental world.) Material things are in the *rūpa loka* (material world.)

Our Two Worlds – *Rūpa Loka* and *Nāma Loka*

1. Living beings enjoy material things in the *rūpa loka*. We are all familiar with our material world (*rūpa loka*), which has "things" that we can see, hear, taste, smell, and touch.

- We also enjoy RECALLING past experiences and also recalling anticipated future events (desires or expectations.) Both those types remain in our mental world (*nāma loka*.)
- A *satta* (living being) results when attaching to either of the two. See #6 of "Me" and "Mine" – The Root Cause of Suffering."

Autobiographical Memory Versus Habitual Memory

2. When we say "we remember" something, that memory could be of one of two things.

- We remember past events like attending a wedding or a funeral, the birth of a child, etc. that is autobiographical memory. A memory of what one ate for dinner on any arbitrary day, even years ago, fall into the same category. Everything that you did from the moment of waking up to going to bed goes into **autobiographical memory**.
- On the other hand, remembering how to ride a bike (or play the piano) is also a memory. Even if you don't ride a bike for many years after learning it, you can recall that memory fairly quickly later on. It would not be like learning to ride a bike for the first time in your life. Such a "capability" is a **habitual memory**.
- There is recent evidence that some people have exceptional abilities with **autobiographical memory**. They can recall what happened on any arbitrary day within the past several years in great detail. Let us discuss that now.

Highly-Superior Autobiographical Memories (HSAM)

3. These studies started with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000's about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onwards. Since then, scientists have studied more people with that ability.

- Scientists have coined the term Highly-Superior Autobiographical Memories (HSAM, pronounced H-SAM) to describe their abilities.
- The following video illustrates how astounding their memories are:

  WebLink: youtube: Endless Memory, Part 1

Notable Facts

4. It starts with Louise Owen's account. Note that around 2 minutes, she says she "scanned through April 21 of that year to April 21, 1992." It is like playing back a recorded file. She started on April 21, 2011 (the year she answered that question) and jumped (in her memory) year-by-year until getting to April 21, 1991. We cannot imagine how she did that, but you can see how quickly she "got to that specific date." She said she went through 25 twenty-firsts and zeroed-in on the one in 1991. That is amazing! Of course, we cannot even imagine how she accurately described events on all those arbitrary dates given to her.

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- @ 4 minutes: It is NOT memorization. Instead, it is the same way we can recall what happened a few hours ago. It just comes to our minds. But, of course, we cannot do that for more than a day or two in the past (unless it is a notable event.)
- @ 4:35: The account of Jill Price, the first person to be identified with HASM ability. But she did not want to meet with the others that we will later in the video. She was the only one who was not happy to have that ability (HSAM.)
- @ 4:50 Brad Williams, Rick Barron, and Bob Petrella. @ 5:50, the person checking the account of Bod Petrella got the date wrong, not him!
- @ 6:00 Actress Mary Lou Henner. @ 8:15, she says it is like playing back a DVD! That is not possible with "neuronal connections in the brain" (see below).
- @ 9: 45 The meeting of five of HSAM memory wizards.
- @ 11 minutes: They are all "ordinary people" with no exceptional or unusual capabilities.
- @ 11:50 They "re-live" their recalled experiences.

Brain Scans of Those With HSAM

WebLink: youtube: Endless Memory, Part 2

5. Here is a list of important information from the above video.

- @ 1 minute: MRI scans of HSAM people's brains. Their left temporal lobes and the caudate nucleus (in the limbic system) are somewhat more prominent. As we saw, these are the suspected receiver and transmitters in the brain. See, "Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body."
- Disregard the comment about the possible connection to OCD (Obsessive Compulsive Disorder). Latter studies (see Ref. 2) show that there is no connection.
- @ 6:20: Memories do not need to be "memorable." They remember mundane, unextraordinary things. Bob remembered 19 seasons of Pittsburgh Steelers football games in 19 seconds! They show on the recorded video playback at 7:33 is t Bob played back in his mind a few seconds ago.
- @ 8:45: Do their memories clutter up their minds, i.e., do all those memories hang around in their minds all the time? No. They call any specific memory as needed, just like scanning through a recording. They can "pull up the right information at the right time." Dr. McGaugh says it is a puzzle, but it is NOT a puzzle in the Buddhist explanation. Those memories are fully intact in the *nāma loka*. Those with the ability can extract that information at any time.
- @ 9:35 DNA and other types of testing.

A Recent Account of HSAM With More Information

WebLink: youtube: The woman who remembers everything | 60 Minutes Australia

6. The previous two videos came out soon after finding several people with HSAM abilities. The above video is from 2019 and has further information about two other individuals, Becky and Markie.

- @ 2:10: Becky "re-lives" her old experiences. We saw that in the previous videos too, but this account is more explicit.
- @ 2:50: She can recite any page from any of the seven Harry Potter books. That is truly amazing. She must have read the books very carefully so that each word got "recorded." **It is essential to realize that what is "recorded" as *nāmagotta* are our thoughts**, as they arise.
- @ 5:00: Becky thought everyone could do it. It was a puzzle to her why her Mom could not remember something that happened five years ago!

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- @ 7:00: Out of 60 people identified with HSAM capability since 2008, Becky is the only one with autism.
- @ 7:20: Relevant brain regions of HSAM people are not that unusually large, as initially thought (see #4.) However, there may be more connections between brain areas.
- @ 8:20: Account of Markie Pasternak, **who remembers every day of her life since age 10.**
- @ 10:55: Becky and Markie meet.
- @ 11:00 minutes: **Becky remembers everything from the first year she was born!**
- @ 11:45: Becky is a Harry Potter fan. No wonder she could remember all seven books, page by page.

Current Scientific Hypothesis on Memory Preservation

7. The following short video provides a good idea of the present scientific concept of "memory formation."

WebLink: youtube: How memories form and how we lose them – Catharine Young

- It says memories "form in the hippocampus" and then "transfer" to other regions in the brain. They came up with that hypothesis after studies on patient H.M. As we have discussed, after removing the hippocampus from patient H.M.'s brain, he lost the ability to recall memories formed AFTER the operation. But since he could remember old memories, scientists concluded that those old memories must have been "transferred" to other regions in the brain.
- That is the ONLY way to explain the accounts by patient H.M. within the "memory stored in the brain" hypothesis. However, they have not explained HOW that transfer process takes place. They would have a hard time explaining the abilities of those with HSAM, in particular.
- @ 1 minute: Discussion of synapses and "long term potentiation" or "stabilization of memories." But does not jive with memory recall by those with HSAM. Preservation DOES NOT require repetition. EACH EVENT (like remembering what one ate for dinner) remains preserved. As thoughts ARISE in one's mind, a record is kept instantaneously as *nāmagotta*. That is hard for us to imagine, but many features about *nāma loka* (*viññāṇa dhātu*) are not conducive to our experiences.
- @ 1:20: Memory records are NOT lost. It is only the ability to recall that is lost. However, people with HSAM have a near-perfect ability to recall memories, vividly displayed by Becky in #6 above. She can remember word-by-word that she had read! But it is true that as one gets older, the "receiver" in the brain gets weaker, and therefore the ability will become less with age.

Difference Between Autobiographical and Habitual Memories

8. The cases of Clive Wearing and patient H.M. that we discussed in "Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory" provides a good idea about the difference.

- Clive lost ALL of his past **autobiographical memory**, presumably due to losing both the "transmitter" and "receiver" of *nāmagotta*. But he had perfect **habitual memory** as demonstrated by his ability to conduct daily routines and also being able to play the piano.
- Patient H.M. lost only part of his **autobiographical memory** since he lost only his transmitter (hippocampus.) His **habitual memory** also remained intact.
- The above videos are about people with **exceptional autobiographical memory.** It is likely to be related to better performance of the receiver circuitry in the brain.
- It is a good idea to read previous posts in this series and absorb these key points.

Only Habitual Memories Are Stored In The Brain

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9. As we discussed in "Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory," **habitual memory** involves an entirely different brain region, presumably the cerebellum. These memories get established by repeating a given task over and over until the neural connections become strong (in the cerebellum). **Thus, I contend that the scientific model discussed above in #7 pertains ONLY to habitual memories.**

- Synaptic wirings are indeed responsible for habit formation (see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View "),
- However, it is a stretch to assume that "video-like recordings" of all past events get recorded in neural connections!
- Strengthening of neural circuits DOES NOT happen in autobiographical memory preservation. **A record of each thought or action gets preserved!** Of course, only a few people can recall most of them.

Further Problems With "Autobiographical Memory Storage in the Brain" Hypothesis

10. If autobiographical memory storage is in the brain, **one would lose all such memories at death.**

- However, there is mounting evidence that many people can recall their previous lives. See "Evidence for Rebirth." Even if just one of the thousands of such accounts is true, then the theory of "memory storage in the brain" fails.
- There is more evidence from the out-of-body experiences (OBE) and near-death-experiences (NDE.) Scientists and physicians have studied numerous cases in each category. **How do those experiences result without a physical brain?** See, "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manōmaya Kāya."
- According to Buddha Dhamma, those who cultivate *abhiññā* powers can recall autobiographical memories (*nāmagotta*) with high-precision. They can recall events from previous lives as well. The level of accuracy and how far back in previous lives depend on the practitioner. The Buddha could remember as far back as he wished. **It is the same as with HSAM, but those with *abhiññā* powers can see memory records (*nāmagotta*) of past lives.**

Finally, several years ago, I wrote the following post, which has some additional information: "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)" It has a video on Jill Price, the person to be identified to have HSAM.

References

1. WebLink: PDF download: A Cognitive Assessment of Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory-LePort-2018
2. WebLink: PDF download: Highly Superior Autobiographical Memory-The role of the precuneus-Mazzoni-2019

2.2.7.2 Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta

October 16, 2020; revised October 17, 2020

Rūpa and *rūpakkhandha,* together with *nāma* and *nāmagotta,* help describe two parts of our world: *rūpa loka,* and *nāma loka. Rūpa* (forms) are in the *rūpa loka* (material world), and *rūpakkhandha* includes mental images of ALL *rūpa* that we have ever experienced (but not directly preserved.) The four *nāma* aggregates are preserved in the *nāma loka* (immaterial or mental world) as *nāmagotta.*

Critical Differences Between *Rūpa Loka* and *Nāma Loka*

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1. We are quite familiar with the ***rūpa loka* or the material world**. It has people, animals, trees, Sun, Moon, stars, etc. One distinct feature of the *rūpa loka* is that EVERYTHING has a finite lifetime, i.e., **no permanent existence**. Each "thing" comes into existence, exists for a finite time, and then destroyed. No exceptions.

- **We experience the *rūpa loka* using the five physical sense faculties.** We see "things" with our eyes, hear sounds via vibrations in the air, smell things when tiny particles enter our noses, taste things when they touch our tongues, and feel the touch sensation when things touch our skins.
- Each physical contact involves an interaction of a sensory faculty with external "things" or "*rūpa*" or "forms." **The result is a mental image of a *rūpa* that arises in mind.** The collection of all possible such MENTAL IMAGES is the *rūpakkhandha*. Thus, *rūpa* and *rūpakkhandha* are two different things.

2. Furthermore, *nāma loka* is our "main world." **With that mental image of a *rūpa*, four types of "mental attributes" or "*nāma*" arise in mind: *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*.** Records of only those four "*nāma*" entities are preserved in *nāma loka* as *nāmagotta*. When we recall such *nāmagotta,* we can re-create the corresponding *rūpa* in our minds.

- **We experience the *nāma loka* with the mind, the sixth sense faculty.**
- One unique aspect of *nāma loka* is that **all our thoughts will leave a PERMANENT record (*nāmagotta*) in the *nāma loka***.
- Thus, even though *rūpa* in the *rūpa loka* decay and die, *nāmagotta* in *nāma loka* never die, as stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Najīrati Sutta (SN 1.76)" which states, "*rūpaṃ jīrati maccānaṃ, nāmagottaṃ na jīrati*."
- Until a Buddha explains, humans don't even think much about the ***nāma loka* or the mental world.** It is also called the ***viññāṇa dhātu***.

"Seeing" Is In a Thought (*Cakkhu Viññāṇa*)

3. Let us take a simple example to illustrate this point. Suppose you are looking at an apple on your desk. An apple is a physical object.

- You can see the apple if there is light in the room. When you look at it, light bounces off the apple and enters your eyes. The brain processes that apple's image and passes it over to *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* in the *gandhabba*. The *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* makes contact with *hadaya vatthu* and transfers that image to the *hadaya vatthu*, the "seat of the mind," as we discussed. See, "Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy."
- What we stated above appears in Pāli as, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjāti cakkhu viññāṇaṃ*." That just means *cakkhu viññāṇa* (or seeing) arises when a *rūpa* makes contact with the *cakkhu* (short for *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*.) Here, *paṭicca* [*paṭi* + *ca*] means *cakkhu* and *rūpa* "getting together" or "making contact."

4. Thus, "seeing" is a *cakkhu viññāṇa* (a thought.) We see that apple when a *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises in our mind. This is a fundamental fact, but it is good to make it clear. When we see that apple, a thought arises in mind saying, "it is an apple."

- **The apple that you saw is NOT the same as the apple itself. It is just an image of the apple captured by your eyes. "Seeing" happens in your mind.**
- Every time you see an object, that "image" goes into the "*rūpa aggregate*" or "*rūpakkhandha*." **However, that *rūpakkhandha* is NOT preserved.** Only when you recall memory is that you "regenerate" that "mental image" in your mind. We will discuss that mechanism in upcoming posts.
- **There in no record of *rūpakkhandha* (aggregate of forms) in the *rūpa loka*!** *Rūpa* and *rūpakkhandha* are different entities.

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That Holds for the Other Sense Faculties – The Origin of *Nāmagotta*

5. In the same way, we hear a sound with thought and recall a memory with thought. All six sense faculties work the same way.

- As soon as a thought arises in mind, the critical point is that it is transmitted out to the *nāma loka* where a record of that will stay forever. This may sound astonishing, but that can be shown to be correct. How else would those people with HSAM be able to recall their memories with such precision? See the post, "Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka." Some children can recall their past life and those with *abhiññā* powers can recall many past lives in great detail.
- We will discuss the details of the "memory preservation" process in the future. But it turns out that it is not the *rūpakkhandha* that is preserved, but the other four aggregates: *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. **The four mental aggregates are preserved as a memory record or *nāmagotta*.**
- In fact, that is how the Buddha recalled how he received "*niyata vivarana*" from Buddha Deepankara, who lived many billions of years ago by recalling those "memory records" or *nāmagotta*.

Each Person Has His/Her *Nāmagotta* Preserved

6. Each event that we experience has a *rūpa*, *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* associated with it. For example, when we see an apple, the associated *rūpa* is the MENTAL IMAGE of the apple (which becomes part of *rūpakkhandha*.)

- That event also has a *vedanā* associated with it, i.e., we know that we saw that apple. The associated *saññā* is the recognition of the object as an apple. Then we may generate *saṅkhāra* about it, for example, may be to decide to eat it (as a *vacī saṅkhāra*.) Then the *viññāṇa* encompasses all those AND any associated plan (to eat it.) All five of those automatically added to the corresponding AGGREGATES (COLLECTIONS), i.e., *rūpakkhandha*, *vedanakkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha*, and *viññāṇakkhandha*.
- And **the four mental components get added to his/her OWN *nāmagotta*.**
- Thus it is critical to see that each person's five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) are THEIR OWN. One's *pañcakkhandha* is one's whole world! One has experienced all of it.
- To emphasize, only the four mental components are preserved in the *nāma loka*. The *rūpa loka* has only "material things," and thus, *rūpakkhandha* is NOT preserved. **The *rūpa* component (the associated mental image) is "re-generated" only when one recalls that past event.** We will discuss that recalling process later.

Memory Recall – Each Person Has His/Her *Nāmagotta*

7. Pick the name of a friend that you have not seen for many years. How long does it take to recall his/her face? Almost instantly.

- That is the same way those people with HSAM recall their past. I urge everyone to re-read the post, "Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka."
- That post gives an idea of how precisely one's experiences are preserved in the *nāma loka*. **I must emphasize that one's experiences are the same as one's thoughts that arose in mind at THAT TIME.** However, that depends on one's ability to recall that past memory. An average human doesn't even remember many past events.
- When a person with HSAM recalls a past event, he/she RE-LIVES that experience. But it is not so vivid for those who do not have HSAM.
- But the point is that over 50 people have such vivid and detailed "re-living" of past experiences means that those detailed records have been kept somewhere.

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8. As we discussed in that post, recalled memories are very similar to digital records preserved in video form. For example, in #5 of that post, Bob Petrella recalled past events as accurately as video recording playback. In #6, we saw how Becky "re-lives" her past experiences as a child.

- As we discussed in that post, **habitual memories** (like riding a bike) remain "stored" in the brain. However, it would be unimaginable to assume that detailed **autobiographical memories (what happened on a past arbitrarily-picked day several years ago)** can be "stored" in the brain.
- The brain is NOT a digital computer. It is essential to think and grasp this key idea.
- Now, let us look into another aspect of *nāma loka*.

"Seeing" Something Can Lead to a Lot of Mental Activity

9. "Seeing" itself is a mental activity, as we saw above in #3 and #4. But if the object that was seen is either attractive or repulsive, that can lead to more mental activity.

- For example, suppose you want to buy a car, and you went to a showroom and saw a car you liked. Then until you buy that car, your mind will be pre-occupied with the car. You will spend some time thinking about various aspects, say, whether you want to go to other showrooms to try to get a better price, how to pay for it, etc.
- All those are "mental activities" that goes on in your mind. Billions of thoughts run through your mind pondering such issues. **Those are "*vacī saṅkhāra* (*vitakka/vicāra*)" that arise in your mind.** See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sankhāra."
- You may spend hours thinking about the car. **That whole time, you are in the *nāma* (or *mano*) *loka*.** You may not even be aware of what is going on around you in the *rūpa loka*. If you are deeply engrossed in your thoughts, you may not even hear someone addressing you or a nearby clock striking a chime at the top of the hour.

We Live In Both Worlds (*Rūpa Loka* and *Nāma Loka*)

10. Every time we experience something in the *rūpa loka*, we INVARIABLY need to "check back" in *nāma loka* to identify what we experienced. It is critical to understand this point.

- When we see a person, we would not know who it is UNLESS we have some experience with him/her. The mind is VERY FAST. It goes back to records (*nāmagotta*) and recalled previous events of seeing and interacting with that person. We are not even aware that such a process happens.
- However, some people with brain damage cannot recognize people because of their inability to recall *nāmagotta*.
- Here is the account of Clive Wearing that we discussed in the post, "Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory."

  WebLink: youtube: The Man With The Seven Second Memory (Amnesia Documentary) | Real Stories
- As we see in the video, he cannot remember someone he talked to several minutes ago. Both his "transmitter" and "receiver"' (interacting with the *nāma loka*) were damaged. He cannot recall any memory. So, he is unable to "match" what he is experiencing now with his past experiences.
- The account of Clive Wearing helps explain the difference between *rūpa* and *rūpakkhandha* (and also between *nāma* and *nāmagotta*.) He can interact with the *rūpa loka* but cannot access his memories (*nāmagotta*) in the *nāma loka.* **Therefore, he is unable to "make sense" of the *rūpa* that he experiences.**
- It is a good idea to review the following post as well: "The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."

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All relevant posts at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

2.2.7.3 Response to a Sensory Stimulus – Role of Gati/Anusaya

October 21, 2020

Response to a sensory stimulus is instantaneous with emotions arising automatically. There is NO time lag. That automatic initial response depends on one's *gati* (character/habits.) *Gati*, in turn, depends on one's *anusaya* (hidden cravings/defilements.)

Response to a Sensory Stimulus Comes from the Mind

1. It is not the eyes that see, it is not the ears that hear. It is the mind that sees, hears, tastes, etc. We discussed that in "Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis" and "Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy." It is important to refresh memory on what we discussed in previous posts since we are getting into deeper aspects.

- Let us review that process with a "seeing event." When eyes capture the image of an object, the brain analyzes that signal and passes over to *cakkhu pasāda* in the *gandhabba*. Then the *cakkhu pasāda* transfers it to the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of mind) and that is when we experience that particular "seeing event." That sensory process starts with a ***rūpa*** coming to **contact with the mind**. ***Phassa*** is the Pāli word for that contact.
- Upon receiving that "signal" a *citta* (loosely translated as a thought) arises with the "seeing sensation." **That is *cakkhu viññāṇa*.**
- But *cakkhu viññāṇa* is much more than taking a picture with a camera. Simultaneously with seeing that image, a set of mental factors arise in the mind. The mind recognizes (*saññā*) the object and generates some initial "actions." That involves recalling past experiences with the "*manasikāra*" *cetasikā* and incorporating various other *cetasikā* like joy (*pīti*) or hate (*dosa*.)
- In a "hearing event," one hears a sound when the ears capture a *sadda rūpa* (a sound wave) and that signal makes contact with the mind in a similar process.
- The other three physical senses work the same way. They involve *gandha rūpa* (fragrant molecules entering the nose), *rasa rūpa* (food particles touching the tongue), and *phoṭṭhabba rūpa* (solid objects touching the skin.)

The Sixth Sensory Stimulus Is *Dhammā* (Memories/*Kamma Vipāka*)

2. In addition to the five physical sense inputs, there is a sixth sense input DIRECTLY to the mind. Suppose you are in a sound-proof and totally dark isolated room by yourself. Is the only sensation you have the touch of your feet with the floor? No. You can be thinking about anything that you wish. You can recall memories AND THEN think about them. Recalling memories is part of *dhammā* making contact with the mind ("*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati mano viññāṇaṃ*".)

- *Dhamma rūpa* (memories/*kamma vipāka*) make contact with the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) without the help of a *pasāda rūpa*.
- We discussed that process in the last several posts in "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach." In particular, we discussed that memory preservation and recall involve a transmitter and a receiver in the brain. See, "Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka," and "Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta."
- Now, let us take an example to understand some more details of the response to a sensory stimulus. Let us consider a visual input as an example.

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Recognition (*Saññā*) of an object (*Ārammaṇa*) happens fast

3. Suppose three people A, B, C are sitting in a small coffee shop. They are all facing the door, and person X walks in. Suppose that person X is a close friend of A, worst enemy of B, and that C does not know X at all. We will also assume that all are males.

- So, let us see what happens within a split second. A recognizes X as his friend, and a smile comes to his face. B recognizes X as his enemy, and his face gets darkened.
- On the other hand, C's mind does not register anything about X, and X is just another person to him. He immediately goes back to whatever he was doing.

4. **That is an example of a "*cakkhu viññāṇa,*" a "seeing event."** It is over within a split second, just like taking a photo with a camera takes only a split second, where the image in captured on the screen instantaneously.

- **However, something very complicated happens in a human mind when a "seeing event" occurs.** It is much more complicated than just recording "a picture" in a camera.
- It is critically important to go slow and analyze what happens so that we can see how complicated this process is (for a human mind) to capture that "seeing event."

Within That Split Second, a Complex Process Takes Place

5. Within that split second, A recognizes X as his good friend, and pleasant emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes happy. B recognizes X as his worse enemy, and bad emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes angry. On the other hand, C identifies X as a man or a woman, and no feelings register in his mind.

- We don't think twice about these observations usually. But if one carefully analyzes what happens, one can easily see that this is an amazingly complex process.
- How does the SAME "seeing event" (seeing X) lead to all these very different changes in the minds of three different people? (and the emotions even show up on their faces!)
- No one but a Buddha can see this fast time evolution of a *citta*.
- The Buddha has analyzed the response to a sensory stimulus in minute detail. We will discuss only the critical basic features here.

Four Features of a Seeing Event (*Cakkhu Viññāṇa*)

6. **The "seeing event" has four essential steps:**

- First, the ***rūpa*** in question (*rūpa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phoṭṭhabba rūpa*, or a *dhamma rūpa*) comes into contact with the MIND. The initial contact of the external *rūpa* with the mind involves the ***phassa*** *cetasikā.*
- The "event" registers in the mind and one gets into an emotional state (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, which is called *sukha, dukha*, and *upekkha* in Pāli.) That is ***vedanā***.
- One recognizes the object, and that is called ***saññā*.**
- Fourthly, based on *vedanā* and *saññā*, one MAY also generate other mental factors (*cetasikā*) such as anger, joy. It is the ***cetanā*** *cetasikā* that "incorporates" such mental attributes to the *citta*.
- A few more *cetasikā* play key roles in the above processes. Let us briefly address those.

Other Essential *Cetasikā* Contributing to the Above Process

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7. First, it is the *jivitindriya cetasikā* that keeps the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) alive. Then there is *ekaggatā cetasikā* that keeps the *citta* focused on ONE sensory input at a time. They are both essential *cetasikā*.

- The *manasikāra cetasikā* plays an equally critical role. It RECALLS previous related experiences that "match" or are relevant to the current sensory experience. For example, A in the above example recognizes X as a friend only because A's mind "scanned through past experiences" and recognized X as a friend. Thus, without the *manasikāra cetasikā*, the *saññā cetasikā* could not have identified X.
- Based on that recognition, more *cetasikā* like joy (*pīti*) can arise, as did in A. On the other hand, *paṭigha anusaya* in B led to thoughts of anger in B. Of course, C would have different kinds of *anusaya* too, but none was TRIGGERED by seeing X since X was a total stranger.
- Note: If A or B was an *Arahant*, that *Arahant* would also identify X, but no feeling of joy or anger would arise since an *Arahant* would not have any *gati/anusaya* left.

Manasikāra and *Cetanā* – Two Critical *Cetasikā* That Automatically Trigger *Gati*/*Anusaya*

8. The "*cetanā*" *cetasikā* carries out the complex process of incorporating other *cetasikā* and putting together that *citta* in response to a sensory stimulus.

- The generic name ***saṅkhāra*** represents any combination of such "extra *cetasikā*"**.**
- The net result of the sensing process is ***viññāṇa***. In this example, it is a *cakkhu viññāṇa*.
- The four steps in #6 happen in that sequence, but no one but a Buddha can "see" such a fast process.
- All this happens within a billionth of a second DURING the arising of that *cakkhu viññāṇa*.

Importance of Recalling Past Experiences

9. To recognize X, one must first recall any possible past interactions with X. It turned out that A and B did have past experiences (interactions) with X, but C did not. The *manasikāra cetasikā* does that in a billionth of a second!

- We discussed how certain areas in the brain (the "receiver") get that information from the *nāma loka*. See, "Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory," "Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body," "Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka," and "Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta."
- It is necessary to understand the material in those posts to understand the critical points that I am trying to make in this post. One's *gati/anusaya* resides with one's mental body or *gandhabba*. That *gandhabba* is trapped inside the physical body. Unless it can recall past events with the help of the brain, the *gandhabba* is unable to recognize people. If one cannot identify someone as a friend or foe, feelings of love or anger cannot arise. That is the simplest way to put it.
- There are two special cases where the above point becomes clear. One is that a newborn baby appears to have no "defilements." The other is a case where critical parts of the brain are damaged. Let us briefly discuss them.

Newborn Baby Has no Hidden Defilements (*Anusaya*)?

10. It seems that a newborn (or even a year-old) baby has no defilements. That is only because of the following two facts: (1) the baby's brain has not developed yet, and, (2) the baby has not formed that many relationships yet (other than with the parents.) It has no "sense of self" or "*sakkāya*."

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- In the beginning of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāmālukya Sutta (MN 64)", the Buddha points out this fact that *sakkāya diṭṭhi* cannot arise in a new-born baby. That is exactly because of what we discussed above. There is no way to trigger the hidden *anusaya* in that baby.
- To quote the above translation: "**For a young tender infant lying prone does not even have the notion 'identity,' so how could identity view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) arise in him?** "

Brain-Damaged People Still Have *Anusaya*/*Gati* – They Just Cannot be "Triggered"

11. A person with extensive brain damage is like a newborn baby. The brain is unable to recall memories in response to a sensory stimulus.

- The unfortunate saga of Clive Wearing illustrates the importance of the ability to recall memories. If you have forgotten, you may want to watch the video on Clive Wearing, who lost his memories due to brain damage. The video is at # 10 of "Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta."
- As we see there, Clive just "lives in the present moment." He cannot think about the past or future (thinking about the future REQUIRES past experiences.) **Every person is a total stranger to him** (except his wife, but even then he forgets about her too if she is not there with him.)
- Suppose Clive had an arch enemy, Z. Suppose that the enmity was so bad that before the brain damage Clive would get mad even thinking about Z.
- But Z would be a total stranger to Clive after the brain damage. What happens if Clive now goes to a restaurant and Z is sitting at an adjacent table? Since Clive cannot recognize Z (as his enemy,) he would not become angry. Even if Z comes to Clive's table and say something nasty, Clive would not get angry. Instead, Clive will be puzzled as to why Z is shouting at him.
- Does that mean Clive's *gati* and *anusaya* have disappeared? **Of course not.** The *gandhabba* inside would still have the same *gati* and *anusaya* that Clive had before the brain damage. It is just that the *gandhabba* does not recognize Z as an enemy because it is UNABLE to "match" Z as his arch-enemy.
- **Thus, understanding the concept of the *gandhabba* (and how it interacts with the external with the help of the brain) helps clarify many complex issues that otherwise cannot be explained.**
- The following #12 through #14 are technical points.

Seven "Universal" *Cetasikā*

12. ANY citta will ALWAYS have seven *cetasikā*. A *citta* would not arise without them.

- Thus, we see that the seven "universal" *cetasikā* are *phassa, vedanā, saññā, cetanā, manasikāra, jivitindriya,* and *ekaggatā.* **Those seven are "*universal cetasikā*" that arise in ANY *citta*.**
- Other types of *cetasikā* MAY arise based on one's *gati/anusaya* AND the *ārammaṇa*.

Viññāṇa Is the Overall Sensory Experience in Response to a Sensory Stimulus

13. ***Viññāṇa* is the overall sense experience** encompassing all those seven *cetasikā* PLUS all other *cetasikā* (included in ***saṅkhāra.***)

- **But *viññāṇa* may also include "future expectations"** IF one's mind attaches to that *ārammaṇa*. See, "Viññāna – What It Really Means."
- We can safely say that *viññāṇa* is the overall sensory experience, INCLUDING one's expectations based on that sensory experience. That is why one's facial expressions may change too, according to such expectations.

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Nothing Faster in the World Than the Arising of a *Citta*

14. Buddha said it is hard to find any phenomena in this world that change faster than the mind: "WebLink: suttacentral: Aṅguttara Nikāya (1.48)".

- The short *sutta* says: "*Nāhaṃ, bhikkhave, aññaṃ ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yaṃ evaṃ lahuparivattaṃ yathayidaṃ cittaṃ. Yāvañcidaṃ, bhikkhave, upamāpi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaṃ cittan*"ti."
- **Translated:** "I consider, *bhikkhus*, that there is no phenomenon that comes and goes so quickly as *citta*. It is not easy to find an analogy (a simile) to show how quickly *citta* can change."

15. It is essential to understand the concepts of *gati* and *anusaya*. The best way to find relevant information is to use the "Search" box on the top right. I put in "*gati anusaya*" in the search box and it came up with the following related posts: "WebLink: Pure Dhamma: Search Results for gati anusaya."

- All relevant posts in the current section at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

2.2.7.4 Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event

October 28, 2020

Ārammaṇa means the focus of the mind at a given moment. It plays an equally important role as *gati/anusaya* in response to a sensory stimulus. For example, when you look at someone, that person is the *ārammaṇa*. When you hear a sound, that sound is the *ārammaṇa*.

The Role of *Gati* (Character/Habits) and *Anusaya* (Latent Defilements)

1. To get started, we need to review what we discussed in the previous post, "Response to a Sensory Stimulus – Role of Gati/Anusaya." In that post, we discussed the sequence of events that happens within a split second of sensory input. There we used the following example.

Suppose three people A, B, C, are sitting in a small coffee shop. They are all facing the door, and a **middle-aged male X** walks in. Suppose that person X is a close friend of A, worst enemy of B, and that C does not know X. We will also assume that all are males.

- So, let us see what happens within a split second. A recognizes X as his friend, and a smile comes to his face. B recognizes X as his enemy, and his face darkens.
- On the other hand, C's mind does not register anything about X, and X is just another person to him. He immediately goes back to whatever he was doing.
- X is the *ārammaṇa* for A, B, and C in the above case.

2. We made the following critical observations.

- With the help of the *manasikāra cetasika,* the minds of A, B, and C recalled past events relevant to X within a split-second. Thus, they instantly identified X as friend, enemy, and neutral, respectively.
- Those "good" memories in A trigger *rāga anusaya* in A and A becomes happy. However, B recalls his "bad memories" with X, which triggers *paṭigha anusaya*. Of course, C may have various types of *anusaya*, but X did not trigger any of those since C has had no prior interactions with X (and since X looked like any average person.)

Even Without Prior Specific Interactions, an *Ārammaṇa* Can Trigger Defiled Thoughts

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3. Now, let us consider a different scenario with a different person Y entering the coffee shop. Let us assume that **Y is B's girlfriend, who is quite attractive.** Suppose A is not in good terms with Y and that **C is a young male** who has never seen Y. Now, the *ārammaṇa* for A, B, and C would be quite different (Y is an attractive female while X was an average middle-aged male.)

- Now, we see that the moods of A and B will reverse. A will be instantaneously unhappy to see Y, and B will be happy to Y.
- Regarding C, the situation could be very different too. If Y appears attractive to him, C may instantaneously form a lustful state of mind.
- Even though C had never seen Y before, C got interested and formed lustful feelings about Y. It was NOT a memory of Y that triggered the interest in C. It was his own *gati/anusaya* to be attracted to a beautiful woman. Of course, he has had interactions with many OTHER women, and those memories were matched in a split-second!

Dependence on the "Thought Object" (*Ārammaṇa*)

4. **Now, we see why a given person does not have a permanently set good or bad mindset.** That is related to the fact that there are no fixed *gati/anusaya* either. The above two examples, A, B, and C, generated very different types of overall mindsets upon seeing X and Y.

- **What kind of mindset arises depends on the *gati/anusaya* of the person AND the sense object (*ārammaṇa*.)**
- The two different *ārammaṇa* in #1 and #3 triggered two very different *gati/anusaya* in all three people A, B, and C.

Two Analogies for *Anusaya* and *Ārammaṇa*

5. One can get a good idea of the concepts of *anusaya* and *ārammaṇa* with the following analogy. ***Anusaya* is like gunpowder. An *ārammaṇa* like a flame.** The gunpowder can stay dormant for a long time, but the gunpowder will ignite if one brings a flame to it.

- For an *anariya yogi* who had avoided sense attractions for long times, *kāma rāga anusaya* can be like **wet** gunpowder. A little flame may not ignite it. But if a flame of sufficient heat can ignite such well-hidden *anusaya* too. There are accounts in the *Tipiṭaka* where the sight of an attractive woman (strong *ārammaṇa*) brought lustful thoughts to *anariya yogis* and removed their *iddhi* powers. On the other hand, *kāma rāga anusaya* in an *Arahant* cannot be "triggered" by ANY *ārammaṇa.* Here, the potency of gunpowder has been removed.
- The tendency to get angry is due to *paṭigha anusaya*. Those with strong *paṭigha anusaya* can get angry with the slightest provocation or with even a weak *ārammaṇa*.

6. In another analogy, *anusaya* is like some mud settled down at the bottom of a glass. The water in the glass looks clean.

- However, that mud will come up if one uses a straw to disturb the water. Now the water would not look clean anymore. Here stirring with a straw is like disturbing a "settled mind" with a strong *ārammaṇa*.
- In an *Arahant*, there is no "mud" or any type of *anusaya*. Thus, "the water in the glass will be clear" no matter how hard one tries to stir it.
- **That "mud" was cleansed not in a physical process, but just with wisdom**, i.e., just by understanding the real nature of this world (Four Noble Truths/*Tilakkhana*/*Paṭicca Samuppāda*.) We will get to that in future posts in this series in a systematic way.
- A Buddha comes to the world to teach "how to cleanse the mind by controlling it" ("*Sacitta pariyo dapaṇaṃ*.") See, "Sabba Pāpassa Akaraṇaṃ…."

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- More details on *anusaya* at "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

An Average Human Will Have Both Good and Bad *Anusaya* (and *Gati*)

7. We usually call someone a "good person" based on his/her overall character, i.e., if that person displays more "good character" than "bad character" over time. But only an *Arahant* is "definitely a moral person," acting 100% morally all the time.

- Even though this is a complex subject, the basic features are those mentioned above. One needs to analyze different situations to firmly grasp these ideas. That is real *vipassanā* meditation! The word *vipassanā* means "special and clear vision" of the true nature of the world.
- One needs to understand how the mind works to make progress on the Path. Only a Buddha can DISCOVER and EXPLAIN the critical role of the MIND.
- Once we understand the fundamentals, it would be easy to analyze ANY given situation. That is why it is worthwhile to spend time and really grasp what we have discussed so far.

Key Points on *Gati* and *Anusaya*

8. As we have discussed, *anusaya* are "latent" or "hidden" tendencies. Even though normally referred to as "latent defilements," they could be "hidden morals," too.

- When "bad *anusaya*" are triggered, one displays bad *gati* (character/habits). On the other hand, "hidden morals" can be triggered, bringing good *gati* to the forefront.
- For example, someone could be labeled a hardened criminal because he is mostly engaged in bad deeds with "bad *gati*" in full display. But good morals in him could be awakened by seeing a child/older person in distress, and he may help them as needed.
- **There is no "absolutely good" or "absolutely bad" person other than an *Arahant*.** Any other person would have both good and bad *anusaya* hidden at various degrees. An *Anāgāmi*, for example, would have very little "bad *anusaya*" (and thus "bad *gati*") left.

The Role of the *Ārammaṇa* Can Come in Different Ways

9. Our discussion in #3 shows that the *ārammaṇa* in question could be something that one had never SPECIFICALLY encountered before. Young men are generally attracted to young women, and vice versa.

- If an *ārammaṇa* matches one's *gati/anusaya*, one will attach to it.
- Suppose someone offers Z a fruit that Z had never seen or tasted. Just by seeing the fruit, Z may not be interested in it unless it looked similar to a fruit he had eaten before.
- However, Z eats it and realizes that he really likes that TASTE. Then Z "falls in love" with that fruit. He would want to eat it in the future whenever he gets a chance.
- That taste in the fruit is a "*kāma guṇa*." *Guṇa* means a "quality" or "a characteristic." **Most people tend to associate the word "*kāma*" with "sensuality." However, "*kāma*" could be anything that is "enticing" or "makes one happy."** We will discuss that in detail in the future.

A Summary of *Hadaya Vatthu*, Physical Body, Brain, *Rūpa Loka*, and *Nāma Loka*

10. Let me summarize our discussion so far in this series of posts, "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach." Life encompasses interplay among the following entities.

- The *gandhabba* (with the *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa*) is the thinking entity.

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- However, it is trapped inside the physical body and cannot access the external world consisting of two parts. (1) The ***rūpa loka*** with sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches. (2) The ***nāma loka*** with memories and *kamma bīja*.
- The *gandhabba* accesses those sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches in *rūpa loka* with the help of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body. Here, the brain plays a critical role.
- It accesses memories and *kamma bīja* in the *nāma loka* with the help of a transmitter and receiver in the brain. The brain also processes all those signals from outside and passes them to the *gandhabba*.
- The *gandhabba* decides what to do in response to such sensory inputs. The brain implements those commends from the *gandhabba* by moving body parts (for speech and bodily actions.)

Rūpa Loka and *Nāma Loka* – Two Parts of Our World

11. We have a "mental world (*nāma loka*)" as well as a "material world (*rūpa loka*)." **(1) The "material world" is the same for all of us. (2) But each person create his/her own "mental world" based on that "material world."**

- A mind experiences both those worlds. It experiences the material world with the help of the five physical senses. The mind experiences the mental world on its own.
- "Things" in the mental world (memories or *nāmagotta*) come to mind directly (without a corresponding *pasāda rūpa*.) However, the "transmitter" and the "receiver" in the brain play critical roles in that process. They come to the mind as *dhammā*, which includes our memories and also expectations for the future. We will discuss that latter part (expectations) in the future.
- On the other hand, the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) help the mind experience those things in the material world.

Nāma Loka is Very Different from the *Rūpa Loka*

12. *Nāma loka* has no spatial boundaries. **That is why we cannot ask, "where are the memories stored"?** We ask that wrong question based on our ingrained perceptions of the *rūpa loka*.

- In *rūpa loka*, everything has spatial locations. A tree in the front yard is so many feet away from the house. The great wall is in China, and the Eiffel Tower is in Paris, France. To see the Eiffel Tower one needs to go to Paris.
- In contrast, our memories do not have spatial locations. **We can access memories from ANYWHERE.** Whether one is in China or France, one can recall memories. When Neil Armstrong landed on the Moon, he was able to recall memories.
- However, both the receiver and transmitter in the brain must be in good condition for the memory to work properly. We discussed the unfortunate cases of Clive Wearing and a few others in recent posts. They were unable to recall parts or all of their memories. See, "Brain and the Gandhabba."
- Our memories and our *kamma bīja* (that can bring *vipāka* in the future) are also in *nāma loka*. A given *kamma bīja* (no matter whether created many lives ago) can bring back *vipāka* ANYWHERE. It does not matter whether one is in China or France. When conditions become right, a *kamma bīja* can bring *vipāka*.
- We will discuss that in more detail in the next post.

All relevant posts in the current section at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

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2.2.7.5 Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka – Two Parts of Our World

November 4, 2020; revised November 6, 2020

Nāma Loka Is One of Two Parts of Our World

1. We have a "mental world (*nāma loka*)" as well as a "material world (*rūpa loka*)." The material world is the same for all of us. **But each person creates one's own mental world based on that material world.** We briefly discussed that in the previous post, "Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."

- A mind experiences the material world with the help of the five physical senses. Then it will make plans to re-live any "pleasurable experiences" again and again. That is related to greed or *lobha* (a reduced version is *kāma rāga* or the craving for sensory pleasures.)
- If it were a "bad experience," the mind would avoid any such future experiences by taking various actions. Such actions may involve *dosa* (hatred), or its reduced version is *paṭigha* ("friction" or "annoyance.")
- Both of the above actions will lead to future suffering. That suffering can be greatly-enhanced if someone's actions include strong *dasa akusala*. Such a "totally covered" mind has *moha* and can lead to immediate and harsh suffering.
- **But even those who live moral lives cannot escape future suffering because they are not aware of the "real nature" of the world.** They have a lower version of *moha* (i.e., *avijjā*), the ignorance referred to in the Four Noble Truths.

Previously Unknown Teachings

2. That last bullet point about the future suffering is unknown to the world in the absence of a Buddha. Only a Buddha can discover that our world is much more expansive (with 31 realms), where life in some of the realms can be full of suffering.

- Other religions teach that one would be guaranteed "future happiness" in heavenly worlds if one lives a moral life.
- With his knowledge about a much wider world of 31 realms, the Buddha showed that there is no realm in this world where one can avoid suffering. Furthermore, suffering in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*) can be quite harsh.
- Therefore, the key question is, how is it possible that one who lives a moral life is still subjected to suffering in future births?
- The explanation is in the "previously unheard Dhamma" of a Buddha. In the current series of posts, we first need to understand our "*nāma loka*." **Of course, there are other ways to get there, mainly by just realizing the dangers of pursuing sense pleasures.**

Everything in the World Belongs to One of Six *Dhātu*

3. The Buddha categorized everything in the world into six types of *dhātu*: *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, ākāsa,* and *viññāṇa.* The conventional translation of the word "*dhātu"* is "element," but in this context "essence" may be a better translation.

- We are quite familiar with our "physical world" made of *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo* spread out in **space** (*ākāsa dhātu*.) Therefore, those five *dhātu* associate with the *rūpa loka*.
- **The sixth, *viññāṇa dhātu*, is associate with the *nāma loka*.**
- When one dissociates with the world of 31 realms, one merges with *Nibbāna dhātu.* See, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Nibbānadhātu Sutta* (Iti 44)."

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Viññāṇa Dhātu Is *Nāma Loka*

4. *Viññāṇa dhātu* INCLUDES all mental entities: *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*.

- Here, *viññāṇa* is a bit complex. It is of two types. (1) ***Vipāka viññāṇa*** arises when we experience something with any of the six senses. Thus, it can be one of the six types of *viññāṇa*: *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivha, kāya, mano*. They arise as *kamma vipāka* or RESULTS of *kamma*. (2) ***Kamma viññāṇa*** arises ONLY in mind as *mano viññāṇa*.
- Unlike *vipāka viññāṇa*, *kamma viññāṇa* has ENERGY. That energy arises in *javana citta* when we DO *kamma*.
- As we see, the experiences through any of the six senses give to "mental entities" that are in *viññāṇa dhātu*.
- In other words, **it is the mind that experiences both parts of our world**.

Viññāṇa Dhātu Is Very Different From Other Five *Dhātu*

5. According to modern science, our mental world is a byproduct of the material body (specifically the brain.) It only deals with the *rūpa loka* and disregards the *nāma loka* (*viññāṇa dhātu*) altogether.

- Modern science is not equipped to tackle the mind yet. Unlike material objects that are inert and thus follow pre-set rules (like Newton's laws of motion,) the mind of EACH PERSON is unique. **Thus, while we can accurately predict the path of a rocket, we cannot predict any given person's actions.**
- The Buddha explained that the mind is the precursor to the material world. That is a complex subject, but I hope you are at least beginning to get the idea that our future rebirths (and thus any physical bodies in future births) arise due to our thoughts (specifically *javana citta,* which arise when we engage in strong *kamma*.)

No Spatial Boundaries In *Nāma Loka* (*Viññāṇa Dhātu*)

6. Another unique feature of the mind (or *nāma loka* or *viññāṇa dhātu*) is that there are no "spatial locations" or "spatial boundaries" in *viññāṇa dhātu*. We cannot ask WHERE it is located. **It is everywhere and anywhere.** See the previous post, "Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."

- The absence of spatial boundaries in *nāma loka* becomes apparent when we realize that we only access the *nāma loka* while dreaming.
- The *arupāvacara Brahmas* do not have access to the *rūpa loka*. As we have discussed, they do not have any of the five physical senses or the corresponding five *pasāda rūpa*. They have the *hadaya vatthu*, which can only recall memories. Those memories come directly to the *hadaya vatthu* since they don't have brains.

The Best Way to Visualize *Viññāṇa Dhātu* – Dreams

7. When we dream, our minds are ONLY in the *nāma loka*. As we have discussed before, all five physical senses "go to sleep" while we sleep, which is when we dream.

- We see, hear, smell, taste, touch WITH OUR MINDS when we dream.
- As we know, there are no "spatial locations" in dreams. We see a dream. We cannot say where it was. If we see a jungle, our mind is there. We feel as if we are in a jungle.

Nāma Loka and *Rūpa Loka* Co-Exist

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8. When we dream, our five physical senses become inactive. In a primitive way, our minds detach from *ākāsa dhātu*. A mind is then in just *viññāṇa dhātu*. That is why we don't perceive "locations" in dreams. We see people, buildings, trees, etc., but a location is not defined.

- Another way to state that is to say ***viññāṇa dhātu* normally co-exists with the *ākāsa dhātu*.** However, when we dream, the mind detaches from *ākāsa dhātu* (since the five physical senses are not active) and is engaged only with the *viññāṇa dhātu* (*nāma loka*.)

Mind Separates From *Rūpa Loka* After the Fourth *Jhāna*

9. A mind detaches from the *rūpa loka* when transcending the fourth *jhāna*, the **highest *rūpāvacara* *jhāna***. This is a technical point that can be skipped by those not familiar with *Abhidhamma/jhāna*.

- One is aware ONLY of the "infinite space" (no other *rūpa*) when one gets to the fifth *jhāna* or the "*ākāsānañcāyatana*" (meaning "infinite space".) When one transcends the *ākāsānañcāyatana* and gets to the *viññāṇañcāyatana* (or infinite *viññāṇa*.) **This is when the mind (*viññāṇa*) "decouples" or "separates" from "space." Now the mind has absolutely no awareness of space or the *rūpa loka*.**
- That is why the highest four *jhānā* are "*arūpāvacara jhāna*." *Arūpa* means "without *rūpa*." The only *rūpa* there would be a trace of matter associated with *hadaya vatthu* of *arupāvacara Brahmā*. Even in *ākāsānañcāyatana,* there is only space and no other "*rūpa*."

Kamma Bhava Is Also In *Nāma Loka*

10. The *nāma loka* encompasses (includes) *kamma bhava.* The appropriate *bhava* manifests under the right conditions. If we drink too much alcohol, we get drunk and get to a mindset of a drunkard. We may stay in that "drunkard existence" for a few hours.

- At the moment of death (if it is at the end of human *bhava*,) a mind will grasp a new *bhava* (existence) and instantaneously be born in that existence at the CORRESPONDING spatial location. For example, if one can grasp a *Deva* existence, one will be instantaneously born in that *Deva* realm a thousand miles above the Earth.
- That is also why a human can be born INSTANTANEOUSLY as a *Deva* in a *Deva* realm at the end of the human bhava. Grasping of a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* of a *Deva* happens instantaneously at the corresponding spatial location (in a *Deva* realm). The *viññāṇa dhātu* does not have spatial restrictions. **It is EVERYWHERE, so to speak!**
- That happens because the *viññāṇa dhātu* is normally "merged with" *ākāsa dhātu*. They overlap. Thus, based on the type of *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, one will automatically be born in the appropriate spatial location in *ākāsa dhātu*.
- That is a very brief description. But it is enough for now to get the basic idea.

A *Gandhabba* Is Totally Shielded From Both *Loka* While Inside a Physical Body

11. A *gandhabba* is totally shielded from both the *rūpa loka* and the *nāma loka* while inside a human body.

- As discussed in previous posts, a *gandhabba* accesses the outside material world (*rūpa loka*) using the five physical senses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body. **It accesses the *nāma loka* using the "transmitter" and "receiver" in the brain.** See, "Brain and the Gandhabba." It is good to review posts in that subsection.
- For a *gandhabba* inside a physical body, sensory signals from outside must come through the five "physical sensors" mounted on the body (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body.) The brain plays a vital role in transferring those signals to the *gandhabba* inside.

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- In the same way, memories experienced by the *gandhabba* "go out" to the *viññāṇa dhātu* via a "transmitter" in the brain. Old memories in *viññāṇa dhātu* "come back" via a "receiver" in the brain. Recent findings in medical science allowed us to identify the "transmitter" as we discussed.

Consequences of a *Gandhabba* Trapped and Isolated Inside a Physical Body

12. **Even though *viññāṇa dhātu* is everywhere, it is NOT present inside the physical human body.** The "entrapment" of a *gandhabba* inside a physical body is a *kammic* effect, as we discussed before.

- This is also why an *Arahant* does not attain *Parinibbāna* until the death of the physical body. The "subtle body" of a *gandhabba* cannot "bear the *Arahanthood*" and dies instantly when it comes out of the **dead body of an *Arahant*.**
- That is also why there are no *Arahants* in *Brahma loka*. As soon as a *Brahma* attains the *Arahanthood*, the death of the subtle *Brahma* body follows.

Buddhist Model of Memory Preservation and Retrieval

13. All memories (from an untraceable beginning) are in *nāma loka* or *viññāṇa dhātu*, which may also be called "*viññāṇa* plane" or "*nāma loka*." Of course, our *kammic* energies (*kamma bija*) are also in *nāma loka*.

- Those "physical entities" that we see, hear, etc. reside in *ākāsa dhātu*.
- We are quite familiar with our "physical world" spread out in space (*ākāsa dhātu*.) Thus, we automatically tend to carry over those concepts to *viññāṇa dhātu*. However, the *viññāṇa dhātu* is very different from the *ākāsa dhātu*. **There are no spatial restrictions in *viññāṇa dhātu*.**
- Thus, we cannot talk about a "specific location" for memories. They are just in *nāma loka*. That is why memories can be recalled without any effort, whether on Earth or the Moon.

Summary of Discussion So Far

14. We have been discussing the role of the brain in our mental activities; see, "Brain and the Gandhabba." In this Buddhist model of human life, the human body is just a "shell" controlled by the "mental body" or *gandhabba*. See "Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy."

- Human existence is not limited to a single life of about 100 years with a human body. Like in many other realms, human existence can be very long, at least several thousand years. See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein." Therefore, each of us could have lived previous human lives within the current human existence (*bhava*.) If so, some of us may be able to recall one or two past lives. But it is very rare to recall a previous life in another existence, for example, a *Deva bhava* or an animal *bhava*.
- As we have discussed, the *gandhabba* can smell, taste, and touch only inside a physical body. The brain acts as the intermediary in all sensory interactions when the *gandhabba* is inside a physical body.
- The brain also helps recall memories in the *nāma loka,* as we discussed above—more details in future posts about that memory recall process.
- In a previous couple of posts, we discussed the role of the brain in some special situations, including total or partial "vegetative states."

All relevant posts in the current section at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

2.2.8 Tipiṭaka – A Systematic Approach

November 11, 2020

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- Tipiṭaka – The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma
- Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation
- Vinaya Piṭaka – More Than Disciplinary Rules
- Abhidhamma Piṭaka – Deeper Analyses of Concepts

2.2.8.1 Tipiṭaka – The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma

November 11, 2020; revised #1, #3, #10 on November 12, 2020

The Need for a Systematic Approach

1. *Tipiṭaka* (*Tripiṭaka* in Sanskrit) is the Pāli Canon, which contains the teachings of the Buddha. It is self-consistent. It is also a vast collection of texts (in 57 volumes) divided into three sections (*Piṭaka*) of *Sutta, Vinaya,* and *Abhidhamma*.

- How would one even begin to understand that vast material? That is especially a daunting task for someone who has had no prior exposure to Buddha Dhamma.
- Two main issues need to be looked at. (1) Understand the primary and ultimate goal of a Buddhist, (2) Cultivate familiarity with key Pāli words that CANNOT and SHOULD NOT be translated into English.
- Just trying to understand various *suttas* (with the difficulty of comprehension in a wide range) could be a waste of time. **First, one needs to focus on a few *suttas* that provide the Buddha's key message. But that itself requires understanding the meanings of some key Pāli words.**
- In the new section, "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach," I am trying to address both those issues. This new subsection will hopefully clarify some related issues.

The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma

2. A Buddha is a unique "being." Even though born a human, he transcended his human birth and attained the *Buddhahood*. The *Buddhahood* is a title attained by those who can purify their minds to the utmost. For example, Einstein had a much higher level of "intelligence" than an average human, but a Buddha's mind is infinitely superior. A Buddha appears in the world very rarely, once in many billions of years.

- A Buddha can "see" the true and complete characteristics of our world. Thus, Buddha Gotama revealed a world of 31 realms that is much more vast and complex than the two realms (human and animal) that are discernible to an average human.
- He also revealed to us a rebirth process that has no discernible beginning. A given "lifestream" evolves from one existence to another among the 31 possible realms.
- Rebirth is not a random process. It follows the principle of causation (causes lead to results; with the removal of causes, no results can manifest.) Translated to Buddha Dhamma, birth results from previous actions DONE WITH greed, anger/hate, and ignorance. With the removal of those "defilements" from a mind, the rebirth cycle will stop since necessary causes have been removed.
- **But why would one want willingly to make an effort to stop the rebirth process?** Before getting to that, we first need to look at the two main prevailing world views.

False Premise of Other Religions

3. World's major religions are based on two fundamental premises: (1) If you live a moral life, you get to go to heaven forever, and (2) If you live an immoral life, expect to suffer forever in hell. Such a claim appear sound and logical, and most people are attracted to that simple premise. See, "Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 1."

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- However, the Buddha taught that just living a moral life WILL NOT guarantee the removal of future suffering. Permanent removal of future suffering REQUIRES stopping the rebirth process.
- By living a moral life, one MAY get a "good birth" in the next life, but that WILL NOT stop future subsequent births with harsh suffering.
- By the way, if someone says one "should not criticize other religions," that statement is made out of ignorance. **One needs to be able to criticize false premises, no matter where they are found.** If one finds a similar issue in Buddha Dhamma, one should bring it up for discussion. I havve discussed some such issues at, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" and "Myths or Realities?"
- Real compassion is to help others understand the true nature of our complex world. That will enable one to get rid of an unimaginable amount of future suffering. Of course, it is up to each individual to decide whether to accept any given explanation about the world's nature.
- The second major false premise is the view that life ends with the physical body's death.

Rebirth is Not True? – Another False Premise

4. In the materialistic view, one lives only the present life, ending with the physical body's death. In this view, there are absolutely no consequences to one's actions (other than for breaking the mundane laws.) For example, if you kill another human, you may go to jail (if caught,) but there would be no other consequences.

- The book "Free Will" by the atheist intellectual Sam Harris provides the rationale of a "materialist." At the beginning of the book, he described heinous crimes committed by two individuals, Hayes and Komeisarjevsky. Then on page 4, he writes, "as sickening as I find their behavior, I have to admit that if I were to trade places with one of these men, **atom to atom**, I would *be* him: **There is no extra part of me that could decide to see the world differently** or to resist the impulse to victimize other people." (highlighting mine.)
- That quote embeds the essence of materialism. **A person is just an assembly of atoms and molecules, nothing more.** Also, see, "Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism."
- But then the question arises, "why is Sam Harris NOT CAPABLE of such heinous crimes?" Those crimes were not done at the spur of the moment. They had planned those crimes. I don't think Sam Harris or any other decent human is CAPABLE of committing such PLANNED crimes. **One would first need to get into such a defiled mindset.** Hitler planned and killed millions of Jews. Not many people are CAPABLE of such actions.
- Both types of major wrong views discussed above arise because one is not aware of the complex web of causes and effects discussed in detail in the *Tipiṭaka*. Can things happen without causes?

Nothing happens without reasons/causes.

5. Modern science agrees that nothing happens without a cause(s). In the past, people believed that earthquakes, floods, floods, etc. happen due to the "will of the Creator God." Now we know that there are natural causes for each of those, and there is no need to invoke a Creator.

- In the same way, if one wins a million dollars in a lottery or breaks a leg in an accident, that would not be the "will of a higher intelligence.' Those are results (*vipāka*) of previous good/bad actions (*kamma*.)
- Similarly, there are reasons (root causes) why some people are born healthy and wealthy, some are born at the opposite end, and an infinite variety in between. By the way, all those animals had been humans in past lives too.
- Therefore, just by using that causation principle, one can come to the reasonable conclusion that there must be causes for the diversity of births. One is born poor due to the causes (bad actions) from a previous life. Similarly, one is born an animal because one had behaved like an animal in human existence in the past. A *Deva* in a *Deva* realm is born there because of good deeds in past lives.

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- There are also reasons why criminals like Hayes and Komeisarjevsky or Hitler are capable of acts of violence. Their defiled minds led them to behave like animals.
- **There are reasons (causes) for anything to happen.** It is just that finding those root causes is not easy because the world is complex. The rebirth process is necessary for the laws of *kamma* to bring forth such a variety of possible outcomes within life and from life-to-life.
- Only a Buddha can provide that complete picture. **Out of that picture emerges the way to stop future suffering altogether.**

Buddhist Explanation Requires a Wider World View

6. The principle of causation that explains all that is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. That is at the heart of *Tipiṭaka* text. I have tried to explain it in various ways. See, for example, "Origin of Life."

- I have recently started another, more fundamental approach in the series, "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach." But such approaches are needed ONLY IF one has doubts about the rebirth process or the other underlying aspects like laws of *kamma*.
- In the Buddha's days, too, there were people with both wrong views discussed in #3 and #4. There were teachers like Makkhali Gosala, Ajita Kesakambali, Purana Kassapa, Pudhaka Kaccayana, Sanjaya Belatthiputta, and Nigantha Nataputta who taught various versions of wrong views as described in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- The Buddha engaged them in some occasions to illustrate the soundness of Buddha Dhamma. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1)," "WebLink: suttacentral: Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)," and "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūḷasaccaka Sutta (MN 35)."

The Need to Correctly Interpret the *Tipiṭaka*

7. Therefore, the basic framework to explain the deep and complex true nature of this world of 31 realms is in the *Tipiṭaka*. Various aspects are in all three sections (*Piṭaka*) of the *Tipiṭaka*: *Sutta, Vinaya,* and *Abhidhamma*.

- A Dhamma teacher needs to have the following qualifications: (1) Know the meanings of key Pāli words. (2) The ability to explain succinct and deep verses in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- Both those REQUIRE the translator to be an *Ariya* or a Noble Person who has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Let me make an analogy to explain that.

8. Suppose a medical text needs to be translated from English to French.

- Would it be possible for a person well-versed in English and French to do a good job, **UNLESS he/she is also a SPECIALIST in that particular field of medicine?**
- Translating a text REQUIRES a deep understanding of the SUBJECT.
- Translating Pāli text in the *Tipiṭaka* to English REQUIRES much more than English proficiency and some knowledge in Pāli. A CLEAR understanding of the DEEP CONCEPTS in Buddha Dhamma is NECESSARY.
- It is not just a matter of learning Pāli grammar and to use various Pāli-English dictionaries that are available.
- In this particular case, the SPECIALIST is a Noble Person. One MUST be at least a *Sotapanna* to be able to explain even the basic concepts correctly.

Which Interpretation Is Correct?

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9. Of course, the question arises: "How would one know whether anyone claiming to be an *Ariya* (Noble Person) is indeed one or not?" Any person can make that claim. The Buddha allowed one to make that declaration if one is certain that he/she has been "freed from the rebirths in the *apāyā*" or has attained the *Sotapanna* stage. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Dutiyabhayaverūpasanta Sutta* (SN 55. 29)" The same passage appears in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (DN 16)."

- That is where each person has to make the decision. If two teachers claim to have the "correct explanation" AND those two are very different, only one is right or closer to the truth. It is up to each person to decide who could be right based on the totality of writings from those two.
- Of course, even an *Ariya* can make mistakes. Unless one is a *Sammā Sambuddha* Like Buddha Gotama, one COULD make mistakes. However, those mistakes would be MINOR compared to the key mistakes that an *anāriya* is BOUND TO make. **One is an *anāriya* until becoming at least a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* (who has begun to understand the Noble Truths on Suffering.)**

Understanding the "Hidden Suffering"

10. To understand the key message of the Buddha, it is necessary to understand the "big picture" of a rebirth process among 31 realms. The *Tipiṭaka* explains it in detail. Without an idea of that big picture, it does not make sense to try to "attain *Nibbāna*." Attaining *Nibbāna* MEANS "stopping the rebirth process."

- One would NOT want to stop a "good thing" from happening over and over. If repeated births is a "good thing," the Buddha would not have labored for 45 years to convince us that many future births for an *anāriya* (one who has not understood the Noble Truths) will be filled with unbearable suffering.
- The Buddha explained that humans (and other living beings) are incapable of seeing the hidden dangers of the rebirth process.
- **The average human perceives that worldly things bring happiness. In the contrary, craving for those worldly things can ONLY lead to unimaginable suffering in future lives.** Such cravings CANNOT be willfully suppressed. Those cravings NATURALLY go away when one starts comprehending the real nature of this world.
- That is the "previously unheard Dhamma" of a Buddha. It goes against all the prevailing views that we discussed above.
- We will continue that discussion in the next post.

All posts in this section at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

2.2.8.2 Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation

November 19, 2020; revised November 24, 2020

Pāli Canon is the standard collection of scriptures in the *Theravada* Buddhist tradition. That collection has all the necessary teachings of the Buddha. However, the key concepts need to be explained in detail by a Noble Person (an *Ariya*.)

Initial Oral Transmission

1. After the passing away of the Buddha, his teachings were handed down ORALLY from one generation to the next over about five hundred years. It had been prepared for easy oral transmission. That becomes clear when one listens to the recital of a given *sutta*. As a child, I had memorized several *suttas* without much difficulty.

- Even today, some people have memorized large sections of the *Tipiṭaka*, especially in Myanmar (formerly Burma). In Myanmar, there are special examinations to test memorizations. See, Tpitakadhara Sayadaws of Myanmar (Burma) in Five Decades." Also, see, "Memorizing the Tipitaka. "

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- That is the reason for the Pāli Canon survived entirely in content over that long period of oral transmission. There were groups of *bhikkhus* who memorized overlapping sections and passed them down.
- A major reason for the assembly of the First Buddhist Council within three months of the Buddha's *Parinibbāna* — around 480 BCE — was to organize the vast material that had been accumulated.
- Within the next two hundred years, two more Councils were held to recite and verify the teachings and to finalize the *Tipiṭaka* in three broad categories ("*ti*" + "*pitaka*" or "three baskets"). The second was held about a century after the first one.
- The third was held in 250 BC at Pataliputra under the patronage of King Asoka. The "three baskets" were completed at this Council with the finalization of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.
- That material was written down in that exact form when it became possible to preserve written material for a long time; see #2 below.

Texts of the Tipiṭaka

2. That completed *Tipiṭaka* was written down in 29 BCE at the Fourth Buddhist Council in Matale, Sri Lanka. See "Welcome to Aluvihāra Rock Cave Temple" for information about the location where the *Tipiṭaka* writing took place. By that time techniques had become available to preserve written material for a long time.

- **That is why the Pāli Canon (*Tipiṭaka*) can be trusted to have the Buddha's original teachings.** Details at "Sutta – Introduction."
- The other earliest written Buddhist documents are from Gandhāra in modern northwestern Pakistan; see, "The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra" by Richard Salomon (2018.) However, those do not provide a complete version of the *Tipiṭaka*; see p. 83 of the book.
- Around the turn of the first millennium, translations of the *Tipiṭaka* to Chinese and subsequently to Tibetan also took place. The original manuscripts in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* can be expected to contain most of the original discourses delivered by the Buddha.

The Authenticity of the *Tipiṭaka*

3. After the initial writing, the whole *Tipiṭaka* was periodically re-written on specially prepared ōla (palm) leaves over the next 200 years. **The leaves deteriorated over time, and needed to be re-written every 100 years or so.** Even though that was a very labor-intensive process (there are 57 large volumes in the modern printed version of the Pāli Canon), it served another important purpose.

- Sinhala language (both spoken and written) changed over the past 2000 years. **The need to re-write it every 100 or so years made sure that the Sinhala script changes were taken into account.** That assured authenticity.
- The following video gives an idea about how those leaves were prepared and what tools were used to write with:

  WebLink: youtube: Ola Leaf manuscripts

4. **The fourth Buddhist Council was the last Council attended exclusively by *Arahants*.** The writing of the Pāli Canon took place during that Council. **That provides credence to the authenticity of the *Tipiṭaka*.** Of course, no one can dispute that the three *Piṭaka* are inter-consistent and also consistent within each *Piṭaka*.

  - The discourses of the Buddha were said to have been delivered in *Māgadhi* ("*maga*" + "*adhi*" or Noble path) language. The written form was called the Pāli. But Pāli does not have its own script, so it was written down with Sinhala script.

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- **That also provides a clear way of sorting out the *Mahāyāna* literature. They are all in Sanskrit and never in Pāli.** *Mahāyānic* philosophers wrote all the Sanskrit *suttā* (more correctly *sutrā*) in Sanskrit.
- Furthermore, the *Tipiṭaka* was NEVER translated to Sanskrit. The Buddha prohibited that. See, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."

"Double-Meanings" of Many Keywords

5. The *Sutta Piṭaka* contains the bulk of the original discourses delivered by the Buddha. It had been specially put into a format suitable for easy oral transmission.

- The Buddha knew that Buddha Dhamma would be going through periods of decline where *bhikkhus* capable of interpreting the *suttā* will not be present. **Thus the *suttā* were composed in a way that only the "conventional" meaning is apparent.** That was a necessary step to preserve the *suttā*, especially before writing became commonplace.
- It is important to remember that Ven. Ananda had memorized all the *suttā* which he then recited at the First Buddhist Council, just three months after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha.
- Ven. Ananda was Buddha's personal assistant over the last few decades of the Buddha's life. It is likely that the Buddha condensed each *sutta* and Ven. Ananda memorized each of them. The Buddha synthesized each *sutta* in a "double meaning" way for them to survive the "dark periods." That point will become clear as we discuss further.
- Then, at the first Buddhist Council, all the *suttā* were recited and were sorted into various categories (*Nikāyās*). We still have that same *Sutta Piṭaka.*
- The *Vinaya Piṭaka* also remains in the same original form. Only the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* was finalized at the Third Buddhist Council. Then all three finalized *Piṭakas* were written down at the Fourth Council. See, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."

Need for Detailed Explanations

6. **The critical point here is that a *sutta* is a CONDENSED version of discourse in many cases.** For example, the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta* was delivered to the five ascetics overnight. Imagine how many written pages would be if written verbatim! Yet, it was summarized in a few pages. The same is true for all the important *suttā*. Otherwise, it would have been impossible to transmit all those thousands of *suttā*.

- Each Pāli keyword (like *ānāpāna, anicca, and anatta*) is packed with a lot of information. Commentaries (called "*Attha Kathā"*) were written to expound on the meaning of important Pāli words and also to explain the key verses (like "*ye dhammā hetuppabbavā..*")

Importance of the Commentaries

7. **Thus, deep *suttas* were meant to be used with the commentaries. Pāli *suttā* are not supposed to be translated word-by-word.**

- Most of those Sinhala commentaries were burned down in the Anuradhapura era; see, "Incorrect Theravada Interpretations – Historical Timeline."
- Fortunately, three original commentaries written by the main disciples of the Buddha (Ven. Sāriputta, Ven. Kaccayana, etc.) during the time of the Buddha had been included in the Pāli Canon (in the *Khuddhaka Nikāya*) and thus survived. The current revival of pure Dhamma by Waharaka *Thero* and a few other *Theros* in Sri Lanka is partially due to their perusal of these three documents (*Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana*). [*Paṭisambhidāmagga* by Ven. Sāriputta and *Petakopadesa*, & *Nettippakarana* by Ven. Kaccayana]

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- Once the deeper meanings stay hidden for long times, only a few with the *Paṭisambhidā Ñāna* can understand AND explain even those three commentaries. Certain *jāti Sotāpannas* are born with that the *Paṭisambhidā Ñāna* from time-to-time. Waharaka *Thero* was one of them. From the time of Buddhaghosa, the deeper meanings had been hidden until Waharaka *Thero* unearthed them in recent years.

Tipiṭaka Transmitted With Mundane Meanings During "Dark Periods"

8. Therefore, there are "dark periods" when *bhikkhus* with the *Paṭisambhidā Ñāna* are not born for long times. During such times, people use conventional interpretations. **And that served the purpose of keeping the *suttā* intact, especially before written texts became common. Even though people understood only the mundane versions, the text was faithfully transmitted.**

- A perfect example is the Ā*nāpānasati Sutta* (some of which are also part of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*). As we discussed in "What is Ānāpāna?", the conventional meaning of the word *ānāpāna* is to tie up "*āna*" with breath inhaling and "*āpāna*" with breath exhaling. That was consistent with the breath meditation that has been there in the world at any time. Many *yogis* practiced it at the time of the Buddha. He learned those methods from such *yogis* before attaining the Buddhahood.
- Other examples are the translation of the keywords of *anicca* and *anatta* as impermanence and "no-self." Even though those two meanings are embedded in the correct meanings, the deeper meanings are broader. There is no English word that has the same meaning as *anicca* (or *anatta*.) Even the word "*dukkha*" DOES NOT refer to just the suffering that one feels. Rather, *Dukkha Sacca* (Noble Truth on Suffering) is about the CAUSES of FUTURE suffering.
- The true meanings of those words will EMERGE as we systematically go through the upcoming posts.

Explanation of Dhamma – *Uddesa*, *Niddesa*, *Patiniddesa*

9. A deep dhamma concept may appear in the Pāli Canon (especially in the *Sutta* and *Abhidhamma*) as just an "*uddesa*" or "utterance."

- "*Niddesa*" is a "brief explanation" that appears in one of the three commentaries mentioned above. Finally, "*patiniddesa*" means explaining in detail with examples to clarify complex or "knotty" points by a *bhikkhu* (or a knowledgeable layperson) during a discourse (or in a text today.) See "Sutta – Introduction."
- For example, in the *suttas* on *Anulōma Paṭicca Samuppāda* it is stated in the *uddesa* version: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ, ..* ending in ".. *Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hotī" ti* OR "the whole mass of suffering." The **STOPPING** of the "the whole mass of suffering" is stated also in the *niddesa* version in *Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda* as, "***avijjā nirodhā*** *saṅkhāra-nirodho,* ***saṅkhāra nirodhā*** *viññāṇa nirodho,.."* ending with "end of the whole mass of suffering."
- However, both *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* arise in an *Arahant*. That seems to be a contradiction when it is stated that *saṅkhāra nirodhā* (cessation of *saṅkhāra*) and *viññāṇa nirodhā* (cessation of *viññāṇa*.)
- In the commentary *Patisambhidamagga Pakarana,* it is clarified in the short form (*niddesa*) to say that those *saṅkhāra* removed by an *Arahant* are *abhisaṅkhāra* and that only *kamma viññāṇa* do not arise in an *Arahant*.
- Then, that needs to be explained in detail (*patiniddesa*) as in the post, "Anulōma Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Sōtapanna Stage."

It Is an Offense to Misinterpret Buddha Dhamma

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10. It is an offense to misinterpret *suttā* or other material in the Pāli Canon. That is in several *suttā* in the WebLink: suttacentral: Bālavagga of Aṅguttara Nikāya 2.21 - 31.

- For example, AN 2.23 is a short *sutta* that says: "*Bhikkhus*, these two misrepresent the Buddha. What two? One who explains what was not spoken by the Buddha as spoken by him. And one who explains what was spoken by the Buddha as not spoken by him. These two misrepresent the Buddha. These are two who slander the *Tathāgatā*."

Summary

11. The following are the key points from the above discussion that I wish to emphasize:

- Many *suttā* are designed to convey "conventional" meanings while keeping the "deep meanings" embedded in them.
- It is those "deep meanings" that bring out the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma.
- Word-to-word translation of the *suttā* does not convey the message of the Buddha. Examples are critical Pāli words like *ānāpāna, anicca,* and *anatta.*
- The surviving three original commentaries in the Pāli Canon (*Tipiṭaka*) can verify the keywords/phrases' deep meanings. Once a Noble Person clarifies them with *Paṭisambhidā Ñāna*, any other Noble Person can explain those meanings to others.

All posts in this section at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

2.2.8.3 Vinaya Piṭaka – More Than Disciplinary Rules

November 26, 2020

Vinaya Piṭaka contains much more information than *Vinaya* rules for *bhikkhus/bhikkhunis*.

Introduction – Need to Consult All Three *Piṭaka*

1. The Buddha said that if there is any doubt or a concept that is not clear, one should check with *Sutta*, *Vinaya*, and *Abhidhamma*. These basically refer to the *Tipiṭaka* (three baskets) of *Sutta Piṭaka, Vinaya Piṭaka*, and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

- Most people refer to the *Sutta Piṭaka* and forget about the other two. *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is a bit hard to understand, and without a firm grasp of basics, it is harder.
- Most people think that the *Vinaya Piṭaka* is just for the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*. But there are sections in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* that have details that are not in the other two *Piṭaka.*
- The following article provides details of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: *Vinaya Piṭaka* – The Basket of the Discipline." We will only discuss some key features.
- For someone who is "new to Buddhism," the introductory article by Bhikkhu Bodhi could be useful: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: The Buddha and His Dhamma."

A Balanced Approach – Importance of the *Vinaya Piṭaka*

2. It is prudent to use a balanced approach to learn Buddha Dhamma. Instead of diving into analyzing deep *suttas*, one needs first to get an idea about the Buddha, the necessary moral background, and basic concepts like *kamma* and rebirth.

- In the beginning, both the *Sutta Piṭaka* and *Vinaya Piṭaka* can be quite helpful. One should get into *Abhidhamma* only after getting a good idea about the background, key concepts, and the ultimate goal.

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- While the *Sutta Piṭaka* discusses dhamma concepts, the *Vinaya Piṭaka* provides the background settings for the following two cases: (1) for many *suttas,* and (2) for many *Vinaya* rules.

Background for Key *Suttā*

3. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* provides an illuminating background account for many *suttas*.

- For example, the WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahāvagga* of the *Vinaya Piṭaka* has a chronological account of the events following Buddha's Enlightenment. The English translation at Sutta Central is good: "WebLink: suttacentral: On Awakening."
- That account describes in detail Buddha's daily activities following the attainment of the Buddhahood. It also explains in detail how the Buddha delivered and discussed, **over several days**, the material condensed in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11) to the five ascetics.
- That is why some highly-condensed *suttas* SHOULD NOT be translated word-by-word. It takes many posts to discuss in detail, even just the key verses of a deep *sutta*. See, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."

Background for *Vinaya* Rules

4. For many years after the Buddha's Enlightenment, there were no rules for the *bhikkhus*. Those who ordained as *bhikkhus* in those early years had fulfilled most of their "*pāramitā*" and did not need much clarification of *dhamma* concepts. They also were 'self-disciplined," and it was not necessary to impose rules.

- Most *Vinaya* rules were set up to handle particular situations where one or more *bhikkhus* had done things that were not appropriate. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* provides background accounts for many such cases. Such accounts provide insights into *dhamma* concepts as well as providing reasons for enacting such rules.
- For example, there was no rule for the *bhikkhus* to abstain from eating after Noon. There were few other reasons to impose that rule, but one reason was to discipline those who started wearing robes to "live an easy life." That rule was enacted probably after 20 years or so, and by that time, most people had become faithful followers of the Buddha. They held *bhikkhus* in high regard and took care of all their needs.
- There is an account in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* for another reason for that rule. One *bhikkhu* went for an alms-collection after dark, and a woman had thrown dirty water from a cooking pot at the *bhikkhu* because she could not see him.

5. Here is another example. Any *bhikkhu* commits a *pārājika* offense (which is one of the four most serious offenses) by declaring supermundane attainments like *jhana* or *magga phala* (*uttarimanussadhamma*), knowing that he does not have such attainments.

- Of course, any *bhikkhu* (or a layperson) can declare **genuine attainment** if the need arose. But if it is done without really having such attainments that is a *pārājika* offense for a *bhikkhu*. He must give up the robes since he would not be able to make progress.
- That *Vinaya* rule was enacted after a group of *bhikkhus* decided to make such claims to receive alms during a famine. That account is described in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*: "WebLink: suttacentral: The training rule on telling truthfully."
- There were reasons for enacting each of the 227 rules for *bhikkhus* and 311 rules for *bhikkhunis*. Those accounts are given in the *Vinaya Piṭaka.*

"The Life of the Buddha" Is a Good Resource

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6. The book, "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli is good to read and keep as a reference for two reasons:

- It provides a chronological record of the Buddha's life (after the Buddhahood),
- Detailed accounts of significant events by combining accounts in the *suttā* with those taken from the *Vinaya Piṭaka*.

7. For example, it provides the background for delivering some major *suttā* or verses.

- For example, there is a detailed account (pp. 55-60) of how the Buddha had to perform even a few miracles to convince Uruvela Kassapa, his two brothers, and 1000 of their followers before they agreed to listen to theWebLink: suttacentral: *Āditta Pariyāya Sutta* (SN 35.28) or the Fire Sermon (page numbers quoted are for the 2001 First BPS Pariyatti edition.)
- So, we can see that it was not easy in those early days for the Buddha to convince some of the ascetics who had their own beliefs of what *Nibbāna* was about.

8. The subsequent chapters provide a good chronological account of what happened until the *Parinibbāna*. One can get a sense of which major *suttā* were delivered at around what time.

- There are accounts on the two chief disciples, and short accounts of other important personalities such as Anāthapiṇḍika, Angulimāla, Visākha, etc. Chapter 7 describes the formation of the order of *bhikkhunis*.
- Several encounters with the *Māra Devaputta* are scattered throughout the book.
- One paragraph on p. 109 is on how the Buddha visited the *Tāvatimsa deva* realm and delivered *Abhidhamma*. A summary was conveyed to Ven. Sariputta expanded it with the help of his students to the form that we have today.
- There is a chapter on Devadatta, which describes events that are not found in *suttā*: For example, how he attained (*anāriya*) *jhānā* and *iddhi* (super-normal powers) powers and using those *iddhi* powers how he appeared on the lap of Prince Ajatasattu as a baby wrapped in snakes.
- It provides a good account of Devadatta's efforts to take the life of the Buddha and how he lost all those super-normal powers and *jhānā* at the end.
- More at "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli."

An Example From the Book

9. I will provide the following as an example of what is in this book that is not available in any *sutta*. It describes how the five ascetics attained the *Sotāpanna* stage over several days with the delivery and discussions of the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.

Here is a direct quote from p. 45 of the book (starting from the point where the Buddha had just finished the first delivery of the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*):

"Then *Aññata Koṇḍañña*, who had seen and reached and found and penetrated the *Dhamma*, whose uncertainties were left behind, whose doubts had vanished, who had gained perfect confidence and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation, said to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, I wish to go forth under the Blessed One and to receive the full admission?"

"Come, *bhikkhu,*" the Blessed One said, "The *Dhamma* is well proclaimed. Live the holy life for the complete ending of suffering." And that was his full admission.

Then the Blessed One taught and instructed the rest of the *bhikkhus* with a talk on the *Dhamma*. As he did so, there arose in the venerable Vappa and the venerable Bhaddiya, the spotless, immaculate vision of the *Dhamma*. All that is subjected to arising is subjected to cessation. They, too, asked for and received the full admission.

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These, having seen *dhamma*, attained *dhamma*, knowing *dhamma* … having attained without the help of another full confidence in the teacher's instruction, spoke thus to the Blessed One: "May we, Blessed One, receive the going forth in the Blessed One's presence, may we receive ordination?"

Then living on the food they brought to him, the Blessed One taught and instructed the rest of the *bhikkhus* with a talk on the *Dhamma*. All six lived on the food brought back by the three of them. Then there arose in the venerable Mahānāma and the venerable Assaji the spotless, immaculate vision of the *Dhamma*, and they too asked for and received the full admission".

More Resources on Background Material

10. The following is also a good resource: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: A Sketch of the Buddha's Life: Readings from the Pāli Canon."

- That post has extractions for various *suttas* and provides accounts before and after the Enlightenment.
- Another one (presumably tailored to young children) is: "WebLink: budsas.org: A Young People's Life of the Buddha."
- In the next post, I will provide an overview of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

2.2.8.4 Abhidhamma Piṭaka – Deeper Analyses of Concepts

December 3, 2020

Abhidhamma Piṭaka Goes Into Fine Details

1. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* plays a critical role in the *Tipiṭaka*. *Abhidhamma* encompasses the deeper and detailed accounts of the material in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. We can consider the following analogy to get an idea of the role of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

- To drive a car, one needs to learn how to use various car components. Even more importantly, one needs to practice driving. That is how one needs to use the *Sutta Piṭaka*. It is necessary to learn the key concepts in *suttas* AND to practice what one learns.
- In that analogy, *Abhidhamma* plays the role of a detailed account of how the car is assembled and the role played by each part. If the car breaks down, a knowledgeable technician can refer to that technical manual and figure out the problem. Similarly, someone knowledgeable in *Abhidhamma* can clarify a deep concept that needs a full and detailed analysis.
- In most cases, it is not necessary to learn *Abhidhamma* in detail. However, it helps to have a cursory background in *Abhidhamma* to understand deep *suttas* better.
- The following article provides a brief description of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* – The Basket of Abhidhamma."

Historical Background

2. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* was finalized at the Third Buddhist Council held about 200 years after the *Parinibbāna* (passing away) of the Buddha. Many English scholars (and texts) say that the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* was a late addition to the *Tipiṭaka*. That is a misunderstanding.

- In the Introduction to his book, "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," Bhikkhu Bodhi provides a detailed account of the history of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*; see pp. 9-11 of Ref. 1. An account with a few more details is given in Ref. 2. That can be summarized as follows.
- In the seventh year after attaining the *Buddhahood*, the Buddha visited the *Tāvatiṃsa Deva* world. There he delivered the material in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* to *Devas* where the chief recipient was his

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mother Mahāmāyā Devi, who had been born there. The material was delivered over three months, and each day the Buddha would descend to the human world for food. Each day, he would provide a synopsis of the teaching given to the *Devas* on that day to Ven. Sāriputta.

- Having learned the key aspects of the *Abhidhamma,* Ven. Sāriputta taught it to his 500 pupils, and thus the basis of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* was established. They needed to work out a detailed account of the material in a way that others could understand.
- It took several generations of *bhikkhus* of the lineage of Ven. Sāriputta — over 200 years — to finalize the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.*
- Reference 2 provides a list of *bhikkhus* who contributed that effort, including Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa, who apparently contributed to the final version at the Third Buddhist Council.

3. At the First Buddhist Council, just three months after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, only a framework of the *Abhidhamma* theory was recited. More was added at the second Council, and the task was completed only at the third Council led by Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa.

- That completed *Tipiṭaka* that was written down in 29 BCE at the Fourth Buddhist Council; see, "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."
- It is essential to realize that hundreds of *Arahants* at the Fourth Council wrote down the whole *Tipiṭaka*. That included the complete *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.* Therefore, we can be confident about the authenticity of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* AND the whole *Tipiṭaka.*
- That is why it is incorrect to say that *Abhidhamma* was "invented" by *bhikkhus* after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha.
- Those who make such statements have not studied *Abhidhamma* or have not understood the in-depth analyses in *Abhidhamma.* The minute details of the very fast *citta vithi* are discernible only to the mind of a Buddha. No one else can even invent such concepts. It is the inter-consistency that makes ALL the material in the *Tipiṭaka* trustworthy. See, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

The Enormity of the Material in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*

4. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* contains about the same *dhamma* groups (*dhammakkhandha*) as the *Sutta Piṭaka* and *Vinaya Piṭaka* COMBINED. It is said to contain 42,000 *dhamma* groups compared to 21,000 for each of the other two. Thus, there are 84,000 *dhamma* groups in the *Tipiṭaka*.

- Philosophers talk about mind and matter as the two basic entities in the world. Scientists have studied the matter in great detail. But neither scientists nor philosophers have any idea of even how to BEGIN to describe the mind. We have discussed that in "Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview."
- *Abhidhamma* breaks down all *rūpa* to be combinations of 28 elementary *rupa*. Those 28 types of *rupa* are in the physical bodies of living beings and all inert matter.
- Then the mind is described in terms of *citta* (loosely translated as "thoughts") and *cetasika* (mental factors.) There are 89 (or 121 depending on categorization) types of *citta,* which arise with different combinations of 52 types of *cetasika*. Thoughts of any living being can be described in terms of those entities.
- To analyze the concepts in the *suttas* in terms of those "basic entities" is an exhilarating experience. Concepts can be investigated to depths as much as one wishes (and is willing to spend the time and effort).

Introduction to *Abhidhamma* – Current Standard Text

5. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* consists of the following categories: *Dhammasaṅghaṇī* (Classification of *Dhammas*), *Vibhaṅga* (The Book of Divisions), *Kathāvatthu* (Points of Controversy) *Puggala Paññatti*

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(Description of Individuals), *Dhātukathā* (Discussion about Elements), *Yamaka* (The Book of the Pairs), and *Paṭṭhāna* (The Book of Relations). *Kathāvatthu* provides an in-depth account of controversial issues discussed at the Third Buddhist Council compiled by venerable Moggaliputta Tissa. *Mahayāna* concepts like "*antarābhava*" were shown to be inconsistent, for example. See "Antarābhava and Gandhabba."

- There is a vast and complex material in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.* This is why it took so long to finalize that material per #2 and #3 above.
- It is doubtful that anyone in recent years has read and comprehended all the material in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, especially *Paṭṭhāna* or the *Yamaka.*
- Most people try to understand one summarized text to get a basic idea about the contents in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.* That standard text is *Abhidhammatta Sangaha,* a summary of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* compiled by Ven. Anuruddha, an Indian *bhikkhu*. That text does not go to deeper issues but provides the fundamentals.
- That Pāli text was translated to English by Ven. Narada in 1956 (Ref. 3.) Subsequently, it was revised by Bhikkhu Bodhi in 1993 (Ref. 1.)

Critical Aspects of Buddha Dhamma

6. Even if one can understand the whole of the *Abhidhamma* theory, one MAY NOT understand the Buddha's message. **One must first understand the Four Noble Truths (same as understanding *Paṭicca Samuppāda* or the true meanings of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*.)**

- *Abhidhamma* only facilitates one to analyze situations to deep levels ONLY IF one starts with understanding the Buddha's message. That message is that there is a rebirth process where most rebirths happen in the four lowest realms where there are harsh levels of suffering. The only way to escape future suffering is to stop the rebirth process and to attain *Nibbāna*.
- Once one has that basic understanding, *Abhidhamma* helps make that picture very clear. One can resolve any remaining issues/doubts by studying the detailed analyses in *Abhidhamma*. **In a way, one cannot even begin to grasp the value of a Buddha until one can see deep concepts explained in an amazingly consistent way from many different angles.**
- *Abhidhamma* can solidify and "fill-in-the-blanks" of Buddha Dhamma from the *suttā*, which can be an exhilarating experience.

Benefits of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*

7. Even though it is not necessary to have a deep knowledge of *Abhidhamma*, a basic understanding can be quite valuable.

- *Abhidhamma* starts at a basic level and proceeds to get to deeper levels systematically. Therefore, one can get a good understanding of key concepts like *kamma, cetana, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*, etc., by studying introductory *Abhidhamma*.
- Even if one does not wish to study *Abhidhamma* in detail, those basic concepts need to be well-understood.
- We will start discussing those essential concepts next.

The other two *Piṭakas* were discussed in the subsection, "Tipiṭaka – A Systematic Approach."

REFERENCES

1. "Bhikkhu_Bodhi-Comprehensive_Manual_of_Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000); this is a revised and updated version of Ref. 3 below. (click the link to open the pdf).

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2. *Dhammasaṅghani* (first of the Abhidhamma books) in the Buddha Jayanthi Edition of the *Tipiṭaka* (2005); pp. XIII-XIV (in the Sinhala language.) Here is a link to an online version of the "Buddha Jayanthi Edition of the *Tipitaka*."

3. "A Manual of Abhidhamma" by Narada Thero (1956.) (click the link to open the pdf).

2.2.9 Antarābhava and Gandhabba

December 11, 2020

- Antarābhava – No Connection to Gandhabba
- Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu – Not Relevant to Gandhabba
- How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba
- Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka – Gandhabba Example

2.2.9.1 Antarābhava – No Connection to Gandhabba

December 11, 2020; revised December 12, 2020 (#7 revised and #8 added)

Antarābhava – Need to Understand the Terminology

1. *Antarābhava* is not a concept in Buddha Dhamma. *Antarābhava* ("*antara*" + "*bhava*") means "in-between *bhava*." There are no such "gaps" between two existences (*bhava*.) It was a heretical view that existed even before the formal emergence of *Mahāyāna*.

- Some current *Theravadins* have the misconception that the *gandhabba* state (mental body or *manomaya kāya*) is the same as *antarābhava,* and thus needs to be rejected.
- However, the *gandhabba* state encompasses the whole of the "human *bhava,*" within which there are many rebirths with physical human bodies.
- I will use two rebirths accounts **to clarify the terminology** and also to **clarify this hugely misunderstood issue.**

Rebirth Account of Jeffrey Keene

WebLink: youtube: Reincarnation, BORN AGAIN?

2. General John Gordon died in the Civil war. He was reborn as Jeffrey Keene in recent years.

- They are two "human bodies" that resulted from the same *gandhabba* (mental body or *manomaya kāya*). **Those two births (as General Gordon and Jeffrey Keene) are within the same "human *bhava*."**
- When General Gordon died, the mental body (*gandhabba*) came out of that dead body. Then that *gandhabba* was in the "*paraloka*" waiting for a suitable womb.
- Many years later, *gandhabba* was pulled into Jeffrey Keene's mother's womb, which is how he was born (*jāti*) with that physical body.
- Therefore, both General Gordon and Jeffrey Keene are in the same "life-stream." They belong to the "same human *bhava*."
- This clearly explains the position of the Buddha about rebirth. Jeffrey Keene is NOT the same as General Gordon. However, Jeffrey Keene's life is irrevocably connected to that of General Gordon. Therefore, it is also NOT correct to say that there in no connection between them.
- It is the same HUMAN mental body (*gandhabba*) that was reborn (*jāti*) with physical human bodies twice (as General Gordon and Jeffrey Kean).

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3. A few more observations may be helpful.

- Even though the physical bodies of General Gordon and Jeffrey Keene were remarkably close, that does not happen all the time. Parents' physical features (their DNA) also contribute to the physical features of any child.
- There is a large time gap between those two lives. It is possible that there could have been more births with physical bodies in between.
- The time gap between successive lives can vary hugely. In some cases, there may be only days or months, but more typically, there are gaps of several years.
- The *gandhabba* does not have the choice of "selecting a womb." When a zygote is created in the womb of a woman following sexual intercourse, a *gandhabba* matching the parents' general *gati* is pulled into the womb. See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

Rebirth Account of James Leininger

WebLink: youtube: Reincarnation - Airplane Boy (abc Primetime)

4. The relevant points are noted below.

@ **beginning**: The narrator asks: "Could we come back as someone else"?

- It is not "someone else" that comes back or reborn. It is the same life-stream with a different appearance (physically.) Those successive births (*jāti*) are within the same human *bhava*. In other words, it is the same "life-stream." See, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream."

@ **0.3 minutes**: James Houston, Jr. was shot down over the Pacific Ocean on March 3, 1945. James Leininger was born some 60 years later and started talking about "getting shot by the Japanese."

@ **3:20 minutes**: The narrator says, "dead can be reborn."

- That is not the right way to describe the situation. It is the same life-stream that is reborn with a different physical body!

@ **4 minutes**: Usually, a child's memories of a previous life fades away around 7-8 years.

@ **5 minutes**: James Leininger's own account of getting shot.

@ **7:30 minutes**: James Leininger provided the name of a friend, Jack Larson, from his previous life, and correctly says that his plane took off from the ship "Natoma." This is STRONG evidence.

@ **8:20 minutes**: He describes himself as James 3 because, in his previous life, he was James Houston, Jr (i.e., James 2).

@ **10:40 minutes**: The dad, Bruce Leininger, says that he thinks his son came back because "he had something to finish."

- No. We all come back. We can come back in human form and also in other forms corresponding to any of the 31 realms.

@ **10:55 minutes**: Comments of Anne Barron, sister of James Houston, Jr.

@ **11:30 minutes**: Comments of Prof. Kurtz, who does not believe in rebirth, says the account of James Leininger (a two-year-old) is made up. It is, of course, up to each person to make that decision. There are many more rebirth accounts and other types of evidence as Near-Death Experiences and Out-of-the Body Experiences; see "Evidence for Rebirth."

Are Those Successive Births in Different *Bhava*?

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5. The above two accounts provide us with the opportunity to clarify the two concepts of human *bhava* and human *jāti*.

- Those who question the *gandhabba* state must answer the following questions: **"Are James Houston and James Leininger in two different bhava?"**
- If they answer "yes," then the following must be true: In between those two human *bhava*, that lifestream must have been in a different *bhava*, such as animal *bhava* or *Deva bhava*.
- However, the Buddha clearly stated getting a human *bhava* is extremely difficult. There could be millions or even billions of years between successive human bhava. See, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- Therefore, it is clear that those two successive births (*jāti*) are within the same human *bhava*. Further details at, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

The "*Antarābhava*" Issue Raised at Third Buddhist Council Was a Different Issue

6. The concept of an *antarābhava* was discussed and rejected at the Third Buddhist Council. It is documented in the *Kathāvatthu* section of the *Abhidhamma Pitaka*.

- There was no discussion on *gandhabba* regarding that issue. I will discuss that in detail in the next post, "*Antarābhava* Discussion in *Kathāvatthu* – Not Relevant to *Gandhabba*."
- Therefore, it is a critical error to identify the *gandhabba* state as an *antarābhava.* Rather, the *gandhabba* state encompasses a whole human *bhava*.

Insights on "Self" and "No-Self" Issue

7. This is also a good opportunity to get insights into the "Self" and "No-Self" Issues.

- Is James Leininger the SAME as James Houston? Of course not. They lived very different lives and did not look the same either. Is Jeffrey Keene the same as General Gordon in #2 above? Even though there were some physical resemblances, they were very different and lived different lives. As we can see clearly, the physical bodies of those two individuals are entirely different. James Houston's physical body had disintegrated a long time ago. At some point in the future, that "lifestream" may be born a *Deva, Brahma*, animal, etc. No ESSENCE propagates from life-to-life, especially from bhava-to-bhava. A Deva bhava is vastly different from a human bhava or animal bhava. **That is why the Buddha rejected the idea of an unchanging "self" or "soul."**
- However, there is obviously a STRONG CONNECTION between the two lives in each of those cases. There would be no James Leininger if there were no James Houston. James Leininger is a descendant of that same "lifestream." As we can see clearly, the physical bodies of those two individuals are entirely different. James Houston's physical body had disintegrated a long time ago. **However, there is an UNBROKEN connection in the mental body.** In fact, James Leininger must have inherited SOME of the mental characteristics– such as *anusaya* — of James Houston (there would have been some changes in the intervening time.) **Thus, the Buddha rejected the idea of "no-self" as well. As long as the samsaric process is there, an unbroken (mental) lineage exists between any two stages within that lifestream.**

Nothing In This World Worthwhile to be Taken as "Mine"

8. The real issue is whether there is anything in this world that is worthwhile to be "**taken to be mine**." **Immoral actions done with such vision/perception can create *kammic* energies leading to "bad bhava" such as animal *bhava*.** That is what we need to be concerned with. That is what the Buddha stated in his very first discourse by, "*saṃkhittena **pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā***" OR "in brief, the **origin of**

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suffering is the craving for the five aggregates of *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāna* (*pancupādānakkhandha*)." **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

- Even though human *bhava* is much longer than 100 years, living beings spend most of their time in other existences (*bhava*) with unimaginable suffering because of not seeing that "big picture" of the long rebirth process that spans not only human *bhava* but much worse *bhava*.
- When the human *bhava* ends and a "bad *bhava*" (for example an animal *bhava*) is grasped, that animal is NOT the preceding human. But it has a "cause and effect connection" to the previous human *bhava*. When in animal *bhava*, for example, that animal cannot even think about these issues; but it still has the perception of "me and mine." **But that animal is totally helpless. That is *anatta* nature! This is the outcome of having the wrong view of "'This is mine, I am this, this is my self'".** That is the meaning of the Pāli verse, "*etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'" ti*
- That change of *bhava* happens at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, at the end of the human *bhava*. **There could be many "deaths" of human bodies before that.** For example, General Gordon and Jeffrey Keene in #2 above were just two births (*jāti*) within a single human existence (*bhava*.) That is the difference between *bhava* and *jāti*, in this context. See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."
- These are complex issues. The key is to get some traction, and then it will become easier.

2.2.9.2 Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu – Not Relevant to Gandhabba

December 16, 2020; revised December 17, 2020

Antarābhava Was Discussed at the Third Buddhist Council

1. The concept of an *antarābhava* was discussed and rejected at the Third Buddhist Council. It is documented in the *Kathāvatthu* section of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

- Many current *Theravādins* say that the concept of an *antarābhava* is associated with *gandhabba*. They say that since *antarābhava* was rejected at that Council, the concept of a *gandhabba* was rejected.
- However, *gandhabba* was not even mentioned in that discussion at the Third Buddhist Council. I will fully translate and discuss the relevant sections of *Kathāvatthu* in this post to put this issue to rest.

Antarābhava Discussion in *Kathāvatthu*

2. There were many "heretical views" that were discussed and emphatically rejected by a group of *Arahants* at the Third Buddhist Council held in India at the time of Emperor Asoka. Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa recorded those discussions in the *Kathāvatthu* section of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.*

- The relevant section is "WebLink: suttacentral: Antarābhavakathā," and an incomplete English translation is there: "WebLink: suttacentral: Of an Intermediate State."
- For those who understand the Sinhala Language, a complete Sinhala translation is in the Buddha Jayanthi *Tipiṭaka*. See, pp. 340-355 of "WebLink: PDF file: 48.OTAP_KathaVatthu_Prakarana_2-Sinhala."
- Here, we will translate some key verses, first providing the Pāli text and then a translation (with details as necessary.) Hopefully, anyone will understand what was rejected and what was not rejected (or even discussed.)

Is *Antarābhava* Within the Three Major Existences?

3. At the very beginning of the Pāli text, we can see that the wrong view about an "*antarābhava*" or an "intermediate state" was the following.

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- *Theravādins* ask: "*Atthi antarābhavoti?* or "Is there an intermediate state?"
- The other side (heretics) says "*Āmantā"* or "Yes."
- *Theravādins* ask: "*Kāmabhavoti?"* or "Is it in the *kāma bhava*?" and the answer is "*Na hevaṃ vattabbe"* or "That is not so."
- Similarly, the heretics say that this "intermediate state" in not in the *rūpa bhava* or the *arūpa bhava.*

However, all existences in this world MUST BE within one of those three major existences: *kāma bhava, rūpa bhava, arūpa bhava.* Then each of those sub-divide into minor categories. For example, in the *kāma bhava,* there are human *bhava*, animal *bhava*, etc.

- **But the heretics say that the "intermediate state" is not in any of the existences.**

Is *Antarābhava* In Between the Three Major Existences?

4. *Theravādins* ask: "*Kāmabhavassa ca rūpabhavassa ca* ***antare*** *atthi antarābhavoti*?" or "Does this intermediate state exist **in between** *kāma bhava* and *rūpa bhava"?*

- Heretics: No.
- Then the *Theravādins* declare "*Hañci kāmabhavassa ca rūpabhavassa ca antare natthi antarābhavo, no ca vata re vattabbe—"atthi antarābhavo" ti*" OR "If you affirm that there is no intermediate state between *kāma bhava* and *rūpa bhava,* then you cannot maintain your proposition."
- In the same way, the heretics admit that there is no intermediate state between *rūpa bhava* and *arūpa bhava,* and the *Theravādins* point out that the heretics' position is untenable.

Antarābhava In Terms of *Yoni*, *Gati*, *Viññāṇaṭṭhiti*, *Sattāvāsa*

5. All living beings in this world belong to those three major types of *bhava*. Buddha explained all possible existences in this world in many other ways as well.

- All living beings can be categorized according to four types of *yoni* (modes of birth), *gati* (according to five major types of *saṃsāric* habits), seven types of *viññāṇaṭṭhiti* (stations of consciousness), and nine types of abodes (*sattāvāsa.*)
- The first two categories are discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahāsīhanāda Sutta* (MN 12)." The seven types of *viññāṇaṭṭhiti* discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Sattaviññānaṭṭhi Sutta* (AN 7.44)" and the nine types of *sattāvāsa* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Sattāvāsa Sutta* (AN 9.24)"
- So, *Theravādins* ask: "*Pañcamī sā yoni, chaṭṭhamī sā gati, aṭṭhamī sā viññāṇaṭṭhiti, dasamo so sattāvāsoti*?" OR "Are there five types of *yoni* or six types of *gati* or eight types of *viññāṇaṭṭhiti* oo ten types of *sattāvāsa*?"
- **Heretics admit that this *antarābhava* cannot be found under any of those categories.**

Does *Antarābhava* Fall Under Other Possible Categories?

6. There are many other ways of categorization discussed in that section "WebLink: suttacentral: Antarābhavakathā." However, the English translation there at Sutta Central is not complete.

- For those who understand the Sinhala Language, a complete Sinhala translation is in the Buddha Jayanthi *Tipiṭaka* per #2 above.
- The point is that *antarābhava* cannot be found under ANY possible category that a living being can be put into.
- This post would be very long if I translate the whole section. However, let us look at one more important category.

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Does a Being in *Antarābhava* Have *Pañcakkhandha* (Five Aggregates)?

7. *Theravādins* ask: "*kāmabhave/rūpabhave/arūpabhave atthi rūpaṃ vedanā saññā saṅkhārā viññāṇanti?*" OR "Do the five aggregates exist in *kāma bhava, rūpa bhava* and in *arūpa bhava*?"

- Heretics: "*Āmantā*" OR "Yes." As they agreed, the five aggregates are associated with a living-being in ANY *bhava*.
- *Theravādins* ask: "*Antarābhave atthi rūpaṃ vedanā saññā saṅkhārā viññāṇanti?* OR "Do the five aggregates exist in *antarābhava*?"
- Heretics: "*Na hevaṃ vattabbe*.." OR "That cannot be said."
- **Here, the heretics admit that a being in *antarābhava* cannot be described in terms of the five aggregates!**

No Basis for the Claim of an *Antarābhava*

8. Therefore, it was shown without any doubt that the concept of an *Antarābhava* does not fit into Buddha Dhamma.

- However, there was absolutely no connection made to the concept of *gandhabba*.
- Anyone can read the Pāli text in "WebLink: suttacentral: Antarābhavakathā" and see that the word *gandhabba* is not even mentioned.

Antarābhava Concept of Those Heretics Is Not The Same as *Gandhabba*

9. If the term *gandhabba* did not even come up in the discussion on *antarābhava* at the Third Buddhist Council, why do SOME present-day *Theravādins* say that the concept of *gandhabba* was rejected at that Council? The simple answer is that they may not have even read the text in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Antarābhavakathā" section of the *Tipiṭaka*!

- I have heard many *bhikkhus* just repeat what they heard from someone else, that the *gandhabba* state is a *Mahāyāna* concept, and it refers to an "intermediate state" or "*antarābhava.*" They don't even try to verify that by looking up the *Tipiṭaka*.
- **They may misunderstand that a human "*bhava*" starts with a human's birth (as a baby from a mother's womb) and that it ends when that physical body dies.**
- That is a VERY BAD wrong view!
- Let us consider the following evidence against that false belief.

Do "Human *Bhava*" Last Only 100 Years and "Fly *Bhava*" Last Only Several Days?

10. We know that a "dense body" of a human lasts for about 100 years, and a housefly lives only several days. **But that time is only a small fraction of the lifetime of the corresponding *gandhabba*!** Whether it is a human or a housefly, it will be in that existence or *bhava* (as a human or a fly) for many thousands of years.

- As we know, the Buddha has emphasized strongly that it is VERY DIFFICULT to get a human existence (*bhava*.) See, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- On the other hand, many rebirth accounts from children worldwide show that they had been born with human bodies only several years previously! See, "Antarābhava – No Connection to Gandhabba."
- Those previous births were within the same human *bhava*. It was the same human *gandhabba* that led to both those human births.

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11. When the dense physical body of a human dies, that is not necessarily the end of the "human *bhava*." Unless the *kammic* energy of that human *gandhabba* is exhausted, *gandhabba* will stay alive. It will be pulled into another suitable womb at a later time. In between adjacent "births with human bodies," human existence continues in the *gandhabba* state.

- **That *gandhabba* state is NOT an "*antarābhava*." It is IN "human *bhava*."** A human *gandhabba* is human and has five aggregates. There is a subtle *rūpa* (invisible to us) associated with that *gandhabba* with a *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) and five *pasāda rūpa*. It can think. It just cannot touch, smell, or taste, but can see and hear. See, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."

Similarly, when a fly dies, it will stay in that existence as a "fly *gandhabba*" and get into an egg to form another fly. For a fly, that process will occur an uncountable times before that "fly existence" ends!

- When a fly dies, it will stay as a "fly *gandhabba*" until it is pulled into an egg to start making another "dense fly body."

Human (or Animal) *Bhava* (Existence) Can Last Thousands of Years

12. The four types of *yoni* (modes of births) mentioned in #5 above are the following: *Aṇḍajā* (egg born), *jalābujā* (womb born), *saṃsedajā* (typically translated as "moisture born" but has a better explanation), and *opapātikā* (instantaneous birth).

- However, when a transition from one *bhava* to another (say, from human *bhava* to an animal *bhava*) takes place, **first only an *opapātikā* birth occurs where a NEW mental body (*manomaya kāya*) is generated by *kammic* energy.**
- In many realms — including all 20 *Brahma* realms — that *opapātika* birth spans the whole *bhava*. They are born one time with a subtle (invisible to us) "mental body" (with a trace of matter), and that is all they have.
- However, in the human and animal realms, that "mental body" will get into a womb or an egg (in animals), leading to a physical body's birth. Those are conventionally called births (*jāti*) within those two *bhava*. That **"mental body" in the human or animal realms** is given a special name of *gandhabb*a.
- Those womb-based and egg-based births are two types of "births" mentioned above: *aṇḍajā* and *jalābujā,* respectively. In some instances, the chemical composition needed to make the "seed" (for example, an animal's egg) forms in natural processes, and that is the third type of *saṃsedajā* birth.

13. As mentioned above, *Brahmas* and *Devas* do not go through the *gandhabba* state. They are born instantaneously (*opapātika* birth) and live for very long times (their whole life in that state.) In fact, *Brahmas*' subtle "bodies" are very similar to the mental bodies (*gandhabba* state) of humans or animals. See, "Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kaya."

- It is mostly in the human and animal realms that first, a subtle *manomaya kāya* is born instantaneously followed by the arising of dense physical bodies with one one of the other three possibilities.
- We have discussed the birth of a human baby in "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception." Many such "births with physical bodies" can take place within a single human *bhava*.
- Now let us briefly discuss a few associated issues/conventions/terminology.

Sometimes *Gandhabba* State Referred to as *Paṭisandhi Viññāṇa*

14. The "descend" of that *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* to a womb is discussed in several *suttas*, including "WebLink: suttacentral: Assalāyana Sutta (MN 93)" where the term "*gandhabba*" is specifically used: "*Jānāma mayaṃ, bho—yathā gabbhassa avakkanti hoti. Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti,* ***gandhabbo*** *ca paccupaṭṭhito hoti; evaṃ tiṇṇaṃ sannipātā gabbhassa avakkanti hotī'ti."*

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Translated: "We do know that, sir. An embryo is conceived when these three things come together—copulation of the mother and father, the mother is in the fertile part of her menstrual cycle, and the presence of a ***gandhabba***." This is explained in detail in "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- But in some other *suttas,* Such as "WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahānidāna Sutta* (DN 15)" the *gandhabba* is also referred to as *paṭisandhi viññāṇa.* in some cases. That is because that *manomaya kāya* is created by the *kammic* energy associated with a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa.*
- For details, see "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka."

Other Use of the Name "*Gandhabba*"

15. There are a class of *Devas* called "*gandhabba*"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Suddhika Sutta* (SN 31.1)" and the following many *suttas* in SN 31 (*Gandhabba Vagga*.) There are numerous types of *Devas* (in lower *Deva* realms) who intake (*abba*) **odors of various plants and flowers** (*gandha*), and thus that name. "WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahāsamaya Sutta* (DN 20)" identifies Dhataraṭṭha, King of the East is identified as "Chief of the *Gandhabba Devas*."

- There is also a group of *petas* with the name "*gandhabba*." **They inhale "foul odors."**
- To add to that, human *gandhabbas* are sometimes referred to as "*tirokuḍḍa*" or "*tirokuṭṭa*" because they can go through walls. See "WebLink: suttacentral: Tirokuṭṭa Sutta (Kp7)."
- Understanding the *Tipiṭaka* requires checking for inter-consistencies with a good understanding of underlying concepts and terminology usage.
- The word "**right**" can mean two different things in "turn **right**" and "you are **right**." Similarly, the word "*gandhabba*" needs to be understood in the context of a particular situation.

2.2.9.3 How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba

December 22, 2020; revised December 23, 2020

The question "**How do we see?**" remains unanswered. The short post by the National Eye Institute, "WebLink: nei.nih.gov: How the Eyes Work," concludes: "These **electrical signals** travel from the retina through the optic nerve to the brain. **Then the brain turns the signals into the images you see**." That does not explain the important part, the EXPERIENCE.

How Do We See?

1. Let us systematically see what happens when we "see" a tree, for example. Please don't just read through, but stop and think about each point. There is a lot of information condensed in this post (true for most posts, but especially this one).

- Light reflected off of the tree falls on our eyes and forms an image of that tree on the retina in the back of the eye. As you can imagine, that image is tiny. That image is then transmitted to the brain in terms of a chemical/electrical signal.
- How does the brain "see" the tree using that chemical/electrical signal?
- Furthermore, we "see" that tree in great detail: leaves, individual flowers, fruits, etc. How is that possible? The images that land on the back of the eyes are microscopic.
- Someone who has thought a lot about this issue is Jeff Hawkins, who is actively engaged in artificial intelligence (AI). In his book, "On Intelligence," he discusses current scientific knowledge on vision and other sensory inputs (Ref. 1.)

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Jeff Hawkins's Book "On Intelligence"

2. Starting on p. 55 of his book, Hawkins discusses how the image that falls on the back of the eye is transmitted to the brain: "But let's take a closer look. Visual information from the outside world is sent to your brain via a million fibers in your optic nerve. .",

- "You can visualize these inputs as a bundle of electrical wires or a bundle of optical fibers.." he writes, "The inputs to the brain are like those fibers, but they are called axons, and they carry neural signals called "action potentials" or "spikes," which are partly chemical and partly electrical..".
- As discussed in that book, visual signals and all sense inputs (sounds, taste, smell, and body touch) to the brain are of the same type. You hear a sound, see the light, and feel pressure, **but inside your brain, there isn't any fundamental difference between these different types of neural signals**. An action potential is an action potential.
- Scientists have not been able to figure out how the brain distinguishes those different types of signals. Moreover, they have no idea how the mind "sees the light" or an image of that tree. Same for the other senses.

How Are Electrical/Chemical Signals Sensed or Experienced?

3. To quote more from that book (p. 56): "Your perceptions and knowledge about the world are built from these patterns. **There is no light inside your head. It is dark in there. There is no sound entering your brain either; it is quiet inside.** In fact, the brain is the only part of your body that has no senses itself. A surgeon could stick a finger into your brain, and you would not feel it. All the information that enters your mind comes in as spatial and temporal patterns on the axons".

- **It is a mystery how those chemical and electrical signals coming to the brain are sensed as vision, sound, taste, smell, and body-touch by the mind.**

All Existing Scientific Theories Are Speculations

4. Scientists are trying to solve this puzzle by looking for answers in the brain. They have come to the end of the line here.

- Jeff Hawkins's book was written in 2004. The video in Ref. 2 (which discusses the brain) was posted in 2006. He and many other scientists have done much work since that time. Yet they have made NO PROGRESS on the key issue of "how those sensory events are EXPERIENCED."
- There are, of course, many THEORIES on that connection. For example, some have suggested that **consciousness (EXPERIENCE) arises in microtubules in nerve cells in the brain**; see Ref. 3. However, microtubules are there (even though different in structure) in plants too. But plants, of course, cannot think.
- **No matter how much they try, scientists WILL NOT be able to find a way to say that mental phenomena can arise in inert matter.**
- Before we discuss Buddha's description, let us review some relevant findings from recent scientific studies.

Tiny Oak Seed Has the Blueprint for an Oak Tree

5. A tiny oak seed has the blueprint for the huge oak tree. That seed extracts necessary "materials" from the soil and "builds" that tree! Think about how complex that process is, i.e., **oak seed giving rise to an oak tree!**

WebLink: youtube: Acorn to oak tree time-lapse

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- The video does not show the latter stages of growing into a huge oak tree over many years.
- As we can see, all necessary "materials for the tree" are extracted from the soil. The seed only has the blueprint for the tree!

Gandhabba Has the "Blueprint" or the "Master Plan" for a Human Body

6. The growth of a baby inside a womb (and then outside the womb) is not different from a seed growing into a tree.

- The zygote (formed by an egg from mother and sperm from father) is not different from a seed.
- The MAJOR difference is that a human can THINK and a tree cannot.
- **The THINKING part in a human comes from the *gandhabba*!** We discussed these details in the posts "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- Let us discuss another piece of evidence from recent scientific findings.

Vision Is Not Continuous

7. Vision or "seeing" appears to us as continuous. We see people moving around, vehicles moving, animals running around, etc. However, in reality, "seeing" happens due to a series of "snapshots" that our physical eyes take. **Those chemical and electrical signals mentioned above come in packets of about 10-millisecond duration.**

- As an example, let us take the case of seeing a tree. The eyes send a series of "data packets" (chemical and electrical signals per #2, #3 above) to the brain. It is NOT a continuous stream of data that arrives at the brain via the optic nerve. The signal comes in "packets." Similar "data packets" come in from the other four physical senses. They are processed (in parallel) by the brain.
- Recent scientific studies show that a human needs at least 10-20 milliseconds (1000 milliseconds = 1 second) to look at the picture to recognize it. Similarly, a "sound packet" of a duration of about 30 milliseconds can be detected and recognized. Thus, it seems that the brain processes sensory data in packets of about 10-30 milliseconds.
- Some of those processing may happen in parallel in different regions in the brain. Further details in "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy." It is essential to read this post if one needs to understand Buddha's explanation fully.
- However, scientists have no idea how those "data packets" lead to seeing, hearing, etc. (actual sensory experiences)!
- Now we can start discussing Buddha's explanation.

Sense Experience Happens in the "Mental Body" (*Gandhabba*)

8. **Actual "seeing" (and hearing, smelling, etc.) goes on at the *hadaya vatthu* located in the *gandhabbā* or the mental body. This is the key point.**

- **In the case of "seeing a tree," the brain processes the data received from the eyes to a level that scientists CANNOT probe.** They are reduced (or "broken down") to the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level below the elementary particle level reached by scientists. At that stage, that signal can be transmitted with the mental body of the *gandhabba* to *hadaya vatthu.* **That is where the sensory experience takes place!**
- As discussed in #7, the brain takes about 10-30 milliseconds to PROCESS data from each sense door. When we are watching a movie, for example, the brain needs to work non-stop to analyze visual and

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sound data for the duration of the movie. That strains the brain, so it is impossible to watch more than one movie at a time without ending up with a headache.

- In fact, the brain consumes about 25% of the energy intake for the whole body!
- These are the details that could not have been transmitted in the *Tipiṭaka*. Furthermore, during the Buddha's days, essentially nothing was known to other humans regarding the brain. The Buddha could not provide this kind of detail at that time. We will discuss that in the next post.

Science Will Never be Able to Create "Artificial Life" or "Artificial Intelligence"

9. That is also why science will NEVER be able to succeed in AI (Artificial Intelligence.) **Note that AI is different from making efficient robots, which are purely mechanical. They don't have the ability to THINK!**

- Note that "artificial insemination" is not creating a new life. There, scientists use DNA from humans (or animals) to create a zygote. That is not any different from a zygote produced in a womb. See, "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- The bottom line is the following: **Without a human *gandhabba*, sensory experience is not possible.** The physical body is just a shell.
- That *gandhabba* can be created ONLY by *kammic* energy, based on a previous strong *kamma* (deed.) **The laws of *kamma* work automatically.** It is a natural process, just like an oak seed giving rise to an oak tree.

Difference Between a "Live Human" and a "Dead Body" Is *Gandhabba*

10. The *gandhabbā* is like a delicate mesh (or an "energy field") overlapping the physical body, with the *hadaya vatthu* located close to the physical heart. That is what gives life to the physical body.

- At the physical body's death, fine *gandhabbā* comes out of the physical body like a ghost. It is so fine that we cannot see it. But we all know that a body can be alive one second and become totally inert (like a piece of wood) at death.
- Have you touched a dead body (human or animal)? You can immediately sense the difference between a dead body and a live person/animal by just touching.
- At death, as soon as the *gandhabba* comes out permanently from that body, the body starts to get cold. The "life force" is no longer there! That life force is the *gandhabba* or the "mental body"!

Transfer of Data from the Brain to *Pasāda Rūpa*/*Hadaya Vatthu*

11. Another key point is that in the fine body of the *gandhabbā*, there are five "*pasāda rūpa*" located around the *hadaya vatthu*: *cakkhu, sōta, ghāna, jivhā,* and *kāya*, that correspond to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touch. Those 'sensing units" overlap the physical heart, far away from the brain. **Scientists will never be able to solve the problem just by analyzing brain processes!**

- We have discussed related important concepts in the sub-section, "Brain and the Gandhabba." As I remind frequently, it takes a real effort to understand these concepts. **With this post, we are going back to continue that discussion.**
- The brain is like a sophisticated computer that analyzes those chemical and electrical signals discussed above in #2 and #3.
- Those chemical/electrical signals are, in fact, reduced to the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level per Buddha Dhamma. *Suddhāṭṭhaka* is the smallest unit of matter in Buddha Dhamma) and are transmitted to the *pasāda rūpa* located around the *hadaya vatthu*.

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- That transfer of "information" from the brain to *pasāda rūpa* around the *hadaya vatthu* happens in the "energy-body" of the *gandhabba* that overlaps the physical body.

Only a Buddha Can Figure Out the Complex Connection Between Mind and Matter

12. That is what the Buddha taught 2500 years ago. Until scientists accept that mind and matter are two different entities, they will not proceed too far from where they are now.

- The ultimate realities of this world are *citta, cetasika, rupa*. Thoughts encompass *citta* and *cetasika.* They are in a separate category from *rupa*. *Citta* and *cetasika* CANNOT arise out of *rupa*! **Stop and contemplate on that.** This is why *Abhidhamma* is important.
- **Someone who has studied *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) may realize that it starts with *saṅkhāra* (ALL mental) generated due to *avijjā*. The PS cycle ends with *jāti* (birth) of an entity with the matter.**
- **The "connection" between mind and matter is "defiled consciousness" (or *viññaṇa*), and *viññaṇa* arises ONLY in a *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) in a gandhabba created ONLY by kammic energy.**

13. That is a fascinating account amenable to minds that are not defiled with strong wrong views. That is why it is NECESSARY to live a moral life and be willing to "listen to reason." **As the Buddha warned, not everyone can understand the deep Dhamma. It takes effort and faith (built on one's own experiences.)**

- We will discuss the deep connection between mind and matter in detail in upcoming posts. But the key points can be found in "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."
- Of course, many details in this post are not available in that form in the *Tipiṭaka*. In fact, that holds for many of my posts on *gandhabba*.
- **However, those descriptions are fully compatible with the *Tipiṭaka*.** I will discuss that In the next post.

References

1. Jeff Hawkins, "On Intelligence" (2004).
2. WebLink: youtube: Jeff Hawkins: "How brain science will change computing."
3. "Can Quantum Physics Explain Consciousness? One Scientist Thinks It Might."

2.2.9.4 Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka – Gandhabba Example

December 30, 2020; revised January 7, 2021 (added #12)

Interpretation of the *Tipiṭaka*

1. The following issues are both important and relevant.
    1. I need to make sure that I do not distort the teachings of the Buddha. That means I need to provide relevant CRITICAL passages in the *Tipiṭaka* when I discuss a subject.
    2. However, some details on deeper aspects are NOT discussed IN DETAIL in the *Sutta Piṭaka* of the *Tipiṭaka*. Those details come in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* and the 3 original commentaries in the *Tipiṭaka*. But still, it requires a *jāti Sotāpanna* like Waharaka *Thero* to provide detailed explanations.

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3. Lastly, we are lucky to live in a time where more details, for example, about the brain, are available from modern science. Further supporting evidence on related subjects is now widely available via the internet (an example is rebirth accounts.) A good example is the description of *gandhabba* (*manomaya kāya*.)

Depending on the topic, I have been using one or more of the above three to write posts. Let me explain by discussing my approach to write posts on the *gandhabba* (*manomaya kāya,*) where I utilized all three of the above.

Details on the *Gandhabba* Concept

2. Many details about the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) are not available in the *Tipiṭaka*.

- Some of those details were in the Sinhala *Atthakathā* (early commentaries) that have been lost. However, even then, it is doubtful that some details regarding the brain could have been provided. Most of our knowledge about the brain is from modern science within the past 100 years or so.
- The Buddha only mentioned the brain as part of the body's 32 parts (Pāli word is ***matthaluṅga***.) See "WebLink: suttacentral: *Dvattiṃsākāra*." I have not seen any details on the functions of the brain in the *Tipiṭaka*.

  [*Atthi imasmiṃ kāye—*
  Kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco, maṃsaṃ nhāru aṭṭhi aṭṭhimiñjaṃ vakkaṃ, hadayaṃ yakanaṃ kilomakaṃ pihakaṃ papphāsaṃ, antaṃ antaguṇaṃ udariyaṃ karīsaṃ ***matthaluṅgaṃ****, pittaṃ semhaṃ pubbo lohitaṃ sedo medo, assu vasā kheḷo siṅghāṇikā lasikā muttanti.*
  Dvattiṃsākāraṃ.
  There are in this body:
  hairs of the head, body hairs, nails, teeth, skin; flesh, sinews, bones, bone-marrow, kidneys; heart, liver, pleura, spleen, lungs; intestines, mesentery, undigested food, excrement, **the brain in the head**; bile, phlegm, pus, blood, sweat, fat; tears, grease, spit, mucus, synovial fluid, and urine.
  The Thirty Two Fold Nature.]
- Only when a *jāti Sotāpanna* like Waharaka *Thero* (who had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage in a previous life) is born, we get to hear significant details. Furthermore, not all *jāti Sotāpannas* can provide such details either. One needs to have *Paṭisambhidā Ñāṇa* to be able to grasp AND explain concepts in detail to others. **Therefore, the first layer of details in my posts come from Waharaka Thero's discourses.**
- The second layer is due to two sources: First, such clarifications can be backed by recent scientific findings. Secondly, many rebirth accounts, Near-Death Experiences, Out-of-Body Experiences, etc., are now available to anyone thanks to the internet. Both provide invaluable supporting material to this complex subject. **Therefore, the second layer of details comes from those two additional resources.**
- As the Buddha advised in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Araṇavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 139)", the main task of a *bhikkhu* (or a lay disciple) is to explain in detail the ideas embedded in the *Tipiṭaka* without distorting key concepts.

Gandhabba ("Mental Body") Is Primary, and the Physical Body Is Secondary

3. The role of the *manomaya kāya* is critical. The physical body is just a shell. It dies in about 100 years. As we discussed in the previous post, the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) may live for thousands of years in the human *bhava*. See, "Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu – Not Relevant to Gandhabba."

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- A fly lives only a week or so, but that "fly *bhava*" (or the existence as a fly) may last many thousands or even millions of years. Therefore, a fly would have the *gandhabba* or the *manomaya kāya* during that whole time.
- As we discussed, the specific term *gandhabba* is used mostly for the *manomaya kāya* of humans and animals. But living-beings in almost all of the 31 realms are born with a *manomaya kāya* (*asaññā* realm only has a *rūpa kāya* without the *hadaya vatthu* or the "seat of the mind.") *Brahmas* in 20 realms have only the *manomaya kāya.*
- **Thus, the *manomaya kāya* (mental body) is primary, and the physical body is secondary.**

Importance of the Commentaries

4. The *Tipiṭaka* was meant to be used with the commentaries. Also, knowledgeable *bhikkhus* or lay disciples were supposed to explain key concepts in detail. **Pāli *suttā* are NOT supposed to be translated word-by-word. See, "Sutta – Introduction."**

- Most of the early Sinhala commentaries were burned down in the Anurādhapura era; see, "Incorrect Theravada Interpretations – Historical Timeline. "
- Fortunately, three original commentaries provided by the Buddha's main disciples (Ven. Sāriputta, Ven. Kaccāyana, etc.) during the Buddha's time had been included in the *Tipiṭaka* (in the *Khuddhaka Nikāya*) and have survived.
- The current revival of pure Dhamma by a few *Theros* in Sri Lanka is partially due to their perusal of these three commentaries of *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Peṭakopadesa*, and *Nettippakaraṇa*.
- Even those three commentaries are somewhat condensed. Waharaka *Thero* was able to expand on those concepts in detail. He provided the basic model of the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) with *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa.* The terms *hadaya vatthu* and *pasāda rūpa* appear only briefly in the *Tipiṭaka* (mostly in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.*) **I have expanded that model using current scientific findings on the brain.**

Gandhabba Model – Role of the Brain

5. Waharaka *Thero* provided the basic model where the brain processes incoming information from the eyes, ears, etc., and passing those processed signals to *hadaya vatthu* via the complex *manomaya kāya* of the *gandhabba*.

- Just as the brain is connected to the other parts of the physical body via the nervous system, *gandhabba*'s body has a "ray-like" (or electromagnetic) system that connects essential elements like the brain *hadaya vatthu*/*pasāda rupa.* It can pass information generated in the brain to the *hadaya vatthu*/*pasāda rupa.*
- That model is very much consistent with recent findings in science. I have referred to such recent findings in my posts. See, for example, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body," and the posts referred to there.

Brain Analyzing "Data Packets"

6. In several posts, I have utilized recent scientific findings on the brain to explain our sensory experience. I hope such explanations provide a way to visualize the sensory recognition process easier. Such posts include "How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba" and "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."

- Also, consistent evidence has been accumulating in several areas, including rebirth accounts, Near-Death Experiences (NDE), and Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE); see "Evidence for Rebirth," "Origin of Life" and "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."
- Hopefully, both those developments will help more people to understand the teachings of the Buddha.

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- In the days of the Buddha, people accepted Buddha's explanations without such detailed explanations. That society was vastly different from the "materialistic society" of today, where recent scientific and technological advances have given a dominant platform to "materialism."
- That is why many people have a deeply embedded wrong view that the "physical body" is all there is and that mental aspects (thoughts) arise in the brain.

Scientific Knowledge Is Limited

7. Even a few hundred years ago, science had many issues of conflict with Buddha Dhamma on even the "material world." Of course, science is far behind in understanding "mental aspects" like consciousness, feelings, perceptions, etc.

- However, science has made much progress, and now several major inconsistencies have been resolved about the universe's material aspects.
- For example, just 400 years ago, "science" believed in the geocentric model of the universe. That the Earth was at the center of the universe and that the stars were embedded in a celestial sphere far above; see: https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Geocentric_model
- Not only science, but all other major religions tried to attune their religions to this model at that time. Most religions still adhere to those concepts; see the same Wikipedia article above.
- But 2500 years ago, the Buddha clearly described our Solar system as a "*Cakkavāla*" or a planetary system. Not only that, but he also said there are uncountable such systems in the universe. He said that it is a waste of time to figure out the details about the universe.
- Here is a video from Carl Sagan to get an idea of how vast our "detectable universe" is:

  WebLink: youtube: Humility - Carl Sagan

Scientific Knowledge Is Expanding

8. Through the years, and especially since the beginning of the 20th century, science has "re-discovered" some aspects of the Buddha's wider world, including the existence of billions of galaxies, EACH OF WHICH contains billions of planetary systems like our Solar system.

- But someone living in the 19th century likely to have ridiculed the idea of innumerable planetary systems (*cakkavāla*) and could have said, "where is the evidence from science?". That aspect of Buddha Dhamma was not amenable to "science" at that time.
- **Just like that, many aspects of Buddha's Dhamma are not amenable to science at the current time. But with time, more and more will be shown to be correct as science advances.**
- Those issues are discussed in "Buddhism – Consistencies with Science" and "Buddhism – Inconsistencies with Science."

My Explanations of the *Gandhabba* Are Consistent With the *Tipiṭaka*

9. The detailed descriptions that I have provided on the workings of the *gandhabba* are not in the *Tipiṭaka*. The Buddha could not have provided such explanations when common people were not aware of the brain's functions.

- However, those descriptions are fully CONSISTENT with the contents in the *Tipiṭaka*. Furthermore, they are also consistent with current scientific knowledge.
- Despite their intense efforts, scientists have reached an impasse in explaining how consciousness (and feelings like joy, sadness) can arise in the brain. See the previous post, "How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba." **The pure materialistic model of science WILL NOT be able to explain such mental phenomena as consciousness, feelings, perceptions, etc.**

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- The main point of that previous post was that **such mental phenomena CANNOT arise without a mental body (or *manomaya kāya* or *gandhabba*.)** It is a good idea to review the subsection "Brain and the Gandhabba" to understand the relationship between the brain and gandhabba fully. Other pertinent issues relevant to *gandhabba* discussed at "Antarābhava and Gandhabba." This post is the third and final post in that subsection.

Summary

10. Interpretation of the *Tipiṭaka* requires more than translating *suttā* word-by-word (which is a very bad way to teach Buddha Dhamma.) One needs to explain concepts in a way that the audience can understand.

- When one COMBINES information from both the *Tipiṭaka* AND other resources such as modern science, one can better understand certain difficult concepts.
- That statement holds for many posts at this website, but particularly true in the sections "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" and "Origin of Life."

11. This post concludes the section on "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach." **The main pint of the section was to illustrate that it is the *manomaya kāya* that is of utmost importance.** In human and animal *bhava*, that *manomaya kāya* is given a special name *gandhabba*.

- **That *manomaya kāya* is just a trace of energy, but it can sustain a whole existence.** Just as an oak seed has the blueprint for a huge oak tree, that trace of energy is all that is needed to sustain our dense physical bodies. See #5 of "How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba."
- That *manomaya kāya* for any existence is CREATED by *kammic* energy produced in ONE'S OWN thoughts (*citta*.) That is why a sentient being exists ONLY as long as it has CRAVINGS for worldly things (*kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga*). But those lives will only lead to much more suffering than any short-lived "pleasures."
- We will focus on the above bullet in upcoming posts. It contains the essence of the Four Noble Truths/*Tilakkhaṇa*/*Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Please read #10 repeatedly (and above mentioned posts) and see whether you can make some sense.
- When one gets a bit of traction, one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*. After that, it is easier to build-up on that and be able to "see" the world as it really is. **That is *yathābhūta ñāṇa*.** It is worth the effort.

12. The series of posts in the current subsection "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" will continue at "Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda" subsection.

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2.3 Buddhahood Associated Controversies

July 9, 2020

Buddhahood Controversies – Introduction

Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part I

Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part II

2.3.1 Buddhahood Controversies – Introduction

July 9, 2020

Overview

1. *Buddhahood* is a term that remains mired in controversy. In upcoming posts in this section, I will discuss three topics that have intrigued many people over the years. That will help cultivate faith in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Saṅgha*.

1. The wisdom and capabilities of a Buddha. We will clarify the implications of the three types of knowledge of a Buddha mentioned in #8 below.
2. Current scientific knowledge is compatible with most of the "supernormal capabilities" of a Buddha. Scientists have not taken the time to do an in-depth analysis. Of course, most scientists do not know enough about Buddha Dhamma (or physics) to do such an analysis.
3. We will also discuss how the teachings of the previous Buddha (Buddha Kassapa) were transmitted as *Vedic* teachings in distorted form. That is why there are so many common terms in Buddhism and Hinduism, like *kamma* (*karma*), *jhāna* (*dhyāna*), and even *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (*Pratītyasamutpāda.*) Of course, Buddha's *Ānāpānasati* meditation was misinterpreted as "breath meditation." All those concepts were there (just like now) at the time of the birth of Prince Siddhattha. We will discuss *Tipiṭaka* accounts where the Buddha pointed that out.

It is easier for an average human to grasp the mundane meanings (and difficult to grasp the deeper meanings.) That is why periodically those mundane explanations come up disguised as Buddhist teachings as well.

Buddha Is a Title

2. Buddha is a title. Buddha is a human who becomes "Enlightened" or attains the *Buddhahood*. However, It is necessary to understand his teachings to a higher level to figure out the meaning of the word "Buddha."

- A Buddha has the "perfect mind." With a perfect mind, a Buddha knows everything about the world. Even though he lived more than 2500 years ago, he described the universe much of the same way that scientists have found out just within the past 100 years. And he provided many more details about our world (much more than the scientists) as we will discuss.
- One is not born a Buddha. The *Buddhahood* is attained or achieved. There have been many Buddhā in the past, and there will be many in the future. For example, the Buddha we are discussing now is Buddha Gotama. There was Buddha Kassapa immediately before him (a long time ago) and the next Buddha will be Buddha Maitreya.
- It is a rare occurrence to have a Buddha in the world. Sometimes, billions of years can go by without a Buddha. See #14 of "Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?"
- Before we get into the knowledge of a Buddha, let us discuss some basic facts about Buddha Gotama.

Prince Siddhattha

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3. Buddha Gotama was born with the name of Siddhattha (Siddhārtha in Sinhala or Sanskrit) and his parents were Suddhodana and Mahā Māyā. Suddhodana was a king, and Prince Siddhattha was brought up in luxury. For example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta* (DN 10), the Buddha says that he had four palaces for the four seasons. An English translation at, "WebLink: suttacentral: The Great Discourse on the Buddha's Extinguishment."

- Scattered throughout many *suttā* in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Majjhima Nikāya* are accounts of various stages of the life of the Buddha (before and after Enlightenment.) I will refer to a few below. It is a good idea to read them. Most translations are good enough, especially regarding such life accounts. Only when deep Dhamma concepts are discussed one needs to be careful about the correctness of the translation.
- A brief account of Prince Siddhattha's life can be found, for example, at "WebLink: henri-van-zeyst: Basic Buddhist Concepts." More details — extracted from the *Tipiṭaka* – at, "WebLink: accesstoinsightt0rg: A Sketch of the Buddha's Life – Readings from the Pāli Canon."
- At the age of sixteen, Prince Siddhattha married princess Yasodhara. They were happily married for thirteen years and had a son, Rāhula. Yet, Prince Siddhattha was not satisfied. He felt a sense of "discontent" or "dissatisfaction" lingering even while immersed in a luxurious life.
- We will briefly go through a series of events that led to a drastic change in Prince Siddhattha. Those four events are the Four Great Omens.

Four Great Omens

4. On his rare visits outside the palaces, one day Prince Siddhattha saw an old person. He had never seen an old person. His faithful companion, Channa, explained that everyone gets old.

- On a subsequent visit, he saw a sick person and learned that everyone becomes sick. On the third visit, he saw a dead body and was told that one day he would die too. Those three encounters got him to think deeply about life and his discontent with life grew steadily.
- On a subsequent fourth visit outside the palace, the prince saw a recluse, spiritual seeker, and his calm demeanor intrigued the prince. Channa explained to him that there were many recluses like that. **They were discontent with life and were in search of a solution to the universal problems associated with life. Those are sicknesses, getting old, and dying.**
- As we note below, people at the time of the Buddha were familiar with the concepts of rebirth. Therefore, they knew about the "cycle of suffering in the rebirth process."
- With the sight of the recluse, prince Siddhattha realized that he would also need to give up the lay-life and pursue the path **to end that suffering associated with the perpetual cycle of birth, old age, sicknesses, and death**. One dies only to be reborn to go through the same cycle!

Influence of Teachings of Buddha Kassapa

5. Remnants of the teachings of the Buddha Kassapa from the deep past had come down through *Vedic* teachings. This is a critical point. As we will see later, the Buddha explained that only the mundane interpretations of Buddha Kassapa's teachings had survived.

- For example, people at that time were quite familiar with the laws of *kamma*, the rebirth process, five (or eight) precepts, and even *Nibbāna*. However, *Vedic brahmins* had used the Sanskrit language to transmit those teachings and used Sanskrit words *karma* and *nirvāna* for the Pāli words *kamma* and *Nibbāna*.
- For example, per *Tipiṭaka,* queen Mahā Māyā had regularly observed eight precepts.
- That is also why there were so many recluses who were trying to figure out the way to *Nibbāna* (*nirvāna*), freedom from suffering in the rebirth process. Some of them thought that by cultivating *jhāna*

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and getting rebirth in a *Brahma* realm is *nirvāna* (or end of suffering.) We will discuss that in the next post.

Renunciation – Becoming a Recluse

6. Shortly after seeing the recluse, Prince Siddhattha left the palace in the middle of the night. Channa led him out on his horse Kanthaka. The prince cut his hair and put on robes suitable for an ascetic. Let us call him ascetic Siddhattha or the *Bodhisatta*.

- First, the *Bodhisatta* went to two of the well-known *yogis* of the day, Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta. They taught him all they knew. He was able to get the highest *jhāna* (*Nevasaññā nā saññāyatana*) in a short time. Those teachers thought that they had attained *Nibbāna*.
- But the Bodhisatta realized that one could not get to *Nibbāna* merely by **suppressing defilements** (greed, anger, and ignorance) with breath meditation or mundane versions of *kasina* mediation. He realized attaining *Nibbāna* requires the **removal of defilements** for "complete purification."
- The Buddha has discussed those interactions with Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahāsaccaka Sutta* (MN 36)," "WebLink: suttacentral: *Ariyapariyesana Sutta* (MN 26)" and various other *suttā*.
- **You can access translations to English and several other languages by clicking the "down arrow" just above the name of the *sutta* at Sutta Central.**

Six Years of Extreme Asceticism

7. After leaving Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, the *Bodhisatta* tried various methods of subjecting his body to extreme hardships. Other than pursuing mundane *jhāna/kasina*, many *yogis* at that time thought one could remove defilements by inflicting such punishments to the body.

- Shortly after leaving Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, the *Bodhisatta* met five companions, Kondañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assajī. They were impressed with the *Bodhisatta*'s determination and were convinced that one day he will become a Buddha.
- By the way, the word Buddha (and *Bhagavath*) also came down in *Vedic* teachings. *Bhagavad Gita* (or "Recitals of *Bhagavad"*), for example, has many *Vedic* teachings that originally came from Buddha Kassapa. Of course, most concepts ended up with mundane interpretations.
- For example, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Brahmāyu Sutta* (MN 91)" provides a detailed account of *brahmin* Brahmāyu who was well-versed in the three *Vedā* (*tiṇṇaṃ vedānaṃ pāragū*). At the beginning of the *sutta*, *brahmin* Brahmāyu recites the qualities of a Buddha: '*itipi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā'ti*. Then he sends his pupil to the Gotama Buddha to check whether he has the "thirty-two marks of a great man (*dvattiṃsamahāpurisalakkhaṇāni*)." It is good to read the English translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: With Brahmāyu (MN 91)."
- During most of those six years, the *Bodhisatta* subjected his body to various forms of hardship. The Buddha discussed those unimaginable sufferings in several *suttā*, including the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahāsaccaka Sutta* (MN 36)."

Enlightenment (Attaining *Buddhahood*)

8. Finally, the *Bodhisatta* realized that subjecting the body to suffering is not the way to cleanse the mind of defilements. The *Bodhisatta* had to undergo six years of unnecessary suffering due to a hard-to-overcome bad *kamma* that he had committed against Buddha Kassapa. He had verbally abused Buddha Kassapa. I will just provide the link to the English translation of the *sutta*, MN 81: "WebLink: suttacentral: With Ghatikāra."

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- On a Full Moon day in May, the *Bodhisatta* sat at the foot of a *Bodhi* tree with a firm determination to attain the *Buddhahood*. The Buddha described the account of the events during that night in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bodhirājakumāra Sutta (MN 85)" among several others.

During the night the Buddha achieved three types of higher knowledge:

1. Ability to recall one's past lives (***pubbe nivāsānussati ñāṇa***),
2. The ability to see any living being's *cuti* (end of *bhava*) and *patisandhi* (grasping of a new *bhava*). This is the ***cutūpapāta ñāṇa***.
3. The attainment of the *Buddhahood* with ***āsavakkhaya ñāṇa***. That involved grasping the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path to *Nibbāna*.

- The *Bodhisatta* was now a fully-awakened Buddha or a *Sammāsambuddha.* He had gained knowledge about the wider world of 31 realms, how beings are born in those realms according to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, etc. It was not mere speculation. He visited those realms and confirmed his findings, as we will discuss.

Events After the Enlightenment

9. The *Vinaya Piṭaka* provides a detailed account of events following the Enlightenment. Here is the English translation, "1. Going forth (Pabbajjā)." Another resource is discussed in "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli." I highly recommend reading those accounts. It provides a good idea of the initiation of the *Buddha Sāsana,* or the "ministry of the Buddha."

- Of course, the translations of some critical Pāli words are not correct there, especially *anicca* and *anatta*. That occurs in the account where the five ascetics attain *Arahanthood* over several days of the discussion of the first two *suttā*, the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11) and the *Anattalakkhana Sutta* (SN 22.59) as I have discussed in many posts.
- Other than the description of deep Dhamma concepts, most English translations of *suttā* are good. Accounts on Buddha's life in many *suttā* in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and *Majjhima Nikāya* fall into that category.
- However, even then, most translators themselves have doubts about the various abilities of the Buddha. They openly express their doubts even about the validity of the rebirth process, or Buddha's ability to visit various *Deva* and *Brahma* realms (even the existence of such realms), to go through walls, to "touch the Sun and the Moon," etc. See, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"

The Buddha stated that he never taught anything that he had not verified by himself. Buddha Dhamma is not philosophy. Most "experts" who express such opinions are not even true Buddhists (in the sense of comprehending deep concepts in Buddha Dhamma.) They are "secular Buddhists" who do not believe in rebirth, the FOUNDATION of Buddha Dhamma. Furthermore, they have no background in science (particularly in physics), and do not realize that many "mystical phenomena" are not contradictory to modern physics!

2.3.2 Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part I

July 17, 2020

Pāṭihāriya (prātihārya in Sanskrit and පාටිහාරිය in Sinhala) is a supernormal ability or a miracle. Several *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* discuss them.

Kevaṭṭa Sutta (DN 11)

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1. I will extract a few relevant portions of the text from the English translation, "WebLink: suttacentral: To Kevaṭṭa (DN 11)." I did not choose the other English translation since it translated "*pāṭihāriya*" as "a demonstration" rather than a "miracle." Anyone can do a demonstration. A *pāṭihāriya* can be performed only by someone with "supernormal capabilities". As we will see below, these powers are mind-boggling!

- At the beginning of the *sutta*, Kevaṭṭa, a young householder, comes to the Buddha and says the Buddha should instruct his disciples to perform "miracles" to convince more people to embrace Buddha's teachings. The Buddha refuses, but explains that there are three types of "miracles."
- The Buddha replies: "Kevaṭṭa, there are three types of miracles which I have taught, having myself understood and realized them. And what are the three? **The miracle of psychic power, the miracle of telepathy, and the miracle of instruction**."

The Miracle of Psychic Power (*Iddhi Pāṭihāriya*)

2. "And what, Kevaṭṭa, is the **miracle of psychic power (*iddhi pāṭihāriya*)**?

- "**Here, Kevaṭṭa, a monk wields various psychic powers:** He becomes many and then becomes one again. He appears and vanishes, goes unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains as if through space. He can dive in and out of the Earth as if it were water, and he walks on water without sinking as if it were Earth. Sitting cross-legged, he travels through space like a winged bird. **He can touch and stroke the Sun** and the moon, so mighty and powerful. He exercises mastery as far as the *Brahma*-world."

(This verse explaining supernormal abilities appears in many *suttā*, including DN 2, DN 10, DN 28, MN 6, MN 73, MN 77, SN 12.70, SN 16.9, SN 51.11, SN 51.17, AN 3.60, AN 3.101, AN 5.23, AN 6.2, AN 10.97)

- Then the Buddha points out to Kevaṭṭa, that someone who has learned the "Gandhāra Charm" ("Gandhāra Trick" would be a better translation) can do some of that too. That is why the Buddha prohibited the display of such abilities. (Apparently, Gandhāra Trick can be compared to the "magic tricks" performed by magicians like David Copperfield today. However, the Gandhāra Trick seems to be much more powerful than any magic tricks performed today.)

The Miracle of Telepathy (*Ādesanā Pāṭihāriya*)

3. "And what, Kevaṭṭa, is the **miracle of telepathy (*ādesanā pāṭihāriya*)**?

- "Here, a monk reads the minds of other beings, of other people, reads their mental states, their thoughts, and ponderings, and says: 'That is how your mind is, that is how it inclines, that is in your heart.'"
- Then the Buddha points out that those who have mastered the "Manika Charm" can read other people's minds as well. Therefore, that also is not impressive.

The Miracle of Instruction (*Anusāsanī Pāṭihāriya*)

4. "And what, Kevaṭṭa, is the **miracle of instruction (*anusāsanī pāṭihāriya*)**?

- "Here, Kevaṭṭa, a monk teaches in this way: 'Reason in this way, do not reason in that way. Consider this and not that. Get rid of this habit, train yourself, and live life like that.' This, Kevaṭṭa, is what is called 'The miracle of instruction.'
- The Buddha goes on to explain in great detail the fruits of such instructions by a learned *bhikkhu* who has learned Dhamma from the Buddha. How he learns to live a moral life and to cultivate *Ariya jhāna* by REMOVING defilements. Then the Buddha explains that SOME OF THEM can cultivate all those supernormal powers mentioned above as well.

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- First, let us look at the scope and implications of the "psychic powers" (*iddhi bala*.) **All these are performed by a purified mind.**

Psychic Powers (*Iddhi Pāṭihāriya*) – Unimaginable

5. Technological advances drive modern society. Scientists have studied properties of MATTER in great detail and have used those new findings to create "innovative devices" that help us work more efficiently. For example, they can build robotic machines that can do a lot of work that cannot be done by humans.

- So, it is indeed a "miracle" that Ven. Cūḷapanthaka created a thousand "copies" of himself to do work around the temple. Once the work is complete, he can make them disappear. That is what is referred to as "He becomes many and then becomes one again" in #2 above. Relevant information on Ven. Cūḷapanthaka at, "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūḷapanthaka" and "WebLink: tipitaka.net: Dhammapada Verse 25 – WebLink: tipitaka.net: Cūlapantaka Vatthu."
- Let us discuss a few more of these "miracles" to see how amazing they are.

Traveling Through the Air With Physical Body

6. Another modern technological advance is to be able to travel long distances with cars, airplanes, and rockets. These became possible due to the collective efforts of many thousands of scientists starting from the time of Galileo and Newton, over 300 years ago.

- However, as stated in the above accounts of Ven. Cūḷapanthaka, traveling through the air with one's physical body is possible after cultivating *iddhi bala.* That is what is referred to as, "Sitting cross-legged, he travels through space like a winged bird" in #2 above.

7. All these "psychic powers" have their basis in highly concentrated energy produced in the *javana citta* of the *yogi*. Yes. even other *yogis* at the time of the Buddha had cultivated SOME of these powers via cultivating *anāriya jhāna*. They could, for example, travel through the air carrying their physical bodies.

- As we know, *javana cittā* generate *kammic* energies that lead to future births. See, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."
- The intensity or the power of *javana citta* can be vastly increased for those who have cultivated *pāṭihāriyā* powers. Such a *yogi* can set up an "energy field" around his physical body, and that energy-field can be controlled to move the physical body as he wishes.
- The video below demonstrates the basic idea of "electromagnetic levitation." A *yogi* would create such an "energy field" around his body and control it to move the body.

  WebLink: youtube: Electromagnetic levitation device
- By the way, these days one can buy various "levitating things" like "levitating globes."

Traveling to a Star System "In an Instant" – With *Manomaya Kāya*

8. The closest star (possibly with a set of planets) to us is four light-years away. That means if a rocketship travels **at the speed of light**, it would take four years to get there. For comparison, the distance from the Earth to our Moon would take only 1.5 SECONDS. Therefore, a rocketship traveling at the speed of light will take **only 1.25 to arrive at the Moon!** But our rocketships take about 3 days to get to the Moon. Therefore, with a modern rocketship, it would take **about 600 years** to get to the NEAREST star.

- The capabilities of the Buddha (and some of his disciples with *pāṭihāriyā* powers) can be truly astounding. The Buddha could travel anywhere among the 10,000 "world-systems" (*dasasahassi lokadhātu*). A "world-system" is a set of planets associated with a star, where one planet would have life. In our "Solar system," the Sun is the star, and life is based on Earth. See, "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."

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- Therefore, it is mind-boggling to even imagine someone traveling to a star that is thousands of light-years away in an instant. Of course, the Buddha would travel such vast distances only with his "mental body" (*manomaya kāya* or *gandhabba*.)
- By the way, *Brahmā* from such 10,000 world-systems can visit Earth too. They have "bodies" that are equivalent to our mental bodies. They do not have dense physical bodies. *Brahmā* from the 10,000 world-systems came to listen to the first discourse of the Buddha, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.
- Many *suttā* state that the Buddha would arrive in a *Brahma* world within the time taken for someone to straighten a bent arm, i.e., less than a second! That is how *Brahmā* from other world systems came to listen to *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*. "*Brahma* bodies" are almost equivalent to *manomaya kāya* of a *gandhabba.* (In comparison, a modern rocketship takes three days to get to the Moon.)
- Nothing analogous to such fast travel has been even discussed in modern physics yet. I suspect that this is related to the recently established "non-locality" (or "quantum entanglement") in quantum mechanics: "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma – Introduction.

Going Through Walls, Mountains, etc.

9. Compared to "traveling through air with the physical body" discussed in #6,#7 above, a much more complex technique comes into play when "going through walls or diving into the Earth." I have not seen such an action attributed to *anāriya yogis*. In this case, one breaks down the physical body to the elementary level of *suddhaṭṭhaka.*

- "Matter" is mostly empty space. An atom is virtually empty. This basic idea is illustrated in the first 3 minutes of the following video.

  WebLink: youtube: What Are Atoms Made Of?

"Solid Matter" Is Mostly Empty Space!

10. We can get an idea about "how empty" and atom is, by just watching the first 3 minutes of the above video. As shown there, an atom is more than 99.999% empty!

- Then why is it that we cannot go through a wall? The answer is that two atoms cannot get too close to each other due to electromagnetic forces. That is not discussed in the above video. In a solid, two atoms cannot come too close, because the outer "electron cloud" of one atom will repel that of the second atom. Therefore, even a steel bar is mostly empty space.
- However, the Buddha taught that matter can be reduced a level below that of electrons and protons. That is the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level where there are no electromagnetic interactions (like the repulsion among electrons.) All the "material stuff" in a physical body can be reduced to **an invisible** *suddhāṭṭhaka* level. Scientists now know that an atom is divisible to smaller parts. The recently detected Higgs boson could be at the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level.
- But scientists cannot reduce bulk matter to the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level. Moreover, they cannot take an object like an apple, break it down to below the atomic level, and then put it all back together. But one with high-end *iddhi* powers can do that!
- **Such a *yogi* can reduce one's own body to the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level, move it all to another location very quickly and then put it back together!** This was discussed in a bit more different way in #6 through #10 in the post, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"
- That approach of reducing the "material stuff" in a body to a form that can be transported to far destinations at high speed and then "re-assembling" back to the original form is part of **science fiction** these days, see "WebLink: wiki.org: teleportation." I remember watching the popular movie "WebLink: wikipedia.org: *The Fly* (1986 film)." In that movie, a fly gets into the "teleportation machine" with the human, and the "re-assembly" at the other end produced a "human fly"!

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Comparison With Modern Technology

11. As we can begin to see, modern science and Buddha Dhamma have two very different approaches for dealing with even material phenomena. **Science is exclusively based on the study of inert matter. Buddha Dhamma can explain material properties in terms of mental phenomena.** Of course, the scientists are still way behind the Buddha.

- From what we discussed above, just think about one comparison. While the Buddha was able to visit *Deva* and *Brahma* worlds within a split-second, scientists have only made it to the Moon and that takes three days.
- The scientists are not even aware of the existence of *Deva* and *Brahma* realms.
- *Deva* and *Brahma* realms are up there above the Earth. They have very little "matter" and that is why scientists cannot see them or their habitats. Our rocketships can go through their habitats without them even noticing it.
- The closest analogy that we have is the depiction of a *gandhabba* in the 1990 movie "Ghost.' See, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept." We can get a good idea of why we cannot see *Devā* or *Brahmā* (or their habitats) from watching that movie. *Devā* or *Brahmā* have "bodies" even more subtle compared to a human *gandhabba*.
- Unless the scientists can figure out how to implement teleportation, they will not be able to even travel to the nearest star with rocketships. The "mind-based" technique of the Buddha is based on a different paradigm.
- In the *Sīsapāvana Sutta* (SN 56.31), Buddha stated that he taught only a small fraction of what he knew. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: In a Rosewood Forest."

There is no need to study or learn about *iddhi pāṭihāriya* in detail. I am providing this account to establish the following point. **By controlling the mind, even a single person can get ahead of many hundreds of years of scientific effort.** We will discuss the other two "miracles" in the next post.

Additional Resources

1. There is a Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Miracles of Gautama Buddha."

2. The above video is the second of a series of videos. More information on atoms in the following set of videos:

WebLink: youtube: What Is an Atom and How Do We Know?

2.3.3 Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part II

July 24, 2020

Introduction

1. A **different paradigm** involves controlling material phenomena in Buddha Dhamma compared to modern science. For example, scientists have developed rocket technology to travel to the Moon. The Buddha was able to go much further and much faster with "mind power" 2600 years ago. We discussed some examples in the previous post; see, "Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part I."

- The mind-based approach of Buddha Dhamma is much more powerful. Such unimaginable powers MAY ARISE automatically by just cleansing or purifying one's mind. However, only certain people can develop such abilities to control material phenomena. They had cultivated such powers in recent past lives.

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- **What is the use of being able to fly through the air like a bird or being able to travel to the Sun instantly and touch it if one is to born as an animal or worse in a future life?**
- Controlling material phenomena is of no use to get a resolution to the universal problem of suffering associated with the rebirth process.
- That is why the Buddha explained to Kevaṭṭa that the **miracle of instruction** is the most important. Only a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha can provide such guidance as to how one can **understand the problem of *saṃsāric* suffering and learn how to overcome it.**

The Miracle of Instruction (*Anusāsana Pāṭihāriya*)

2. In the *Kevaṭṭa Sutta* (DN 11), the Buddha explains to Kevaṭṭa that a Buddha (*Tathāgata*) arises in the world with the perfect knowledge about the world. Then anyone could learn his teachings and follow them to reach full release from future suffering via attaining *Nibbāna* (*Arahanthood*.) The Buddha in that *sutta* describes the steps a *Bhikkhu* would go through, but the process is similar (and less strict) for a lay-follower.

- He would live a moral life, abstaining from killing/hurting other living-beings, without using improper forms of speech, and also controlling greed and anger. **Most of all, he would learn the true nature of this world and remove many ingrained wrong views about this world.** See, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sōtapanna Stage."
- Most of the first half of the *sutta* describes the recommended (more strict) lifestyle of a *bhikkhu*. It is a good idea to read the second half starting with the section on "Restraint of the Sense Faculties." See the English translation, "To Kevaṭṭa (DN 11)."
- The Buddha advised a "middle-of-the-way" lifestyle that is away from both making one's body to hardships AND indulgence in sense pleasures.
- While following the Buddha's path, some people may also attain the ability to control material phenomena with **psychic power (*iddhi pāṭihāriya.*)** Let us specifically discuss that briefly now.

What Are *Iddhi*?

3. *Iddhi* means "to cultivate" or to "grow" or "to make better."

- **Those "supernormal" abilities that we discussed in the previous post result from cultivating four mental capabilities (*Cattāro Iddhipādā.*)** They are *chanda* (desire for spiritual development/to attain *Nibbāna*,) *citta* (the mindset for that goal,) *viriya* (the effort,) and *vīmaṃsā* (figuring out the way by investigating.) The "Vibhaṅga Sutta (SN 51.20)" discusses those factors in detail. It is a good idea to read the English translation there and also "Iddhipada-vibhanga Sutta: Analysis of the Bases of Power."
- **Note that *chanda* here does not refer to the desire for sensual pleasures (*icchā.*)** Instead, it relates to a yearning for spiritual progress (for *anariya yogis*) and the desire to attain *Nibbāna* for those who are on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- While *anariaya yogis* can attain some supernormal powers, those achieved by *Ariyā* (Noble Persons with *magga phala*) are much more potent or powerful. Furthermore, an *anariya yogi* could lose those abilities (just like the ability to get into *anariya* **jhāna) even in this lifetime.**

Anāriya Iddhi Powers Are Temporary

4. The *Tipiṭaka* account of Devadatta clearly illustrates this point. He was able to cultivate *anariya jhāna* and had developed some supernormal powers (*iddhi*) as well.

- By performing some supernormal tasks, Devadatta was able to impress Prince Ajātasattu. Having assumed the form of a young boy clad in a girdle of snakes, he appeared in Prince Ajātasattu's lap. Prince Ajātasattu was highly impressed and became a devout follower. Devadatta started thinking about

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"replacing Buddha to lead the order of *Saṅgha."* **With that thought, Devadatta lost his supernormal capabilities.**

- Still, Devadatta did not lose his ambition to "become the Buddha." Later on, he tried to take the life of the Buddha in several attempts. In the end, he was born in an *apāya*.
- The details are in the section starting with "The story of Devadatta" at, "Schism in an Order (*Saṅghabheda*)." It is a long read up to the end of the post, but it is worthwhile.

What Is the Basis of Such *Iddhi* Powers?

5. This is where we start understanding the basis of "mental power."

- A mind burdened with greed, anger, and ignorance (about the real nature of this world) has no "strong and beneficial" abilities. Instead, such minds create "dark *kammic* energies," leading to unpleasant *kamma vipāka* in general and also rebirths in "bad realms." We know that those undesired realms are the *apāyā* or the four lowest realms. **The Pali terms for those three bad causes are *lobha, dosa, moha*.**
- If a mind is absent from those three primary defilements, then actions (*kamma*) by such a "non-contaminated mind" create "clean *kammic* energies." Those lead to good *kamma vipāka* and rebirths in the 27 "good realms" lying at and above the human realm. **In the absence of *lobha, dosa*, and *moha*, a mind creates *kammic* energies with, of course, *alobha, adosa, amoha*. Those are the three good causes.**

Births in the Four Lowest Realms Arise Due to Actions with *Lobha*, *Dosa*, *Moha*

6. The "dark energies" associated with thoughts associated with *lobha, dosa, moha* create "*kammic* energies" that can bring births (*jāti*) in the *apāyā*. Those energies are "*bhava"* in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process. **Therefore, "*bhava paccayā jāti"* means a "bad *bhava"* leads to a corresponding "bad birth."**

- With the more robust the level of ignorance (*moha,*) the easier it is to do the seven *akusala kammā.* Those are false, hurtful, deceitful, and vain speech and killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct.
- A mind that free of *lobha, dosa, moha* (i.e., with *alobha, adosa, amoha*) is a "moral mind". It would know the difference between moral deeds and immoral deeds. In particular, it would try to avoid the seven *akusala kammā* done with speech and bodily actions.

Births Above the Human Realm Arise Due to Actions with *Alobha*, *Adosa*, *Amoha*

7. There are 26 realms above the human realm (six *Deva*, sixteen *rupāvacara Brahma*, and four *arupāvacara Brahma* realms.) Such births arise due to *bhava* energies created with thoughts devoid of greed and anger. Here deep ignorance or *moha* is absent and, thus, *amoha*. However, as we will see, there is still ignorance about the true nature of the world (*avijjā*) left in mind.

- In other words, **births in the 26 "good realms" arise due to the three root causes of *alobha, adosa, amoha*.**
- Because of that, lives in those realms are relatively free of harsh sufferings.
- If we look at the lifetimes of those realms, they become longer for higher realms. See, "31 Realms of Existence."

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- The human realm is also "good," but there is significant suffering too. So, we need to treat the human realm differently from the other 30 realms. We discuss that now.

The Human Realm is Unique

8. **Human births could arise due to combinations of all six root causes.**

- There are three main types of humans. Some have *tihetuka* births, meaning that particular human birth was due to a *kamma* with the three "good roots" of *alobha, adosa, amoha*. Another set of humans have only two good roots (*dvihetuka* births), either *alobha/amoha* or *adosa/amoha*. The third type has only one good root of *amoha.* Those are *ahetuka* births because they are "unfortunate births." (The word "*ahetuka"* here does not mean the absence of even a single good root)
- It is not possible to distinguish between *tihetuka* and *dvihetuka* births. But it is relatively easy to identify *ahetuka* births because they have little intelligence.
- All three types of humans experience both good and bad *kamma*. Even *tihetuka* people can come down with disease or injury. Even though the *Deva* realms also belong to the *kāma loka* (just like the human realm,) the bodies of *Devā* are not dense enough to cause any diseases/injuries.
- The root causes and how they lead to rebirths discussed in, "Six Root Causes – Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."

Second Uniqueness of the Human Realm

9. The human realm is also unique in the following way. Most rebirths are determined while in the human realm. Then they spend the lives in either lower or higher realms until the corresponding *kamma vipāka* are "paid off." For example, a given human may do some bad deeds suitable for births in *apāya* but may change the lifestyle and cultivate *jhāna*. So, he/she would have created both good and *bhava*. Since developing a *jhāna* is an *anantariya kamma*, a *Brahma* birth will come at his/her death. But unless he/she had attained a *magga phala*, a birth in an *apāya* will result after exhausting time in the *Brahma* realm.

- As we remember from the post, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)," a newly-formed Earth would be entirely populated by humans (with *Brahma*-like subtle bodies.) But with time, cravings arise due to *anusaya*, and those with "bad *gati"* will be reborn in lower realms. If a Buddha does not appear in a given eon, most humans end up in the lower realms sooner. It is a complex issue.
- More details on *anusaya* at, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

Living-Beings in Lower Realms Have Denser Bodies in General

9. In general, living-beings in the *kāma loka* (four lower realms, the human realm, and six *Deva* realms) have dense bodies with five sense faculties. In most cases, sensing odors, tastes, and bodily-touches REQUIRE dense bodies.

- Most living-beings have a craving for those "close-proximity" sense pleasures. They like to eat tasty foods, smell sweet odors, and to engage in sex. As long as a living-being does not lose cravings, they WILL NOT be free from the *kāma loka*. Now, some may cultivate *anariya jhāna* and be born in a *Brahma* realm but will return to the human realm at the end of that life.
- As we mentioned earlier, *Devā* do enjoy such 'close contacts," but those contacts are "softer." In Pali, the word "*olarika"* implies "close contacts with dense bodies in human and lower realms." In the *Deva* realms, the contacts and bodies are "*sukuma"* or softer. *Devā* also can be born in the *apāyā* after they exhaust their *Deva* lifetimes.

The Journey Among the 31 Realms Is Perpetual

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10. The above process has been going on for any of us from a time that is not possible to trace back. That is the *saṃsāric* journey or the rebirth process.

- Unfortunately, most of those births are in the four lower realms or *apāyā*. But, of course, we would not know all this unless we learn it from a Buddha or a disciple of the Buddha.
- The "suffering" in the First Noble Truth is the harsh suffering in the *apāyā*. Any pain and suffering that we FEEL NOW are due to past causes. We need to use appropriate medical treatments to alleviate such suffering.
- The First Noble Truth of Suffering refers to the harsh FUTURE suffering associated with the rebirth process. The good news is that the Buddha also explained how to stop that future suffering.

The Miracle of Instruction (*Anusāsana Pāṭihāriya*) of a Buddha

11. **The above description of the real nature of our world with 31 realms and a beginning-less rebirth process is not known to the world in the absence of a Buddha.** Only a Buddha can discover them and explain it to the world. **Furthermore, a Buddha also provides instructions on how to stop the perpetual suffering in the rebirth process.**

- **Those two aspects involve the "Miracle of Instruction (*Anusāsana Pāṭihāriya*)" of a Buddha.**
- The other two "miracles" of psychic powers and telepathy are just two byproducts. But, as the Buddha told Kevaṭṭa in the *Kevaṭṭa Sutta* (DN 11), those are not that different from "magic tricks." They are real and not magic, as I have explained in "Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part I" and "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism? "
- **What is the use of being able to fly through the air like a bird or being able to travel to the Sun instantly and touch it if one is to born as an animal or worse in a future life?**
- **In the same way, what is the use of accumulation of billions of dollars in this life, only to be reborn an animal in a future life?**
- This is why the Buddha advised us to focus on attaining *Nibbāna.* At least the *Sotapanna* stage of *Nibbāna.*
- We will focus on the "Miracle of Instruction of a Buddha" in the upcoming posts. Then it will become apparent, from yet another angle, the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma.

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2.4 What is Buddha Dhamma?

Revised on January 16, 2016; major revision September 12, 2018; revised August 7, 2019; March 2, 2020

Introduction

1. Many people, who are to a bit of Buddha Dhamma, see that there is something good about it. So, they just go to a meditation retreat and try to get a dose of Dhamma over several days.

- It is good to do that initially. But there is much more to Dhamma than to attain some temporary relief from the stresses of this life. If one can see that, then one needs to spend a bit more time and learn the full message of the Buddha.

2. If we learn the laws of motion from someone who does not really understand them, it is harder to digest. We may even learn them incorrectly, in the case of a bit harder subject, say, relativity. If the person who explains does not have a good understanding of the theory of relativity, then it is likely that the person who learns it will not learn much.

- I have not only learned Buddha Dhamma, but have practiced it over the past ten years, and have seen the benefits for myself.
- As a scientist, I am amazed at the depth of Buddha Dhamma. You will be able to see what I mean if you spend some time here.

A Wider World View

3. Benefits from Buddha Dhamma or the "worldview of the Buddha" can be two-fold.

- First, is the spiritual aspect. One will be able to experience "peace of mind" even by reading and learning, but when one starts comprehending the critical message of the Buddha, that can have a profound impact.
- Second, is the "intellectual aspect." Buddha Dhamma thoroughly explains the "laws of Nature." I have spent ten years studying it, and I am still learning. Once one starts digging deeper, one will see that modern science is far behind.

4. As I build up this site, anyone will be able to see that Buddha Dhamma is the ultimate Grand Unified Theory; see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- It explains everything not only that we can see, but also the existence of infinite number of worlds with living beings in 29 other realms of existence. We can only see the human and animal realms.
- Thus Buddha Dhamma is not a religion in the sense of providing salvation. Buddha was not a God, a prophet or a messenger. He was a human being who purified his mind to perfection so that he could see the whole of existence. He was the perfect scientist, who investigated the problem of life and found the complete solution. We all need to find our salvation by following the Path that he prescribed to purify our minds.

Why Are There So Many Versions of Buddhism?

5. Thus Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) is the most elaborate theory of "this world." It is called "*pubbe anunussetu dhammesu*" or a "Dhamma (or a theory on nature) that is not known to the world before a Buddha comes along." The Buddha uttered this phrase multiple times in his first sutta; see, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction."

- However, it has "evolved" into many different versions since the Buddha Gotama revealed it to the world over 2500 years ago.

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- During the past 2500 years many different versions of "Buddhism" have emerged; see, "Historical Background – Introduction." No one can claim, "this is the original version that was delivered by the Buddha." It is up to each individual to examine different versions and decide which version makes sense.
- Thus it pays to spend some time and try to find the version(s) closest to the original. This is not an easy task these days.
- My goal is to present the closest version that I found. It is up to you to examine it and see whether you agree.
- I content that is in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka,* not Sanskrit *sutras*, and not in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga. I have pointed out the inconsistencies in both Mahāyāna version and also in the current Theravāda versions with Visuddhimagga as the basis; see, "Historical Background" section.

Key Concepts of Buddhism

6. It will be quite beneficial to read the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section to get an idea of the basic principles.

- One cannot even begin to follow Buddha Dhamma unless one learns about the key concepts, see "Key Dhamma Concepts."
- The first stage of *Nibbāna* (*Sotāpanna* stage) is attained just by fully comprehending the "world view of the Buddha." Then one clearly sees the fruitlessness of seeking lasting happiness in "this world" of 31 realms.

7. What is the central message of the Buddha? It is essential to read the section, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- It is also important to realize that ***dukkha*** is not the **feeling** of suffering; that is ***dukha***; see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."
- If one did not know that he was talking about a much "bigger world" than the world we directly experience, one would think of that statement as nonsensical. The laws of *kammā* do not make sense unless one at least knows that the Buddha was talking about a rebirth process that has no beginning.

8. Newton discovered the three laws of motion which helped describe gravity. Instead of re-discovering them, we learn them at school. We have to learn from a teacher. But if the teacher does not know the material well, then a student will not be able to learn the correct laws of motion.

- One needs to learn from a true disciple of the Buddha, one who has not only studied it, but also has experienced the benefits.
- Even though I use some "science examples", there is no need to know any science. A science background may be helpful mainly in the "Dhamma and Science" sections, but even there it is not necessary.
- The new section on "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" is more suitable for those who have at least a high-school background in physics.

The Big Picture

9. Before one embarks on a journey, one needs to know what the trip is about, and what the destination is. Furthermore, whether it is worthwhile to undertake the trip. Please be patient and first find out what Buddha Dhamma is about, the big picture, first. Please spend some time learning about the key message of the Buddha, before undertaking the journey. If one does not know where one is going (or the terrain), how can one reach the destination?

- Buddha Dhamma describes the true nature of "this world." But "this world" does not just mean our life as a human. "This world" is unimaginably complex. Scientists admit that they are aware of only 4% of the things in this universe; see, "The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to

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Discover the Rest of Reality", by Richard Panek (2011). Also see, "Dhamma and science" section for details.

- Please be patient and scan through the main sections to get a brief idea first. Getting the "whole picture" will take time, see, "User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website."

10. The next question (especially when one sees that it is indeed a complex picture) that comes to one's mind is that "How do I know this picture is right?." One makes that decision based on one's own experience. But even before that, one could get an good idea by treating Buddha Dhamma as a scientific theory. That is why the section on "Dhamma and Science" is useful.

- Please pay special attention to the rebirth process. Many people wonder why rebirth bad. But they do not realize that the chance of rebirth as a human is extremely rare; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- One must also realize that *jāti* (birth) and *bhava* (existence in a given realm) are two different things; see, "Bhava and Jathi – State of Existence and Births Therein."
- Most are reborn in planes below the human realm where suffering is much worse. Scientists estimate that at any given time, there are one quadrillion (1000 trillion) ants living on Earth; this means for each human, there are million ants. Compared to about 7 billion of human population, an incredible number of other living species live on this planet.
- Even on our bodies, we carry a large number of sentient beings: see, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!."
- The human population is insignificantly small compared to the animal population. Statistically, that gives an idea of "probability of a human birth." We do not see the much higher populations in the other lower three realms because our minds are covered by defilement. If one develops *jhānā* and acquires *abhiññā* powers, one can see beings in some of those realms.
- **October 25, 2019**: I recently started a new subsection, "Origin of Life," that discusses many scientific, philosophical, and religious views of the origins of life.

Is Buddhism Pessimistic?

11. Many people think Buddha Dhamma is pessimistic. The Buddha just revealed the suffering in "this world" and that it can be overcome;; see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."

- He showed that there is a better type of happiness, called *nirāmisa sukha*, that one gains as one moves away from "this world" towards *Nibbāna*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- This *nirāmisa sukha* increases gradually as one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path, and makes quantum jump at the first stage of *Nibbāna*, the Stream Entry (*Sotāpanna*) stage. There are three more levels, and at the final level, *Arahant,* one becomes free from "this world" (no more rebirths) and attains *Nibbāna*.
- Thus *Nibbāna* is not just a promise to be fulfilled at death; it can be experienced in this very life. I invite you to take this journey with me for a while and see for yourself. As the Buddha said, "Come and see for yourself" [Dhamma quality: *ehipassiko*].

12. My goal is to provide at least some details of the complex world view that was provided by the Buddha, which has been been muddled and distorted within the past 2500 years.

- "Our world" is much more complicated than what is grasped by our senses; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- And our lives do not end with this one; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Those two facts constitute the basis of the true nature of existence. One cannot comprehend the message of the Buddha until one at least has some idea about this "big picture."

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- Many questions people have on concepts like *kamma*, morality, *Nibbāna*, etc, as well as philosophical questions like "why I am here?", or "why is the world the way it is?", will have answers within this big picture. It is a complete world view, but it is up to each individual to determine whether it makes sense. As the Buddha pointed out, the stakes are very high, and it is a good idea to take time and critically evaluate this big picture.

13. The following sections have information at various levels. Please scan through and find sections of interest.

"Three Levels of Practice" "Living Dhamma" "Key Dhamma Concepts" "Dhamma and Science"

"Paticca Samuppāda" "Sutta Interpretations" "Historical Background" "Abhidhamma"

"Bhāvanā (Meditation)" "Buddhist Chanting" "Tables and Summaries" "Discussion Forum"

"Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" "Dhamma and Philosophy"

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2.5 Foundation of Dhamma

Revised October 25, 2019

If you have not read the introductory post, "What is Buddha Dhamma?," please read and understand that first. It describes the unique aspects of Buddha Dhamma, in the sense that it is not a religion by some definitions. and the Buddha was not a savior.

A Worldview Not Known Without a Buddha

1. There are two co-existing facets of Buddha Dhamma:

- The Buddha said, "This Dhamma is unlike anything that the world has ever seen." It needs a paradigm change to get into the "new perspective about this world view of the Buddha." One needs to be able to put aside all preconceived notions to understand the core message.
- However, the Buddha also said, "My Dhamma is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good at the end." There is something to be gained from Buddha Dhamma for people who just come to know about it to those who have really grasped the core concepts. That is why I have separated posts into three categories on the site.
- Many important terms and verses, even whole *suttā*, can be interpreted at several levels, ranging from superficial to profound meanings. As I build the site, I will try to give some examples. For example, the five precepts have much deeper meanings than the ones that are apparent. It is gratifying, and exhilarating, to see deeper meanings as one progresses. Thus, there is something to be gained at any level.

Three Levels of Practice

2. There are three basic ways to practice Dhamma:

- At the fundamental level (see, "Moral Living and Fundamentals"), one can find happiness or suffering according to the way one lives one's life. One whose actions are harmful to oneself or the others will be living in misery. Someone may seem to be living in luxury, but could be living with a stressed mind. We know about many wealthy/famous people who even committed suicide.
- At the next level, one leads a moral life and accumulates good *kamma* that could lead to a good rebirth. However, we need to keep in mind that even if one does not commit a single immoral *kamma*, the next birth could be a bad one. That is because we may have done enough immoral deeds in our previous lives; see, "Working Towards Good Rebirths."
- At the highest level, one will act to remove all evils from one's mind so that the mind becomes liberated from the body, which causes all suffering. Thus one will be working to achieve *Nibbāna*, the unconditioned, permanent happiness; see, "Seeking Nibbāna" and "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."

3. The organization of this site at three levels:

- Most people intuitively know the benefit of a moral life. Dhamma will help understand why, and even point to some possible improvements.
- When one lives a moral life and EXPERIENCES the benefit of that, one will be automatically drawn to think about whether there is a life after death. One reads about the evidence for/against this possibility. If the answer is "yes", then one can find possible ways to work towards a better life in the next birth. This is not much different from the moral behavior in above. It is just that one will learn a lot about "the world" that we live in.
- Once achieving the second stage, some may want to explore the third stage. That third stage encompasses THE message of the Buddha, that no matter where one is born in the next life, there are

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NO guarantees that the lives after that will be suffering-free. That is the path to *Nibbāna*, to cease suffering permanently.

A Systematic Approach Is Required

4. Going straight to the third level will be like trying to get into high school without finishing the primary and secondary schooling.

- However, even if one has not even heard anything about Buddha Dhamma before, some may be already at the second stage, and few may even be ready for the third stage. This life did not start at this birth. Each of us have come a long way and have molded our character through countless lives in the past. Thus, even if one is unaware of it, one may already be mentally prepared to tackle the third stage. So, please look around and find a starting point that you are comfortable with; see, "Where to Start on the Path?." Only you know about yourself!
- Also, see, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" and "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

Critical Thinking Is Essential

5. It is critical to realize that "knowledge" is not perfect at any level as long as one remains "in this world." Even though he was not talking about that, the famous physicist Richard Feynman illustrates this point well in this video:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Feynman Magnets and Why questions

- Let us take his example of someone slipping on ice. A drunk person stepping onto ice-covered surface does not even realize that it is icy and slippery. At the next level, an alert person knows that the surface is slippery, and thus will be careful. But if one needs to know why the icy-surface is slippery, then a bit of basic physics is needed to understand "why ice is slippery." See the next post, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."
- It is not necessary to understand "why ice is slippery" if one has an uncontaminated mind; a sober person with a calm mind will take precautions when stepping on a icy surface. More complex situations require the cleansing of an "average mind" further. This is where Buddha Dhamma makes a difference.

A Defiled Mind Is Unable to Grasp Deep Dhamma

6. Even though humans have an innate sense of what is right and what is wrong, the human mind becomes cloudy due to the five hindrances (see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances").

- Once Dhamma Theory is understood, just that understanding leads to the clearing up of some of these hindrances; furthermore, the logic of a moral life comes naturally out the Dhamma Theory. At least some idea of the foundations of Buddha Dhamma is CRITICAL before the "practice stage."
- If one living a moral life reads about the Dhamma Theory, he/she may be motivated to explore the second stage, i.e., to think about the validity of the process of rebirth, which is a fundamental axiom of Buddha Dhamma.
- When one LIVES a life with the belief that what one does in this life will affect how one will fare after this life, then one may realize the danger in this traversing this endless cycle of rebirths. That will lead to exploring the third stage, which is THE real message of the Buddha.

Each Person Needs to Take the Initiative

7. No one else can steer anyone else to any meaningful mundane happiness with *nirāmisa sukha* (in this life or next) or to *Nibbāna*.

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- The Buddha said, "*Attā hi attano nātho, ko hi nātho paro siyā*," or, "One indeed is one's own refuge; how can others be a refuge to one?"
- Purification of the mind is the key. That means removing greed and anger and dispelling wrong views by learning Dhamma. That is the key to attain a peaceful life now, a better rebirth, or even to attain *Nibbāna*.
- Each one is in charge of one's mind. Others can only help.
- It is entirely up to the individual. This site will help one find the right path.

Next, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind", ……

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2.6 The Importance of Purifying the Mind

Revised October 25, 2019

1. Analysis of a given situation always needs to be taken in the proper context. Let us again listen to Dr. Feynman's video that was in the previous post, "Foundation of Dhamma."

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Feynman Magnets and Why questions

- It is worthwhile to discuss the case of an icy surface to look a bit deeper than even Dr. Feynman did. He merely pointed out that there is no end to the sort of questions especially when a child keeps asking: "what is the reason for that?" at every step: "Why is Aunt Mimi in the hospital?" leads to the answer, "She fell on ice." Then, "Why did she fall on ice?" leads to "Because ice is slippery", which leads to, "Why is ice (and not concrete) slippery ?."

Material Phenomena – No "Ultimate" Explanation

2. Up to this point, the child (or an average adult) can understand each answer, BECAUSE, based on their life experiences, all those answers make sense. But the last question cannot be answered to the complete satisfaction of a child or an average adult, who does not have a background in physics.

- Unlike most other solids, ice has this peculiar property. When water is cooled, it expands when turning into ice.
- So, when Aunt Mimi stepped on ice, the pressure of her weight caused ice to shrink (i.e., become water). Thus a thin layer of water was formed between her shoes and ice, which causes her to slide and fall. Other solids tend to get more hardened under pressure, so there no slipping due to that particular cause.

3. Now one DOES NOT need to know that bit of physics to avoid falling on ice. What was required to prevent falling was to have a keen sense of knowing that ice is slippery and one needed to take necessary precautions.

- May be Aunt Mimi was in an agitated state of mind and hurried out of the door without realizing that there was a thin sheet of ice on the driveway. If she was drunk, that would have also lead to the same result. If she was in a calm, relaxed state of mind, she would have been more careful.
- An agitated mind can result from excess greed and hate too. Most people do not realize this, but if we think back, each of us can remember instances where we made bad decisions because of greedy or hateful state of mind. This is why getting into heated arguments can be risky. People even kill in a moment of rage.

Buddha Dhamma – Mind at the Forefront

4. The teaching of the Buddha are unique. The mind is at the forefront, not material phenomena; see, "Manōpubbangamā Dhammā..."

- Material phenomena originate with the mind. A deeper and lengthy discussion at, "Origin of Life."
- But in order to understand those deep teachings, one's mind must be calm and clear. There are five things called hindrances that cause our minds to be clouded; see, "Key to Calming the Mind – Five Hindrances." These have accumulated via bad habits that we have developed over countless lives; see, for example, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- Each one has a different set of bad habits, but we all have them. Yet we can function "in this world" with that "baseline" (for example not fall while walking on ice), if we do not make it worse by substance abuse, or making the mind agitated (by getting angry or overly greedy), etc.

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Living a Moral Life Is Not Enough

5. Most people live their lives without resorting to extreme behaviors. That still does not allow us to see the true nature of "this world." We are just carried by the tide without us trying to examine whether it is a good idea to "just go with the flow."

- We do our best to make our lives better (materially) and eventually die without knowing that all those life struggles were in vain at the end.

Importance of the Rebirth Process

6. The worse thing is that the story does not end at death, but just moves on to another phase (rebirth), where we will be doing precisely the same again.

- We have gone through this unending process for innumerable lives. Most those have been much worse than our current human life. If one learns true Buddha Dhamma, one will "see" the fruitlessness of our struggles to seek happiness in a "world" that is inherently not able to provide that. Then one will try to get out of "this world" by following the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha and achieve permanent happiness..
- **That is the crux of the message of the Buddha.**
- We will be able to "see" the truth in the above paragraph (i.e., the true nature of "this world") if we start cleaning our minds to get rid of the five hindrances (see, "How to Calm the Mind").
- There is mounting evidence for rebirth; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

We will be able to "see" the truth in the above paragraph (i.e., the true nature of "this world"), if we start cleaning our minds to get rid of the five hindrances (see, "Key to Calming the Mind - The five Hindrances").

A Wider Worldview

7. A wider worldview is necessary for the rebirth process. We need to understand the broader view of "this world" of the Buddha. Many people plunge into "practicing Dhamma" without even having an idea of the "world view" of the Buddha. **How can one practice, if one does not know what the goal of that exercise is?** The goals could be threefold:

i. to gain some peaceful state of mind in this life

ii. looking at a more extended range, to make sure one will have a better life-experience also in the upcoming births,

iii. to be released from this cycle of rebirths filled with dissatisfaction, and to seek permanent happiness, *Nibbāna*.

If the goal is one of the above three (and especially if (ii) and (iii)), then one needs to know what the complete "world view" of the Buddha was: This is the Buddha Dhamma.

- A comprehensive discussion at, "Origin of Life."

Original Teachings Are in the *Tipiṭaka*

8. It has been over 2500 years since the Buddha declared his message about the previously unknown broader world view. During that time, many distorted versions of Buddha's teachings appeared. See, "Historical Background."

- My goal is to provide a more sensible, logical explanation based on the *Theravada Tipiṭaka* that has remained unchanged. I have pointed out that in that section.

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- Throughout this website, I have shown that Buddha Dhamma is self-consistent (within the *Tipiṭaka*), and is also compatible with many findings of modern science. See, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency" and "Dhamma and Science."

9. Since many are "just looking" and have no reason to believe the truth of this world view, I am going to present it as a theory. We will be continually testing this theory to see whether it meets the established scientific standards. I am used to that methodology as a scientist.

- Many people, especially in the earlier times, made that decision on the enhanced EXPERIENCE as they followed the path. As one moves along the Path, this EXPERIENCE starts to transcend the sensory experience or sensual pleasures. There is crucial difference between the sensory experience and the **vastly enhanced experience of a purified mind.**

True Nature of This World

10. Now, once one understands what this broader world view is, then one can see that the solution to our problem existence does not depend on trying to probe deeper into material aspects at each step in an endless loop. We just do not have enough time in this life to learn all that.

- Instead, it is just a matter of purifying our minds. A purified mind can "see" through one's own **refined experience as one follows the Path.**

11. Stated succinctly, the Buddha discovered that the solution to the problem of the existence is the failure to "see" the true nature of "this world." That true nautre of this world is even more complex than what the science is finding out. See, "Worldview of the Buddha."

- But one only needs to see that "whole picture" and to realize that no matter where we are born, we will never find long lasting happiness "in this world." That is because "this world" is inherently ever-changing and that change is unpredictable.
- Everything "in this world" is in constant flux, but we cannot "see" that because our minds are "too cloudy" or "too impure."

Different Worldviews

12. There are religious approaches too, but I am going to stay away from that subject. By the way, Buddha Dhamma is not a religion. It is scientific and is based on cause and effect (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*.) There are no hypotheses about a Creator. The "conventional scientific method" started with the ancient Greeks, about at the same time that the Buddha lived.

- So, we have two scientific approaches. The mind-based scientific method of the Buddha, and the conventional matter-based scientific method.
- Currently, most scientists are trying to figure out how the mind works in terms of the workings of brain. However, mind is not in the brain.
- **Buddha Dhamma is entirely consistent with the material aspects of science (as we will discuss). But in Buddha Dhamma, mind precedes matter;** matter is secondary.

Three Characteristics of This World

13. Let us go back to the case of slipping on ice that was discussed in Dr. Feynman's video. To cope with an icy surface, all we need to know is to have prior EXPERIENCE with such a scenario. We also need an alert mind (that is not distracted by alcohol, anger, lust, etc.) to apply that experience to cope with the situation. That is the mind-based approach.

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- When one carefully examines the "world view" within the Buddha Dhamma, one will be able to see the problem of existence. ALL PARTS of this world are unsatisfactory, and thus one can never maintain anything to one's liking for long times. See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- **That is all one needs to really understand, not just to read about. That is the hardest; that is what requires an effort. Of course, one first needs to read and learn about this "world view."**

Conventional Scientific Approach – The Focus Is on Material Phenomena

14. On the other hand, one could keep going down the line of questions probing deeper to the causes as to why ice is slippery, why does water expand when it is cooled, the nature of chemical bonds, about electrons and protons, about quarks that make up those protons, etc.

- It is quite true that this probing has led to many technological advances that we all enjoy today. I can write something on this site and get it to you within minutes; it is fantastic and very beneficial. But my point is that all this "probing deeper into material aspects" has not gotten us any closer to the questions on the existence. **Right now, science is approaching the limits of this probing because now we know that all matter is just energy.**
- Even though we may benefit from the technological advances, such benefits can be enjoyed only for a brief moment (about 100 years) in the *samsāric* time scale. Buddha Dhamma provides a long-term solution.

Buddha Dhamma – The Focus Is on the Mind

15. What the Buddha stated 2500 years ago was that, in the end, there is no benefit in probing deeper into material properties as far as one's existence is concerned. All one needs to realize is that no matter what we achieve, they are all transitory, not stable. That requires purifying one's mind.

- When one truly comprehends the three characteristics of existence (see, "Anicca – True Meanings"), and thus the unsatisfactory nature of this existence, one will not seek to gain "material things" but will endeavor to achieve *Nibbāna*. **That only requires purification of one's mind. It does not require examining the outside material world in detail.**
- When one goes deeper into the Buddha Dhamma, it becomes clear that mental energy is the basis of all existence. But that is a long story. We first need to see whether the "broader world view" of the Buddha makes sense.
- In 2019, I started a new subsection, "Origin of Life" that gets into a deeper analysis.

Next, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma",……

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2.7 The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma

Expanded May 20, 2016

- The Grand Unified Theory of Dhammā – Introduction
- Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial
- 31 Realms Associated with the Earth
- Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms
- Body Types in Different Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya
- Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body
- Nibbāna in the Big Picture

2.7.1 The Grand Unified Theory of Dhammā – Introduction

Revised May 20, 2016; December 22, 2018; July 6, 2019; August 21, 2019

1. According to Buddha Dhamma, EVERYTHING in existence can be put into four ultimate realities (*paramattha*):

- Thoughts (*citta*)
- Thought qualities or mental factors (*cetasika*)
- Matter (*rūpa*)
- *Nibbāna*

These entities described in detail in the Tables and Summaries and *Abhidhamma* sections; see, "Abhidhamma – Introduction."

- All existence "in this world" described in terms of the first three. And they are all conditional; each is born due to the presence of a cause. If there is no cause, none of these three will arise. That is the fundamental cause and effect (*paṭicca samuppāda*) in Buddha Dhamma.
- Causes are numerous, but the root causes are six: greed, hate, ignorance, non-greed, non-hate, and non-ignorance.
- *Nibbāna* and those other three entities are mutually exclusive (things in this world are absent in *Nibbāna*); see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamanibbānapaṭisamyutta Sutta (Ud 8.1)" (English translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: The First Discourse about Nibbāna").

2. *Nibbāna* results with the removal of the three roots of greed, hate, ignorance (*rāgakkhyo*, *dosakkhayo*, *mohakkhayo Nibbānaṃ*).

- It is necessary to cultivate the three moral roots non-greed, non-hate, and non-ignorance first while in the mundane eightfold path. That allows one to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) and get to the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."
- Therefore, one strives to remove greed, hate, and ignorance, which are "*san*"; see, "What is 'San'?." That is the key to *Nibbāna,* as laid out in the Noble Eightfold Path.

3. The *citta* arise and decay at a fast rate: billions of *citta* can arise and pass away each second. But as we will see in the *Abhidhamma* section, "active thoughts" occur relatively infrequently in "fast bursts" or *citta vīthi*. *Cetasika* is "embedded" in each *citta*. There are 89 types of *cittā* in all, and 52 types of *cetasikas*; see, "Tables and Summaries." Thus the mental realm is very complicated.

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- For an introduction to the mind, see "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)," "The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)," and "Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?" in that order.

4. Matter (*rūpa*) constitutes of 28 basic units, of which only four are truly fundamental. However, the smallest indivisible unit is called a "*suddhaṭṭhaka*"; see, "Rūpa – Generation Mechanisms" and "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka." These *suddhaṭṭhaka* have very long lifetimes of a *mahā kappa* (basically the age of the universe). *suddhaṭṭhaka* are the building blocks of any "tangible thing" in this world.

- Any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) in "this world" are subject to change. Each *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (basically any material things) has a lifetime which could be shorter than a second or as long as billions of years (for a star for example).

5. Many people confuse "*udayavaya*" or "formation and breakup of *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)" means anything, including *suddhaṭṭhaka,* is perpetually in flux. They try to tie this with "impermanence" which they incorrectly translate *anicca* to be. In the contrary, *suddhaṭṭhaka* have very long lifetimes.

- It is only those "composites" such as humans, animals, trees, etc, that undergo decay and death at time scales that are discernible to us; a gold bar, does not decay for a very long time; see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- For a discussion on *udayavaya ñāṇa,* see, "Udayavaya Ñāṇa."

6. The "result" of this *udayavaya* nature of all *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) embedded in the Three Characteristics of "this world": *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. But *anicca* is NOT impermanence, and *anatta* is NOT "no-self"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

- Briefly, (i) it is not possible to find AND maintain happiness in anything in "this world." (ii) Because of that, we become distraught and suffer, and (iii) Thus, one becomes helpless (not in control). It is essential to realize that these are characterize of not just this life, but our beginning-less rebirth process in "this wider world" of 31 realms described below.
- Even though gold bars are virtually permanent relative to our lifetimes, we still cannot "maintain it to our satisfaction." That is because we have to leave it (and anything else) behind when we die.
- And all this is due to "*udayavaya*" of *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), all that we experience.

7. **Therefore, there is NOTHING "in this world" that is permanent (except "*nāma gotta*"; see below)**. Everything is constantly changing. That is the fundamental reason why nothing in "this world" will meet one's expectations; see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."

- Some things can last longer than others, but nothing is permanent. Anything is CONDITIONAL, i.e., arises due to causes. It would not come to existence in the absence of root causes. Thus it is said that everything "in this world" is CONDITIONED.
- The only exception is "*nāma gotta,*" which are the permanent records of a given "life-stream"; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)." That is how one with *abhiññā* powers can go back and look at one's past lives; some children can recall their past lives too. That record is permanent.

8. This world made of *citta, cetasika*, and *rūpa* is very complicated. Living beings can be born in 31 realms out of which we can "see" only two realms: human and animal.

- **Think about the fact that all biological matter arises from just four bases of DNA, and all computer codes based on two units, 0 and 1.** Thus, one could see how complex the mind is when there are 89 types of *cittā,* and 52 types of *cetasikas* are involved!

9. *Nibbāna*, in contrast to *citta, cetasika*, and *rūpa*, is UNCONDITIONED. *Nibbāna* attained by removing all root causes. Thus *Nibbāna* itself does not arise due to root causes and therefore is permanent.

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- *Nibbāna* is attained at four steps or stages: Stream Entry (*Sotāpanna*), Once-Returner (*Sakadāgāmī*), Non-Returner (*Anāgāmī*), *Arahant*.
- At each stage, bad character or "*gathi*" (pronounced "*gathi*") that could result in births in some realms are "removed"; see, "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti." For example, at the *Sotāpanna* stage, those *hateful gati* suitable for beings in *niraya*, *greedy gati* suitable for *petā* (hungry ghosts), etc. are removed.
- All causes (and all "*gati*") removed at the *Arahant* stage. However, an *Arahant* lives as a normal human being until death and is not reborn anywhere in "this world." Let us first examine what the Buddha meant by "this world" in the next section.

Thirty-One Planes of Existence

Here is a video from Carl Sagan to get an idea of how vast our "detectable universe" is:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Carl Sagan "100 Billion Galaxies each W/100 Billion Stars"

The "worldview" of the Buddha is not merely about the living beings on this planet. Our Solar system is one of an infinite number of "world-systems" (planetary systems). In EACH planetary system with life (scientists have not found even one yet, but they are out there!), there are 31 "planes of existence." As we find out below, we can "see" only two of these realms: our human realm and the animal realm. Thus our "world" is much more complicated than even the present-day science believes.

As some of you may already know, **science cannot account for 95% of the mass of the universe**, which they label "dark energy" and "dark matter"; see, "The 4 Percent Universe" by Richard Panek (2011), or do a Google search on "dark energy and dark matter." That is why I say that the Buddha transcended "this world"; see, "Power of the Human mind – Introduction." He was able to "see" the whole of existence: see "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem" under "Dhamma and Science."

- A being in a given plane of existence is reborn in any of the 31 realms at death. That happens instantaneously, and evidence for such a mechanism is slowly emerging from quantum mechanics; see, "Quantum Entanglement – We are all Connected."

The Buddha has described these different realms of existence in many *suttā*, and a convenient summary is at: "The Thirty-one Planes of Existence." It is not easy to describe in detail the 31 planes of existence in a short essay, and I will describe their various characteristics as needed in other posts. In the following, I will use a visual to simplify things a bit and to provide a simple description of *Nibbāna* with respect to this "wider world of existence."

Imagine a sphere with 31 shells, with a small sphere in the middle. Thus the total volume of the big sphere is filled by the center sphere and surrounding shells. The 31 sections represent the 31 planes of existence. I emphasize that this is just a visual. The reality is different. For example, animal and human realms co-exist. Also, both time and space are infinite.

1. The inner 11 shells represent the *kāma loka*, where all five physical sense faculties are present.

- The innermost sphere represents the *niraya* (hell) where there is non-stop suffering; next is the animal realm. There are two more realms where suffering is higher than in the human plane.
- The human plane is the fifth shell. That is the last realm where greed, hate, and ignorance all prevail. However, this is unique in the sense that humans can also get rid of all those three and attain *Nibbāna*.
- The sixth through eleventh shells represent the realms of the *devā* (wrongly translated as gods by many). *Devas* do not have dense bodies with flesh and blood, and thus, they do not have the physical ailments. They do not generate greedy thoughts.

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2. The next 16 shells represent realms where only two physical sense faculties (eye and ear) are active, in addition to mind. These beings have very fine bodies, even less dense than *devā*. These are called *rūpa lokā*.

3. The last four shells represent the *arūpa lokā*, where beings have ultra-fine bodies and only the mind faculty; they do not have physical senses.

4. In *rūpa* and *arūpa lokā*, living beings are in *jhānic* states, and those beings do not have either greed or hate; but they still have ignorance.

- Humans can attain these *jhānic* states, and thus humans can "temporarily live" in those *lokā*; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Anāriya or Mundane Jhānā."
- The 16 realms in the *rūpa loka* correspond to the four lower *jhānā*, and the four realms in the *arūpa loka* correspond to the four higher *jhānā*.

5. Now, a lot of you may be thinking, "How do I know all this is true? Is there any evidence?." There are a lot of things we do not know about "this world." We cannot rely on our senses or even science to verify/confirm these; see, "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis" and "Dhamma and Science."

- Only within the last 50 years or so that science has accepted that our universe has more than a few galaxies (now science has confirmed that there are billions of galaxies!).
- Furthermore, the newest findings (yet unconfirmed) in string theory indicate that we live in a 10-dimensional world (of course we cannot see the other spatial dimensions), not a 3-dimensional world. For a fun look at different spatial dimensions, see, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions."

6. Any living being (including each of us) has been in all realms in this beginning-less *saṃsāra*. We have been in the *niraya* (hell), and we have been at the highest (except the five pure abodes in *rūpa loka* which can be accessed only by *Anāgāmī* or Non-Returners).

7. Above the human realm, there is relatively less suffering (except at death, which is inevitable). However, unless one has achieved at least the Stream Entry (*Sotāpanna*) stage, even a living being in the highest plane can fall to any lower level. Therefore, a normal human is bound to end up in the *niraya* (hell) at some point; once there one will spend a long agonizing time there and eventually come out. Each of us has done this many times over. The cause of births in different realms is explained in terms of "*kamma* seeds"; see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka").

8. So, each living being moves from one realm to another, **but spends most time in the four lower worlds**, mainly because once fallen there, it is hard to come out. This "*saṃsāric* wandering" is the critical point to think about and comprehend.

9. As one moves away from the center, the level of suffering decreases and the level of mundane pleasure increases up to the 11th realm. After that in the *rūpa* and *arūpa lokā* it is mainly the *jhānic* pleasures, not the sense pleasures; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

10. The human realm and the animal realm are the only ones where a being is born to parents. In all other realms, living beings are born instantaneously, formed fully, within an instant (*cittakkhana*) of dying in the previous life. *That is an opapātika birth.* That is why the Buddha said, "*mano pubbaṅgamā dhamma……*." The mind is the root cause, not matter.

- As discussed in the *Abhidhamma* section, even the humans and animals start their "*bhava*" *opapatically* as *gandhabbā;* see, "Manomaya Kāya." They begin building a "dense physical body" after getting into a womb.

11. A person who becomes an *Arahant* or attains *Nibbāna*, will not be reborn in any of these 31 realms. Thus, *Nibbāna* is not difficult to understand: see, "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?", and "What are

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Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna", and other posts (by the way, you can type a keyword in the "Search box" at top right to get a list of relevant posts).

- *Nibbāna*, in the present model, corresponds to getting out of all 31 shells, out of the big sphere; no more rebirth in any of the 31 realms. *Nibbāna* is where the permanent *sukha* or *nirāmisa sukha*, is.
- When one attains *Nibbāna* or *Arahanthood*, he/she looks just like any other human but has no attachments to any worldly things. Until death, an *Arahant* is subjected to *kamma vipāka*. When that *kammic* power is used up, he dies and is not reborn because he/she will not "willingly grasp" (or "*upādāna*") any of the possible births.

12. Why are we trapped in the 31 realms? Because we perceive that there is happiness to be had in "this world." We are not aware that there is much suffering in the lower four realms. Many people look at their lives and say, "where is this suffering the Buddha was talking about?": It is the hidden suffering that is there not only in this world but mostly in the lowest four realms. The problem is that once fallen there, it is hard to come back up. In those realms – animal realm included – beings are more like robots. They do not have developed minds like humans.

- No one or no external force is keeping us in "this world" of 31 realms. Content with sense pleasures, do not see the suffering "in the long term" or even in this life as we get old. Thus **we are clinging to everything in this world like an octopus grabbing its prey with all eight legs.** And we are not aware that there is a better kind of pleasure in *Nibbāna*, in detaching from "this world"; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?." (Also, unless a Buddha comes along, we do not know about the 31 realms and are not aware of the suffering in the lower four realms).

13. Can we taste *Nibbānic* "pleasure"?. Yes. We can feel it in increments, even below the Stream Entry (*Sotāpanna*) stage; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna." That is *nirāmisa sukha*, the "pleasure of giving up worldly things."

- This *nirāmisa sukha* has "quantum jumps" (substantial instantaneous changes) at the four stages of *Nibbāna*: Stream Entry, Once-Returner, Non-Returner, *Arahant*. Thus when one is on the Path, one can experience *nirāmisa sukha* at varying degrees, all the way to *Nibbānic* bliss, during this very lifetime; see, at the end of "The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna."

14. All these 31 realms are in our solar system (*cakkavāla* or *Chakrawāta* in Sinhala). They are associated with the Earth. There are billions of such *cakkavāla* (planetary systems) in existence at all times with living beings.

- These are in clusters of the small, medium, and large "world systems" (galaxies, galaxy clusters, and superclusters?). But none is permanent. They come into being and eventually perish. Within the past 100 years or so, scientists have confirmed the existence of billions of planetary systems within each galaxy. And there are billions of such galaxies in our universe!.

We have been born in almost all of these realms in our *saṃsāric* journey that has no traceable beginning.

Continues the discussion in , "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental", ……..

2.7.2 Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial

May 14, 2016; Revised November 25, 2016; September 30, 2019; October 26, 2019; January 11, 2020

Material World and Immaterial (Invisible) World

1. Our "human world" is made of two types of worlds:

- The material world that we experience with the five physical senses. This is our familiar world with living beings and inert objects. This world has sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches. For example,

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we experience sights via, "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ,*" where *cakkhuviññāṇa* is "seeing." Other four sensory faculties have similar expressions; see, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa."

- We can also recall our memories from the past and any future hopes/expectations that we have. Those are in the "immaterial world" that we experience with our minds. **It is also called the "*nāma loka*."**
- Here we use the phrase "immaterial world" to describe those *dhammā* that can only be experienced with the mind VIA, "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*." Those *dhammā* includes concepts, memories, etc in addition to *kamma bīja* with energy; see below.

2. Those two worlds co-exist. It is just that we cannot "directly experience" the immaterial (invisible) world or the *nāma loka*.

- There are many things that we cannot "see" but we know to exist. For example, we know that radio and television signals are all around us, but we cannot "see" them. We need special equipment like radios or TVs to detect those signals.
- Those *dhammā* in the immaterial world are just like that. There is an organ (*mana indriya*) in the brain that detects those *dhammā*. Scientists are not aware of that yet. They think past memories, for example, are stored in the brain. They are not. Those memories are in that immaterial world that co-exists with the material world. Just like a radio can detect those invisible radio waves, *mana indriya* detects those "unseen" memories (and also *kamma bija* that bring *kamma vipaka*.)
- You may ask how can all those different memories and uncountable *kamma bija* from our past lives be sorted out by the *mana indriya*. Did you realize that there are numerous radio and TV signals in a major city? Just like a radio or a TV can sort our and detect those signals, *mana indriya* can detect various types of *dhammā*.

What Are Dhammā?

3. *Dhammā* are what we perceive with the mind with the help of the *mana indriya* in the brain. They include our memories including those from past lives. Only those with *iddhi* (super-normal) powers can recall memories from past lives. However, some children can remember past lives; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

- But *dhammā* (plural) also includes numerous *kamma bija* due to our past *kamma* (not only from the present life but from past lives.) They are not mere memories but have energies.
- **Those *dhammā* with energy (i.e., *kamma bija*) are CREATED by our minds. Specifically, they are created in *javana citta*.** For deep analysis, see, **"**The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka**."**
- We know from modern science that matter and energy are related by the famous equation of Einstein: E = m X c^2, where E is energy, c is the speed of light, and m is mass (amount of matter.)
- Just like plant seeds can germinate and become trees, our *kamma bija* (*kamma* seeds; *bija* means "seeds") can germinate in our minds and bring *kamma vipāka*.

Rūpa and be Dense or Fine (Subtle)

4. *Rūpa* in Buddha Dhamma cannot be translated to English as "matter" or "solid objects." As we discussed above, our minds can make very fine *rūpa* called *dhammā*, and can also detect those *dhammā* that are in the immaterial world.

- Of course, the word "*dhamma*" refers to a theory or teaching, like in Buddha Dhamma. Only when used in the plural, *dhammā* refer to those fine *rūpā* detected with the mind (with the help of *mana indriya*.)
- Therefore, those very fine *rūpā* are called "*dhammā*" They are "*anidassanaṃ, appaṭighaṃ,*" meaning they cannot be seen or detected by our five physical senses; see, "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis." **They include "*kammic* energies" that can bring *vipāka* at any time.**

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- The fine *rūpas* are normally not called *rūpa* but are called *dhammā* to make the distinction. ***Dhammā* are very fine *rūpa* which are at or below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.** They are the *rūpa* that are grasped only by the *mana indriya* or *dhammayatana*: "*anidassanaṃ, appaṭighaṃ, dhammayatana pariyapanna rūpaṃ*." For a more in-depth analysis, see, "What are Rūpa? – Dhammā are Rūpa too!."

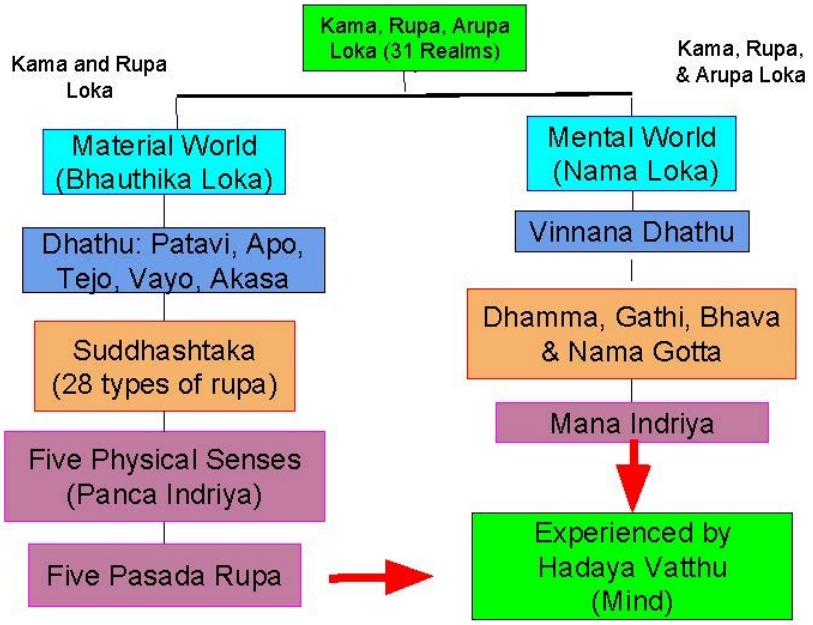
5. The five physical senses detect "dense" *rūpā* that are in the material world. Such dense *rūpā* are ABOVE the smallest "unit of matter" in Buddha Dhamma, called *suddhaṭṭhaka*. (A *suddhaṭṭhaka* is a billion times smaller than an atom in present-day science). The 28 types of *rūpa* consist of these "dense types of *rūpa*"; see, "Rūpa (Material Form)."

- The fine *rūpas* are normally not called *rūpa* but are called *dhammā* to make the distinction. ***Dhammā* are very fine *rūpa* which are below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.** They are the *rūpa* are grasped only by the *mana indriya* or *dhammayatana*: "*anidassanaṃ, appaṭighaṃ, dhammayatana pariyapanna rūpaṃ."* For a more in-depth analysis, see, "What are Rūpa? – Dhammā are Rūpa too!."

All Thirty-One Realms Share the Immaterial World

6. The immaterial world is like a fine fabric that connects all living beings. It is just that we cannot "see" the immaterial world, while we can see most of the material world. All 31 realms share the immaterial world.

- In the four realms of the *Arūpa loka*, "dense matter" formed by *suddhaṭṭhaka* are absent (except for the *hadaya vatthu* of the *arūpa brahmā*). Beings in the *arūpa loka* experience only *dhamma.* They do not have any of the five physical senses and have only the mind (*hadaya vatthu*).



Click to open in pdf format: WebLink: PDF File: Two Types of Loka

- Thus the "material world" is accessible only to living beings in the *kāma loka* and *rūpa loka*.
- *Arūpa loka* means there are no "condensed *rūpa*" (like those in *kāma loka* and *rūpa loka*), but of course, *dhammā* are there (those *arūpa* beings can think and recall past events just like us).
- Furthermore, even in the *rūpa loka* only fine and subtle matter exists. There are no "solid objects" like trees. If we visit a *rūpa loka,* we may not see anything.

The World in Terms of *Dhātu*

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7. Let us briefly discuss the main points depicted in the above chart. Everything in this world is made of 6 *dhātu*: *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, akāsa*, and *viññāṇa*. Five of them constitute the "material world" and the *viññāṇa dhātu* represents the "immaterial world."

- By the way, *akāsa* is not merely "empty space." We will discuss this later.
- The basic building block for the material world is *suddhaṭṭhaka*. Not long ago, scientists thought that atoms were the building blocks, but now they say that even those elementary particles have structure. A *suddhaṭṭhaka* is much more finer than any elementary particle.
- In the immaterial world (or the mental plane), there are the mental precursors to *suddhaṭṭhaka*. They are *dhammā, gati*, and *bhava*. Based on our *gati*, we make *suddhaṭṭhaka* in our *javana citta;* see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

Five Physical Senses Detect Dense *Rūpa* and *Mana Indriya* Detects *Dhammā*

8. We have five sense faculties to experience the material world: eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and the body. They pass down the sense inputs to the five *pasāda rūpa* located in the *gandhabba* or the *monomaya kāya*, that overlaps our physical body); see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)." By the way, *gandhabba* is not a Mahāyāna concept: "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka."

- On the mental side, we have a *mana indriya* in the brain to sense the immaterial world; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- Based on those five physical sense contacts with the material world and the contacts of the *mana indriya* with the immaterial world, our thoughts arise in the *hadaya vatthu* (also located in the *gandhabba* or the *monomaya kāya*); see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- That is a very brief description of the chart above. One could gain more information by clicking on the links provided and by using the "Search" button. Don't worry too much if all this does not make complete sense yet.

9. Thus it is important to understand that there are two types of *rūpa* in our human world:

- Tangible matter in the material world that we experience with the help of the five physical senses.
- Then there are unseen (*anidassana*), intangible (*appaṭigha*) *rūpa* such as thoughts, perceptions, plans, memories. They are *dhammā, mano rūpa, gati, bhava, nāma gotta*. It is the *mana indriya* in the brain that helps detect subtle *rūpa*.
- Both types of *rūpa* are eventually detected and experienced by the mind (*hadaya vatthu*). The *hadaya vatthu* is not located in the brain but in the body of *gandhabba* and **overlaps** the physical heart region of the physical body; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- Comprehending this "wider picture" may need a little bit of effort. The world is complex and most of the complexity is associated with the mind. The seat of the mind is not in the brain but in the fine body (*manomaya kāya*) of the *gandhabba*.

The Dream World

10. Another part of our immaterial world is the dream world.

- When we dream, we "see" people and material objects. But we cannot say where those are located. They do not have a physical location; they are in the immaterial plane. And we do not "see" those dreams with our eyes, but with the *mana indriya*.
- When we sleep, our five physical senses do not function. But the *mana indriya* in the brain does. Scientists do confirm that parts of our brains are active during sleep.

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- What is experienced in *Arūpa Loka* is somewhat similar to seeing dreams. Of course, one has the ability to contemplate in the *arūpa loka*. However, one is unable to read or listen. Therefore, one cannot learn *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) from a Noble Person. Thus, one is unable to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* in the *arūpa loka*. But if one had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage prior to being born there, one is able to meditate and attain higher stages of *Nibbāna*.

Dense *Rūpa* for "Rough" Sensory Contacts

11. There is another way to look at our sense experiences. Living beings are attached to this world because they expect to gain pleasures from this world. Such pleasures are obtained by making contact with *rūpa*. Those *rūpa* come at various densities.

- Bodily pleasures are achieved by the strongest contacts (touch). Then come taste, smell, vision, sounds, becoming less dense in that order.
- The softest contact is via *dhamma*. This is our immaterial world; we think, plan for the future, remember things from the past, etc: We do this all the time, and we can do it anywhere. Another way to say this is to say that we engage in *mano, vacī,* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- Thus, contacts by the *mana indriya* with *dhammā* in the *mano loka* constitute a significant portion of sense experience. That involves *mano rūpa* (*dhamma, gati, bhava, nāma gotta*) in the mind plane or the immaterial world.

12. The way a living being experiences and enjoys (or suffers) sense contacts is different in the three main categories of existence: *kāma loka, rūpa loka*, and *arūpa loka*.

- Most "rough" or "*olārika*" sense contacts are available only in the *kāma loka*. Even here, they are roughest in the *niraya* (the lowest realm) and in general reduces in "roughness" as moving up to the human realm, the fifth. The 6 *deva* realms are significantly "softer" than the human realm; *deva* bodies are much more finer (like that of a *gandhabba*) and a normal human cannot see them.
- The roughest sense contacts (touch, taste, and smell) are absent in the *rūpa loka*. Only visual and sound contacts are available for the *brahmā* in the 16 *rūpa loka* realms, in addition to the mind.
- Those *arūpi brahmā* in the 4 *arūpa loka* realms have only the mind, with which they experience only the finest *rūpa* (*dhamma*) that are below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.
- Those *brahmā* in both *rūpi* and *arūpi loka* have seen the perils of "*kāma assāda*" that are available in the *kāma loka*. They had enjoyed *jhānic* pleasures as humans and value those more than the "rough" sense pleasures. They have given up the craving for those "rough" sense pleasures that are available via touch, taste, and smell.

Stronger Cravings Match "Denser Sensory Contacts"

13. We can get an idea of such "soft" and "rough" sense contacts with the following example. Suppose someone (a grandmother is a good example) watching her grandchild laughing and dancing around having a good time.

- At first, she may be watching from a distance and enjoying the sight of the little baby having fun.
- Then she goes and hugs the child. It is not enough to just watch from a distance; she needs to touch the child.
- If the child keeps on wiggling and having a good time, the grandmother may start kissing the child. In some cases, the grandmother may start tightening the hold on the child, even without realizing it and may make the child cry out in pain.
- This last scenario is an example of how the craving for extreme sense pleasures can instead lead to suffering. Of course, it is the **craving for *olārika* sense pleasures** that leads to most suffering.

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- But suffering is there even in the *rūpi* and *arūpi* realms. Even at the level of *arūpi brahmā* — where the attachment is only to pleasures of the softest of the *rūpa* (*dhamma*) —, there is inevitable suffering at the end when they have to give up that existence and come back down to the human realm.

Less Suffering in "Less-Dense" Realms

14. Therefore, the level of inevitable suffering goes hand in hand with the "denseness" of the sensory contact.

- Pains, aches, and illnesses are there only in the lowest 5 realms (including the human realm) where there are dense physical bodies. In the higher realms, those are absent. This is the price even the humans pay for being able to experience "rough contact pleasures" such as a body massage, sex, eating, and smelling.
- We humans in the *kāma loka* like to enjoy close and "rough" sense pleasures. In addition, most times, just enjoying sense pleasures is not enough; we like to "own" those things that provide sense pleasures. For example, people like to "own" vacation homes; it is not enough to rent a house in that location just for the visit.
- This tendency to "own" pleasurable things also go down in higher realms. There are fewer material things to "own" in *brahma lokas*, especially in the *arūpi brahma* realms.

Connection to *Magga Phala*

15. As one attains higher stages of *Nibbāna*, craving for "rough" sense pleasures, as well as the desire to "own" things go down.

- A *Sotāpanna* has only "seen" the perils of *kāma assāda;* he/she still enjoys them. Thus, he/she will still be born in the *kāma loka* realms. but not in the *apāyā*.
- A *Sakadāgāmī* may still enjoy "*kāma assāda*," but has no desire to "own" those things that provide pleasures. It is enough to live in a nice rented house, and there is no desire to own a nice house. In fact, a *Sakadāgāmī* can clearly see the burden of "owning things." A *Sakadāgāmī* will be born only in realms above the human realm.
- An *Anāgāmī* has no special interest in enjoying *kāma assāda*. He/she eats to quench the hunger (but will eat delicious foods when offered). An *Anāgāmī* will never give priority to any sense pleasure over the "pleasure of Dhamma" (of course, Dhamma here means Buddha Dhamma). He/she will be born in the *rūpa* realms reserved for the *Anāgāmīs* upon death, and will not be reborn in *kāma loka*.
- An *Arahant* has no desire for even *jhānic* pleasures and will not be born anywhere in the 31 realms upon death.

16. Each habitable planetary system (*cakkavāla*) has all 31 realms of existence, even though we can only see two realms (human and animal) in ours.

This is discussed next: "31 Realms Associated with the Earth", ……

2.7.3 31 Realms Associated with the Earth

May 20, 2016; revised November 29, 2018; April 25, 2019; August 27, 2019; March 10, 2020

1. There are many things in "this world" that we cannot see, hear, etc. (i.e., perceive with our six senses). Scientists admit that they cannot account for 96% of the "stuff" that makes our universe. See, "The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality", by Richard Panek (2011). For more information, Google "dark energy, dark matter."

- Many forms of energy that apparently do not have significant mass (or weight) but exist out there in the world.

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- A good example is the fact that we are unaware of the huge amounts of "information" that surrounds us. There are hundreds and thousands of radio and television signals in a major city. We cannot see or hear any of those programs (i.e., we are unaware of their existence) without having a radio or a television "tuned" to the correct frequency.
- In the same way, we are unaware of the existence of 29 of the 31 realms centered around the Earth. Living beings in some of those realms live side-by-side by us, but we are unaware of them. Most of these beings have bodies "more like energy forms" than solid bodies.
- With better detection technologies, we may be able to communicate with some of these living beings with subtle bodies in the future. Of course, those who develop *abhiññā* powers can also see some of them. We will get back to this issue below, but let us first discuss the relative locations of the 31 realms.

2. Buddha Dhamma says there are 31 realms associated with each habitable planetary system (*cakkavāla*). And there are an infinite number of them in the universe (this latter fact has been confirmed by science).

- Modern science is gradually confirming this broader world view explained by the Buddha 2500 years ago; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction." Only a few hundred years ago, Western world accepted a universe that centered around the Earth with stars "embedded in a celestial sphere"; see, "WebLink: WIKI: Celestial spheres."

3. In the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," we described a model that consisted of 31 concentric "shells." The actuality is pretty much close to that analogy, with some additional features. I have compiled a summary of the 31 realms in the table "31 Realms of Existence."

- The sphere with 31 concentric shells overlaps the Earth. The lowest realm, *niraya* (or hell) is located deep inside the Earth.
- The next four realms (*preta, asura*, animal, and human) are closer to the Earth's surface. There are some *preta apāyā* deep inside the Earth, but some *pretās* live on the surface. *Asurās* also live on the surface, but mostly in remote locations such as the ocean and isolated mountains. Both cannot see both *pretās* and *asurās*.
- There are many *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* that describe those three realms (*niraya, preta, asura*) in detail. We will discuss it in the future. The *Peta Vatthu* in the *Khuddaka Nikāya* of the *Tipiṭaka* describes *pretās* as well as *gandhabbā*.

4. Of course, humans and animals live on the surface of the Earth. *Gandhabbā* only belong to either the human and animal *bhava*. Those *gandhabbā* are waiting for a suitable womb to be born with human (or animal) bodies; see the section: Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya).

- Thus we say that those *gandhabbā* are in *para loka* (nether world). Even though they live alongside us, we cannot see their very subtle bodies: "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."
- So, our world is much more complicated than we think.

5. Then come the six realms for the *devas*. The lowest of the six deva realms are again located on the surface of the Earth. Those *devas* are called *Bhummatta devas,* and they belong to the *Cātummahārājika deva* realm; see, "31 Realms of Existence." They live mostly in their residences (*deva vimāna*) based on trees. Of course, we cannot see them or their "residences."

- The higher *deva* realms extend out from the Earth.
- The 16 *rūpa* realms extend even higher above the Earth.
- The four *arūpa loka* realms are located even further from the Earth.
- All these realms are concentric with Earth's center. As the Earth spins around its axis and rotates around the Sun, all 31 domains move along with the Earth, just like the human realm does.
- Buddha has named these various realms in several key suttā, for example, in WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11) and WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Samaya Sutta (DN 20).

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6. In general, beings in higher realms can "see" those in the lower ones, but not the other way around (if come "face-to-face"). For example, *devas* can see us, but cannot see the *rūpi* or *arūpi brahmā*. *Rūpi brahmā* can see *devas*, but cannot see the *arūpi brahmā*.

- From the previous post, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial," we know that there are only traces of "real" matter (*suddhaṭṭhaka*) in the *arūpa* realms. Thus beings in the other 27 realms cannot "see" those *arūpi brahmā*.
- When one develops *abhiññā* powers, one is said to be able "see" successively higher realms. Of course, one needs to be able to get into the fourth *jhāna* to develop such *abhiññā* powers. Eventually, when one develops the eighth *jhāna* (and can get into *attha samāpatti*), one could be able to see many of the 31 realms.

7. Now let us look at "things" in this world from a different perspective. A fundamental premise of Buddha Dhamma is the following. "Energy" is embedded in **spin** (*bramana* in Pāli; *bramana* or භ්‍රමණ in Sinhala), and in **rotation** (*paribbramana* in Pāli; *paribbramana* or පරිභ්‍රමණ in Sinhala).

- The smallest unit of matter, a *suddhaṭṭhaka*, does not stay still. Depending on its rotation or spin (*bramana*) and its rotation around something else (*paribbramana*), other "modes of energy" and "types of *rūpa*" arise.
- It is easy to visualize by considering the motions of the Earth. We all know that the Earth rotates (*paribbhramana*) around the Sun, and it takes a year to complete one revolution around the Sun.
- While doing that the Earth rotates around its North-South axis; this is the spinning (*bramana*). It takes a day for the Earth to complete one such spin.
- Here is an excellent video that discusses this universal feature:

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Rotation in Space - Professor Carolin Crawford

8. There are an infinite number of such *cakkavāla* (star systems or a collection of planets revolving around a star) in our universe. Each planet in such a "star system" undergoes spin around its own axis and rotation around the star. Science has confirmed this within the past hundred years.

- Each of those *cakkavāla* may have "Earth-like" planets with their own 31 realms.
- A cluster of thousand such *cakkavāla* is called a "*cūḷanikā lokadhātu*" or a "small world system." Thousand of such systems is a "*majjhimikā lokadhātu*" or a "medium world system." A cluster of thousand of such systems is a "*mahāsahassī lokadhātu*" or a "large world system"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūḷanikā Sutta (AN 3.80)."
- Also see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamakosala Sutta (AN 10.29)" and "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

9. Scientists have also confirmed that all elementary particles (the smallest particles scientists can detect) have spin. Furthermore, in an atom, the electrons can be said to "rotate" around the nucleus, in a crude analogy with the Earth rotating around the Sun.

- Then our Solar system rotates too. The next higher conglomerates (for example, galaxies) also undergo rotation. Because of these rotations, all these structures tend to flatten out. For instance, in our Solar system, all the planets are on a plane. In the same way, all galaxies in a galaxy cluster in a flattened disk.
- Therefore, even though we see a very calm starry night sky, things out there are in constant motion. Furthermore, there are violent explosions of stars (supernova) that occur a billion times a year in the visible universe.
- That is why the realities out there are much more different than what we perceive with our very crude sense faculties. All the atoms and molecules in our bodies are in constant motion, not to mention the spins and rotations of uncountable *suddhaṭṭhaka* that constitute them.
- Thus everything around us is in constant flux. Our senses are just not capable of detecting them.

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10. Modern science has also enabled us to see more and more of living beings around us. For example, the Western world was not aware of the existence of microscopic living beings until the advent of the microscope by Leeuwenhoek in the late 17th century: WebLink: WIKI: Antonie van Leeuwenhoek.

- Now we know that there are billions of living beings in the body of a human being. See, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!."
- Hopefully, new technologies will enable us to "see" many living beings belonging to the *preta, asura*, and *deva* realms — as well as *gandhabbā* — in the future.
- Even though there are some claims of detection of horrible sounds from the *niraya* deep inside the Earth, they have not been confirmed; see, "Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?."

11. As one moves up to higher realms, attachments to the material aspects decreases. That is why living beings in higher realms have less number of sense faculties.

- In the *kāma loka*, one has all six sense faculties. Even there, the higher *deva* realms have "less strong sense contacts" with less dense bodies that we cannot see.
- *Rūpi brahmā* have much more delicate "bodies" compared to *kāma loka devas*. They do not have touch, taste, and smell sensations.
- "Matter" is very subtle in higher *rūpa loka* and *arūpa loka* realms. Therefore, even in the final destruction of a *cakkavāla* (in a supernova explosion), the realms above the *Abhassara* realm (realm #17) are not destroyed. That is why the lifetimes of those *Brahmā* are much longer than a single *mahā kappa* (an eon or the age of the universe); see, "31 Realms of Existence."

12. Now we can understand why we cannot see the other 29 realms.

- In the higher realms around the Earth, living beings (and their environments) have very little solid matter. That is why we cannot see them or their habitats.
- The four *arūpa realms* are mostly devoid of even the smallest unit of matter (*suddhaṭṭhaka*). Realms in the *rūpa loka* and even in the *deva* realms of the *kāma loka* are made of very fine matter that we cannot see.
- The beings in the *niraya* (hell) have very dense bodies subjected to various forms of torture; of course, that realm is located deep inside the Earth.

13. We are used to the perception of "solid tangible physical bodies" of humans and animals. That is called the "*ghana saññā.*" However, those physical bodies are mostly "empty." That is because atoms, which are the basic building blocks, are mostly empty.

- Furthermore, our physical bodies all start with a single cell (zygote) in a mother's womb. One needs a microscope to see a single cell. A *gandhabba* (which is even smaller than a cell) merges with that zygote that was formed by the union of a mother and a father. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- Before entering the womb, that *gandhabba* had a fine body similar to that of a *rupi brahma*. Then that cell grows by taking in food first from the mother and then by eating once coming out of the womb. Our heavy physical bodies result from the accumulation of inert matter (by eating food).
- And as we discussed in "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births," a human *bhava* may not end at the physical death of the solid body that lives about 100 years. A human *bhava* may last thousands of years, and that life-stream continues its existence in many "physical bodies" with the *gandhabba* as the basis.

14. For example, in rebirth stories, the physical bodies in successive births are different, even though there may be some similarities; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." In between consecutive lives, the life-stream continues just in the form its core, the *gandhabba.*

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- The solid body of a few hundred pounds that we consider to be "me," is just a shell. When the gandhabba leaves the body — either at death or sometimes during a heart operation (see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)"), it has no attributes of life.
- That is an excellent way to contemplate the "*ghana saññā*" or to realize that our physical bodies are mostly dead matter; a shell that the *gandhabba* resides in. If a person of 300 pounds loses 100 pounds of weight, really that person "loses" one-third of his/her identity? It is the same person because the *gandhabba* is the same.
- All beings in the 31 realms eventually have "mental bodies" that are very fine comparable to that of a *gandhabba.* Even with our most excellent microscopes, we cannot see their ultra-fine "bodies."

15. The above picture gives us a perspective on how foolish we are to focus on material wealth, titles, etc. for at most 100 years in this life. By living a moral life, and by doing meritorious deeds we can make a much bigger "investment" in the future. That is by accruing merits that could lead to rebirths in the *Deva* or *Brahma deva* worlds where there is much less suffering and no physical illnesses.

- But even in those higher realms, death is inevitable no matter how long the lifetimes are. Most of all, there is no escape from the possibility of future births in the lowest four realms. Thus *Nibbāna* is the only permanent solution.

16. Following is a fairly good video describing the general features of the 31 realms:

WebLink: youtube: Bhante Anandajoti: The Planes of Existence

Next in the series, "Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms", ….

2.7.4 Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms

June 4, 2016; revised October 3, 2019

Difference Between *Bhava* (Existence) and *Jāti* (Births)

1. There are many posts on the critical concept of *gandhabba* not only in this series, but scattered throughout the site, and especially in the section, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kaya)." These posts discuss the details on how a living being goes through the rebirth process without having an unchanging "soul." But they maintain (ever-changing) personal characteristics or *gati* (pronounced "gathi") between two adjacent lives.

- It all started with a post on this basic concept at the start of this website: "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."
- While it is good to get an idea of the nature of all living beings in the 31 realms, it is not necessary to learn those in detail. I want to provide a complete and inter-consistent picture per original teachings of the Buddha in this section.
- However, the concept of the *gandhabba* is essential to understand **how we are reborn with physically different bodies — multiple times — in a single human existence (human *bhava.*)** That human bhava may last thousands of years; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein." Unlike *devas* and Brahmā who are born just once, we live and die to be reborn human multiple times before switching to another realm.

This World Has Thirty-One Realms of Existence

2. We will first review two significant aspects of the 31 realms. Then we will discuss the concept of a *gandhabba* (which applies only to human and animal realms) in more detail.

- First is that the transition from one existence (*bhava*) to another is ALWAYS instantaneous; it happens at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment ("*cuti*" pronounced "chuthi"); see, "Paṭisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi" and "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

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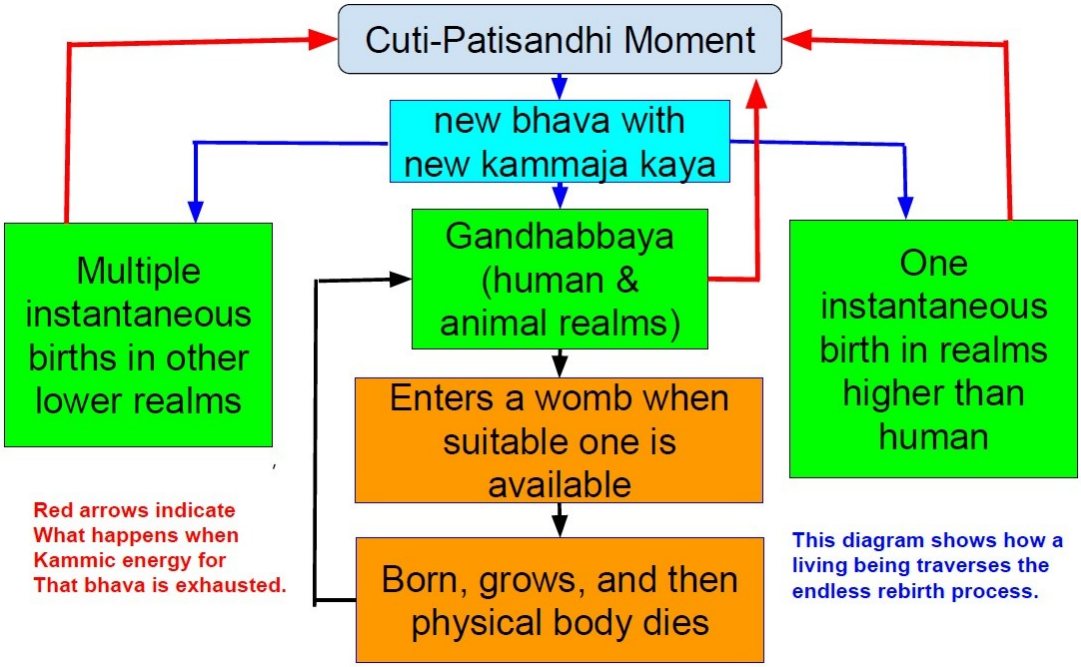
- The second aspect is that in the 20 higher-lying realms, those beings (Brahmā) weigh less than a billionth of an atom in modern science!
- All beings with dense bodies are in the 11 realms of the *kāma loka.* Even there, the six *deva* realms have less-dense bodies compared to humans.

Death of Physical Body Different From the End of an Existence

3. The following chart shows the major features of what happens at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. That is when a living being makes a transition from one *bhava* (existence) to another, say from being a human to a Brahma.



Click to open the pdf file: WebLink: PDF File: Births in Different Realms

- Without exception, at each such *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, a new *kammaja kāya* is generated by the *kammic* energy fueling a new existence. That *kammaja kāya* ALWAYS has a *hadaya vatthu.* That is the seat of the mind (the quality of which depends on the realm).

Types of "Bodies" In Different Realms

4. Thus it is essential to realize that the critical thing that happens at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment is the generation of the unbelievably small *kammaja kāya*, which contains the blueprint for the new existence. At that point, the mechanism of "birth" can be roughly divided into three categories, as shown in the chart.

- The Brahmā in the *rūpi* and *arūpi* realms (top 20 realms) are instantaneously born with very little else other than several *suddhaṭṭhaka*–size "material elements." Their body features discussed below. The main feature here is that they are spontaneously born in those realms and live very long times there until death. Then another cuti-paṭisandhi moment takes that being to a new *bhava.*
- The only difference in the six *deva* realms (in *kāma loka*) compared to the Brahmā is that they do have well-defined physical bodies (*karaja kāya*) like us. However, those bodies are much less dense, and we are not able to see them even if they stand right in front of us.
- A *deva* is born with the body equivalent of a 16-year-old, and their food is a drink called *amurtha.* Devas have all five sense faculties like us and are said to the optimum sense pleasures available in *kāma loka*. They also live that one life until death and then switch to a new existence (*bhava*) at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.

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- That completes the discussion on the green box to the right.

5. What happens in the green box to the left is a bit more complicated. That is because each realm in the *apayas* (lowest four realms) is somewhat different. We will discuss the animal realm together with the human realm (middlebox) below. Let us first discuss briefly the lowest three realms indicated by the green box on the left.

- The lowest is the *niraya* (hell), where beings are born with full dense bodies like ours instantaneously. They undergo ceaseless cutting, burning, and various other forms of torture. They die innumerable times, only to be reborn promptly. Only when the *kammic* energy for that existence is exhausted (usually after millions of years) that they encounter the next *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.
- Beings in the preta (*peta*) realm also are born instantaneously and can have subtle or dense bodies. The distinguishing feature there is suffering due to hunger.
- Beings in the *asura* realm are beings with massive, very inactive bodies. They are also born instantaneously and live those miserable lives until the next *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.

Kammaja Kāya (*Gandhabba*) Can Last Thousands of Years With Many Human Rebirths

6. That brings us to the middle green box, which represents the human and animal realms. A little bit more complicated process takes place here. Here also, a being with a subtle (energy) body is produced at the cuti-paṭisandhi moment, just like in the *rūpa loka* realms. It is called a *gandhabba.*

- A *gandhabbas* has the basic *thrija kāya* of a *rūpi Brahma: kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya*, and *utuja kāya,* which we will discuss in detail below. Besides, a *gandhabba* may acquire a very fine *karaja kāya* (physical body) by inhaling the aroma. Thus a *gandhabba* is denser than a *rūpi Brahma.* It has a "body" more like that of a *deva* in density.
- A *gandhabba* could be in that state for many years until a suitable womb becomes available. A suitable womb (more precisely the mental state of the mother at that time) must match the *gati* of the gandhabba. The evolution of the *gandhabba* in the womb is discussed in, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?." Then it is born as a new baby, grows, and eventually, that physical body also dies. If there is more *kammic* energy left for the *bhava,* then the *gandhabba* leaves that dead body and waits for another womb. That process continues until the *bhava* energy is exhausted, and then it goes through the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment to receive a new *bhava;* see the chart above.
- In addition to going into a womb, (in some animal species), *gandhabba* enters an egg inside a female animal. Upon growing to a full animal and death, *gandhabba* comes out and waits for another egg. It is the same procedure as above.

Physical Body is Just a Temporary Shelter

7. One of the main benefits of learning about the *gandhabba* is in helping remove the wrong view that "I am my physical body."

- In the contrary, a physical body is a temporary shelter that the *gandhabba uses* to experience the much-coveted "sense pleasures." In particular, smelling, eating, and touch (most of all, sex) require a dense human body. Unfortunately, a human body can last only about 100 years. Even that body is in the "decay mode" after 50 years or so. Thus, those sense pleasures start diminishing, and eventually, that body dies.
- Then the *gandhabba* comes out of that dead body and waits for a suitable womb. If and when it gets into a womb, the new physical body is influenced by the new parents. Thus the new body can be very different from that in the previous birth. Even during this same "human *bhava*," our human bodies may look very different from one birth to another (as confirmed by rebirth stories).

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- Of course, the *gandhabba* does not stay the same either. The only things that can be called "personal" to that *gandhabba* are its *gati*, and those evolve too.
- That is a brief explanation of the above chart.

Brahma "Bodies" Have Only a Trace of Matter

8. As we mentioned in #4 above, most lifeforms in the 31 realms have unbelievably tiny physical bodies. **They are more like "energy bodies."** Any individual being in the 16 *rūpa loka* realms and the four *arūpa loka* realms weighs less than a billionth of an atom! They may be thought more as energy packets.

- In case it was not clear from previous posts, we recall that an *arūpa loka Brahma* has a *kammaja kāya* consisting of just a *vatthu dasaka.*
- *Rupa loka Brahmā* have *vatthu dasaka* (seat of the mind) and two *pasāda rūpa* for seeing and hearing. They also have *kāya dasaka* and *bhava dasaka*. Thus their *kammaja kāya* has five *suddhaṭṭhaka*-size elements. A *rūpa loka Brahma* also has a *cittaja kāya* (thought stream) and a *utuja kāya* (very fine).
- Thus any of these Brahmā cannot be seen with the most sophisticated microscope we have today.
- More details in, "Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kaya." A *manomaya kāya*, when referred to the human and animal realms, is the same as *gandhabba*.

Kammaja Kāya of a Human *Gandhabba*

9. Let us again summarize the make up of a *kammaja kāya* of a human *gandhabba*. It has a *hadaya vatthu* (consisting of a *vatthu dasaka*), *bhava dasaka,* and *kāya dasaka,* and four *pasāda rūpa* (*cakkhu dasaka*, *sota dasaka*, *gandha dasaka*, *jivaha dasaka*).

- This *kammaja kāya* consists of 7 *suddhaṭṭhaka* in different *bramana* (spin) and *paribramana* (rotation) modes. That is how they become *dasaka* (units of ten or decads); see, "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Six of these define the sense faculties of the *gandhabba*: *vatthu dasaka* is the mind, and *kāya, cakkhu*, *sota*, *gandha*, and *jivha dasaka*) are the "fine senses" that correspond to body, eyes, ears, nose, and tongue in the physical body. *Gandhabba* can interact with the external world directly via them when outside the physical body. It can smell and inhale aroma giving rise to a very fine and subtle material body. However, that body is not solid enough to physically touch anything or to eat.
- The seventh *dasaka* is *bhava dasaka*, which — together with the *kāya dasaka* — defines what kind of a physical body it will start building once inside a womb. For example, *bhava dasaka* determines sex.

10. As soon as the *kammaja kāya* forms at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, the mind becomes active. The thought stream (*cittaja kāya*) starts, and the mind will be mostly in the *bhavaṅga* state. Simultaneously, an *utuja kāya* forms by the *suddhaṭṭhaka* generated by both the *kammaja kāya* and *cittaja kāya.*

- Thus immediately after the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, *gandhabba* has three "bodies" or *thrija kāya*. However, the *cittaja kāya* is all mental, and both the *kammaja kāya* and utuja *kāya* are very fine. They are more like "energy bodies."
- Soon after this "initial formation," the *gandhabba* can build a "subtle, misty" body (*karaja kāya*) by inhaling aroma (from fruits, trees, etc.). Still, an average human cannot see it, since it is not "dense enough." However, some people (especially those with *abhiññā* powers) can see "sufficiently solidified" *gandhabbas.*

The desire for a Dense Human Body

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11. But this *gandhabba* is continuously under stress because it is unable to enjoy the most coveted sense pleasures of those with dense human bodies, i.e., eating and sex. It can see people enjoying these sense pleasures and is very much frustrated not being able to acquire a "real physical body." Some can stay in this state for many, many years if a suitable womb does not become available.

- In some cases, they may spend the *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* and undergo another cuti-paṭisandhi moment without inheriting a human body. That is why one is indebted to one's parents, no matter how bad they may be.

12. The story of the *gandhabba* gets more interesting (and complicated) after it goes through the first birth as an average human and dying. The *gandhabba* that comes out of that dead body is, of course, different from the original gandhabba. Its kammaja kāya has changed due to whatever *abhisaṅkhāra* that the human cultivated. But the *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* does not change; if it had 1000 years worth of *kammic* energy at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, that would deplete with time.

- Of course, there is no *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment when a human dies with extra kammic energy for the human bhava. Death is the death of the physical body. The *gandhabba* comes out of that dead body awaits a new womb; see the above chart. Thus all three components of the *thrija kāya* continue after the "death of the human."

New Physical Body Incorporates Characteristics of New Parents Too

13. Let us consider some important features of this *gandhabba* that comes out of that dead body after its birth as a human.

- The *kammaja kāya* still has a copy of the previous physical body. However, when it starts a new physical body in the new womb, it takes some features from the new parents too. Thus the new physical body is a trade-off between those three influences. It may keep some distinguishing features (birthmarks or gunshot wounds, for example, as we have encountered in rebirth accounts. But it will acquire new features also from the new parents (skin color, size, etc.).
- The *gandhabba* that comes of the dead body is just a "misty, fine version" of the person at death. Most times, they come out with imprints of the clothes they were wearing at death and may look just like that (in a ghostly, misty form) until going into a new womb. My teacher *Thero* has seen *gandhabbas* of people who died hundreds of years ago "wearing" those old costumes. Of course, they are not real physical clothes.

14. Since the *cittaja kāya* also continues, their thought streams continue. So, if someone dies in an accident, he may not realize that he is dead for a little while. If he died from a gunshot instantly, the *gandhabba* comes out of and will be looking at the dead body trying to figure out what happened. He may wish to go home and finds himself instantly at home. And he will try to shout to others, but of course, they don't hear. He may try to touch them, but he cannot. It takes seven days for a *gandhabba* to comprehend what happened entirely and to resign to his/her new life.

- That is also why children can recall their past life. But just like we start forgetting things from years ago, those children start forgetting about the previous life when they grow older. Furthermore, it is harder to remember from past life compared to this life.
- Another point is that most such rebirth accounts are from people who died while young in accidents. Those *gandhabbas* who come out of the bodies of people dying at old age are not likely to remember that life. That is because even during that life, they might have lost their memories.

Next in the series, "Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kaya", ……..

2.7.5 Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya

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31 Realms In 3 *Loka*

1. There are three main categories that the 31 realms can be divided into ***kāma lōka, rūpa lōka,*** and ***arūpa lōka***.

- Living beings in the *kāma lōka* are in 11 realms: four lowest realms (*apāyās*), the human realm, and six *dēvā* realms.
- *Rūpa lōka* has 16 *rūpāvacara brahma* realms. A "*rūpāvacara brahma*" means a *brahma* in the *rūpa lōka*.
- *Arūpa lōka* has 4 *arūpāvacara brahma* realms.
- Different sets of sense faculties are associated with beings in those three types of "*lōka*."

Body Types in *Arūpa Loka*

2. Those in the ***arūpa lōka*** have just the mind. Therefore, the only *rūpa* (or matter) associated with an *arūpi Brahma* is the *hadaya vatthu*, the smallest unit of matter in Buddha Dhamma called a *suddhaṭṭhaka*.

- **An *arūpāvacara brahma* has a *manōmaya kāya* that has only a *hadaya vatthu*.**
- That *suddhaṭṭhaka* is much smaller than an atom in modern science. So, we cannot see these beings. It is important to note that we cannot even see many microscopic beings that live among us, like those in drinking water. Just because we cannot see them, it does not mean they do not exist.

Body Types in *Rūpa Loka*

3. Those in the ***rūpa lōka*** have just sense faculties: eyes, ears, and mind.

- But the eyes and ears are not solid and tangible things like the physical eyes and ears that the animals or we have.
- Seeing and hearing for those *rūpāvacara Brahmā* happen with the aid of *cakkhu* and *sota pasāda rūpa*. Each of those two are also of the size of a *suddhāshtaka*.
- Therefore, even for a *rūpāvacara Brahma,* the whole "body" is made of basically three *suddhāshtaka,* unimaginably small. **This collection of *hadaya vatthu* and the two *pasāda rūpa* is called the *manōmaya kāya* of that *Brahma*.**

Therefore, even with the aid of the most sophisticated microscope, it will be impossible to see any of *Brahmā* in those 20 realms (*rūpa and arūpa loka*.) They all have only a "subtle body" with just a few *suddhāshtaka* or a "*manomaya kāya*."

Manomaya Kāya in *Kāma Loka*

4. In fact, ALL BEINGS have such **basic sense faculties** of the size of a *suddhāshtaka* each. **The basic sensing unit for a *kāmāvacara* being has six units for seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touch, and thinking.**

- Any *kāmāvacara* being (including humans, animals, and *dēvās*) has a "fine body" with those unseen five sense faculties called "*pasāda rūpa*": *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* for seeing, *sota pasāda rūpa* for hearing, *ghana pasāda rūpa* for tasting, *jivhā pasāda rūpa* for smelling, *kāya pasāda rūpa* for touching.
- **These five sets of *pasāda rūpa* and the *hadaya vatthu* make up the "mental body" or "*manōmaya kāya*" of a *kāmāvacara* living being.**
- It is easy to see that a *rūpāvacara Brahma* has a *manōmaya kāya* with just two *pasāda rūpa* (for seeing and hearing) and a *hadaya vatthu* for thinking. An *arūpāvacara Brahma* has just the *hadaya vatthu* for the mind.

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Dense Physical Body in *Kāma Loka*

5. The above mentioned *manomaya kāya* of a being in *kāma loka* is "trapped inside" a dense body. The physical (solid) eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body of a *kāmāvacara* being (human or animal) act as "sensing equipment" to collect external signals.

- The brain processes those signals and sends them to the *manōmaya kāya* inside this solid body. See, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- This is why, even for humans, the essence is in the manōmaya kāya. The solid body is just an inert shell that is "powered by" the manōmaya kāya. **When the manōmaya kāya comes out at death, the physical body becomes inert, just like a log of wood.**

Manomaya Kāya Has the Blueprint for the Physical Body

6. This "*manōmaya kāya*" is the one that takes hold of the zygote in a womb at conception. The union makes that zygote of the mother and father; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- A *gandhabba* that descends to the womb originally has a bit denser body than this *manōmaya kāya*. In addition to the "*manōmaya kāya*," it has a "material body" too, but that is still too fine to be seen by us. When the *gandhabba* enters the womb, that "material body" is shed and only the "very fine *manōmaya kāya*" combines with the zygote.
- As discussed in that post, the zygote is the cell formed by the mother and father's union and is well understood in modern science. Of course, modern science is not aware of the *manōmaya kāya* of the *gandhabba* that merges with the zygote.
- **In fact, scientists do not know how that zygote becomes a "new life," a brand new living being.**
- *Gandhabba* is discussed at "Mental Body – Gandhabba."

7. Now that zygote with the *manōmaya kāya* starts diving into more and more new cells. The energy needed to make those new cells comes from the mother (i.e., from the mother's food). See "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- That initial single cell grows to a baby of the size that comes out of the womb after nine months. Now, we can see that the critical *manōmaya kāya* — with those basic sensing faculties – is negligibly small compared to that baby.
- Of course, once outside the womb, the baby grows by eating food and eventually grows to an adult. Virtually all solid matter in an adult is just lifeless matter. This is why a person can lose one-third or even half of the body mass and remain the "same person."

Manomaya Kāya is Primary

8. **Therefore, there is not much in the heavy solid body that really defines that "person." All the key aspects are in the mental body or the *manōmaya kāya*.**

- That solid body is made alive by the *manōmaya kāya* with the *hadaya vatthu* and the five *pasāda rūpa*. Hard to believe, but that is what happens.
- At the death of the physical body, that *manōmaya kāya* comes out. When it comes out, it also has a very fine "physical type" body that resembles the body of the person that dies. That combined fine body is really "ghost-like" and can be seen by even some people. That is called *gandhabba,* and it now waits for another suitable body to enter if more *kammic* energy for the "human *bhava*" is left.

No Dense Bodies in *Rūpa* and *Arūpa Loka*

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9. For *Brahmā* in the *rūpa loka*, three units of matter are formed by *kammic* energy at the moment of birth; because it has three units of matter such an initial "body" formed at the moment of *patisandhi* is called a "*thrija kāya*." The three units are *kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya,* and the *utuja kāya.* The *utuja kāya* is a very fine physical body, and those "*rupi Brahmā"* can "see" and "hear."

- Those *rupi Brahmā* have a *kammaja kāya* consisting of *kāya dasaka, vatthu dasaka, bhava dasaka*, and two *pasada rūpa* for seeing and hearing: *cakkhu pasada* and *sota pasada*. Each *pasada rūpa* is essentially a *suddhaṭṭhaka*, with different modes of spin/rotation ("*bramana*"/"*paribramana*"); see, "31 Realms Associated with the Earth".
- Even though "*kāya*" is translated as "body," the only "physical body" of a *rupi Brahma* is the "*utuja kāya*." Thus a "*kāya*" does not necessarily mean a "physical body."

10. The physical bodies (*utuja kāya*) of those *rūpi Brahmā* are much finer than those of the *devas*, and thus *devas* cannot see those *rūpi Brahmā* just like we cannot see the *devas*.

- The *Brahmā* (and also *devas*) can "see" without the aid of light and "hear" without having air to transmit sound waves; their "physical bodies" do not have "eyes" and "ears" like ours. Thus they can "see" and "hear" over great distances. And they can be anywhere they wish within a short time.
- The closest analogy of how their "vision" works is how we "see" dreams; we don't need eyes to see dreams. The *Brahmā* can "see" with the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* (perceive may be a better word). These things will become clear in the future as we get into details.

"Denser" Bodies in Lower Realms

11. A basic rule of thumb is that beings in lower realms, in general, cannot see the beings in the higher realms; humans, of course, have the capability to develop *abhiññā* powers and "see" those beings in higher realms.

- In the *kāma loka*, the highest realms are, of course, the *deva* realms. *Devas* are also born instantaneously (*opapatika* births), just like the two kinds of *Brahmā.* However, *devas* have a fourth type of body called the "*karaja kāya*," which is like our physical body. And just like us, they need to consume food ("*amurtha*") regularly to sustain their "*karaja kāya,*" which is also called the "*aharaja kāya*" since it requires food ("*āhāra*") for sustenance.
- Thus *devas* have "four bodies" or "*catuja kāya*," i.e., the four bodies of "*kammaja kāya*," *cittaja kāya, utuja kāya, and the "karaja kāya."* are collectively called a "*catuja kāya*."
- But *devas* (and *Brahmā*) do not get sick. They die and disappear when the *kammic* energy for that existence runs out.

Beings in *Kāma Loka* Start With *Manomaya Kāya*

12. When humans and animals are first "born" into that existence, they are also instantly formed in a form close to that of a *Brahma.* This is the *manōmaya kāya* generated by *kammic* energy at the *cuti-patisandhi* moment.

- That *manōmaya kāya* is condensed into the *gandhabba* state that we have discussed in previous essays; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kaya) – Introduction" and follow-up posts.
- For example, if a man dies and still has *kammic* energy for the "human *bhava*" left, he will be reborn as a human. Otherwise, he will latch onto another "*bhava*" on his past strong *kamma vipāka*. For example, his next "*bhava*" could be as a deer.
- If he is reborn, a human, a "human *gandhabba*" will emerge from the dead body; if he is to be born a deer, then a "deer *gandhabba*" will emerge from the dead body.

Gandhabba Can See/Hear Without Physical Eyes/Ears

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13. The body of a human or animal *gandhabba* is also a "*catuja kāya*" like a *deva.* But it is finer than the body of a *deva*. A *gandhabba* can only inhale odors ("*gandha*" + "*abba*") as food, and thus the name.

- **Just like *Brahmā* or *devas*, a *gandhabba* can "see" and "hear" over great distances.** A *gandhabba* does not have a solid body to support physical eyes or ears. (Of course, we have a hard time imagining that. But it can be compared to what happens when we see a dream. There is no need for light to see dreams; we see dreams when pitch-black at night; we do not "see" dreams with our eyes).
- Even though one could think it would be nice to be a *gandhabba*, a human *gandhabba* is in perpetual stress (agony may be a better word). A *gandhabba* cannot enjoy any kind of "contact" sense pleasure since the body is fine; cannot taste the food or grasp anything.

A Physical Body Is Needed for "Sensual Pleasures" or "*Kāma Assāda*"

14. A human or animal *gandhabba* needs to "build" a physical body to experience sensual pleasures. They received those "*bhava*" because they very much DESIRE "coarse sense pleasures": "*upādāna paccayā bhava*."

- Thus we can see that we get these solid, dense bodies BECAUSE that is what we so eagerly desired. As long as we crave these "coarse sense pleasures," we will be born in the *kāma loka*. Even though the *devas* are also in the *kāma loka*, their desires are not as "coarse." They do not need to "tightly grab things" to get enjoyment.
- *Brahmā* in *rūpa loka* are even further removed from "coarse sense pleasures"; they do not desire tastes, smells, or body touches. Seeing and hearing are enough for them.
- *Brahmā* in *arūpa loka* does not even have a desire for sights and sounds. Mind pleasures are enough for them, and the presence of matter is minimal in the *arūpa loka*.

Those "*Kāma Assā*da" Come With Drawbacks [Danger] (*Ādīnava*)

15. We do not realize that having a "dense body" also leads to various ailments. A dense body is also subject to decay as it gets old.

- Furthermore, now the ability to "see" and "hear" over great distances is gone. Now the *gandhabba* is trapped inside a heavy, solid body shell and has to "see" and "hear" through the "physical doors" that are attached to that body. That is the sacrifice made to be able to have the "grabbing experience," to be able to enjoy coarse foods and sexual pleasures, etc.
- The Buddha called the physical body ("*karaja kāya*" or "*āhāraja kāya*") a "cave" or a "shell" that a *gandhabba* uses temporarily. It has a certain lifetime, and during that time, it grows, decays, and finally dies. Then the *gandhabba* needs to find another body. Especially in the *kāma loka*, we build a "new shell" when the old one dies and spend a lot of time as a frustrated *gandhabba* waiting for a suitable womb to start building a new body.
- Details at "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."

Physical Body a Temporary

16. Thus, it should be clear now that it is only the "physical body" that decays and finally dies. A human *gandhabba* will keep evolving and find a "new body" similar to the old one IF the *kammic* energy for that *bhava* is not exhausted. Otherwise, the human *gandhabba* will disappear (like a *deva* or *Brahma* does at death), and a new animal *gandhabba* will emerge if the new *bhava* is that of an animal; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Thus we can see now that even for humans and animals, "the basis" is a fine body of a *gandhabba* with a fine body like a *rupi Brahma* (and less dense than the body of a *deva*). The "solid body" starts growing inside the mother's womb and continues after the "birth" as a baby by eating food.

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17. Nature uses this physical body or the "shell" to impart *kamma vipāka* as well. We need to constantly clean this body all the time and also need to take care of vital body parts. These are part of the "physical suffering" that we do not think twice about.

- And of course, we can come down with not only minor colds and headaches but also major ailments like heart problems or cancer; this is also part of the "physical suffering." Both kinds of "physical suffering" arise due to the physical body.
- However, these hardships are "masked" by our sense of "anticipated future happiness" by acquiring such and such "pleasurable things."

Human Body Is Special

18. The other point, which is even more important, is the special nature of the human body with a well-developed brain. See, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body." That is what makes human life special because that is what allows us to understand the message of the Buddha and be able to get a release from the suffering-filled round of rebirth.

- How the bodies of the hell beings are prepared by *kammic* energy just to impart *kamma vipāka* (they are unable to do *abhisaṅkhāra,* especially *puññābhisaṅkhāra*) is discussed in "Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?.

Next in the series: Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body

2.7.6 Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body

June 10, 2016; revised January 24, 2020

Gandhabba Is The "Mental Body" of a Human

1. Physical bodies are just temporary shelters for the *gandhabba*.

- In a single "human *bhava*" or the "existence as a human", *gandhabba* could be using one to hundreds of different physical bodies; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- Such "human births" could be anywhere on Earth. However, they normally take place in a specific region based on one's *gati*. Most rebirths occur within a given country, as seen from rebirth accounts. See, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- In between two consecutive "physical lives," the *gandhabba* is in the nether world or "*paralowa*"; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."

Racial and Cultural Differences Are Meaningless

2. Thus all racial and cultural divisions that people fight daily are meaningless; those identities change as the *gandhabba* "switches physical bodies" from life to life. In principle, a Chinese may be born as a "black person" in Africa or as a "white person" in Europe in the next life. However, adjacent lives are generally in similar geographic locations because of the condition for matching "*gati*." Still, in the next "human *bhava*" — which may come after billions of years — one's *gati* would have changed drastically.

- As more and more people start grasping the Buddha Dhamma, most of the violence in the world could reduce. Along that line, one who may be born to poverty in this life may be born a wealthy person in the very next life (if enough merits accrued), and vice versa. All these struggles we go through are only for an insignificantly short time in the scale of *saṃsāra* (cycle of rebirths) or even compared to the duration of a single human *bhava* (which could last many hundreds of years). Thus it is wise to "invest in the long term."

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Sensory Faculties Are in *Gandhabba*

3. The physical body shields the *gandhabba*'s sensory system, while the *gandhabba* is inside the physical body. The *gandhabba* has lā sensory faculties. But now those "external sensory signals" need to come through eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and *mana indriya* in the brain; see below.

- When outside a physical body (and waiting for a suitable womb), the *gandhabba* cannot eat or physically touch tangible things, because it does not have a "dense body." But it can see, hear. Furthermore, it uses a very sophisticated sensory system (not light or sound waves) to see and here, which we will also discuss briefly below.

Difference Between *Indriya* and *Āyatana*

4. The Buddha analyzed the world in many different ways. Here we present another such analysis, since it can provide different insights about the *gandhabba*.

- We have six sense faculties (*indriya* or *āyatana*) to sense six different types of "matter" (*rūpa*) in our world. There is a subtle connection between our six sense faculties and the types of "matter" in our world. We will discuss this connection.
- By the way, *indriya* and *āyatana* have totally different meanings. For example, eyes are *indriya* when we just happen to see things. Still, they BECOME *āyatana* when they are used for pleasure, i.e., to deliberately look at mind-pleasing things to enjoy them. Only an *Arahant* uses his/her sense faculties are *indriya* all the time.
- This is another way to define and analyze our world. Everything in our world belongs to those 12 *āyatana*. Sometimes they are called 6 *ajjhatta āyatana* (or internal *āyatana* or sense faculties) and 6 *bahiddha āyatana* (things in the external world that we sense).

5. These are listed in Pāli in #6 of the post, "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis." A simpler account is at, "What are Rūpa? – Dhammā are Rūpa too!."

- We touch the densest material (*phoṭṭhabba*) out there with our bodies (*kāya*).
- Next, less dense tastes (*rasa*) with our tongues (*jivhā*).
- We smell with next less dense minute particles with smell (*gandha*) with our noses (*ghāṇa*).
- Hear uses vibrations propagating through air (*sadda*) with our ears (*sota*).
- We see with the aid of photons propagating through space (*varna*) with our eyes (*cakkhu*).
- Our consciousness arises via *dhammā* in the mind plane with our minds (*mano*).

Dhammā Are Just Energy

6. The last type of *rūpa* (*dhamma*) are not solid matter, but just energy; see, "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

- Thus *dhammā* do not occupy space (*ākāsa*) and are in the mind plane or the mental world.
- All other five types of *rūpa* occupy space and are in the material world.
- So *rūpa* cannot be translated as "matter." See, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial." That is why sometimes it is better use the Pāli words.

How Does a *Gandhabba* "See" While Inside a Physical Body?

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7. It is actually through a complicated process that a *gandhabba* sees, hears, etc while being inside a physical body (*karaja kāya*) such as ours. I have explained the basics in "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction," and many other posts.

- However, it is much easier to grasp how a *gandhabba* sees and hears while being outside the physical body. Even though most of us may not have had such "out-of-body experiences," it can happen, especially during heart operations; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." Some people have a natural ability to do that on their own, as discussed in that post.
- Thus, let us discuss how a stand-alone *gandhabba* sees and hears while being outside a physical body; **this is not only simpler but provides us with some insights.**

The Sensory Faculties In *Gandhabba*

8. The real sense faculties produced by *kammic* energy at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment are in the *kammaja kāya* of the *gandhabba.* The subtle body of the *gandhabba* has three components, as we have discussed and will again discuss below. The sense faculties are all in the *kammaja kāya.*

- The *kammaja kāya* of the *gandhabba* has seven essential elements called *dasaka*, meaning entities with ten items (decads). They arise from *suddhāṭṭhaka*, which is composed of eight "items," as we have discussed; see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka." Different types of *dasaka* are formed just by incorporating one mode of spin (*bramana*) and one mode of rotation (*paribramana*); see, "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- One added component gives rise to *jīvita rūpa* (pronounced "jeevitha roopa"); this is likely to come from the spin (*bramana*) mode, but I cannot be sure. This *jīvita rūpa* is in all these other types of *dasaka* because that is what "maintains life." Thus different types of *dasaka* (see below) arise due to different modes of rotation (*paribramana*). [***jīvita*** :[nt.] life; span of life.]

9. Now we can list the different types of 7 *dasaka* (or decades) that are in the *kammaja kāya* of the *gandhabba.*

- *Vatthu dasaka* (mind; also called *hadaya vatthu*): *suddhāṭṭhaka* + *jīvita rūpa* + *hadaya rūpa*
- *Kāya dasaka* (body plan): *suddhāṭṭhaka* + *jīvita rūpa* + *kāya pasāda rūpa*
- *Cakkhu dasaka* (eye *indriya*): *suddhāṭṭhaka* + *jīvita rūpa* + *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*
- *Sota dasaka* (ear *indriya*): *suddhāṭṭhaka* + *jīvita rūpa* + *sota pasāda rūpa*
- *Ghana dasaka* (nose *indriya*): suddhāṭṭhaka + *jīvita rūpa* + *ghāṇa pasāda rūpa*
- *Jivha dasaka* (ear *indriya*): *suddhāṭṭhaka* + *jīvita rūpa* + *jivhā pasāda rūpa*
- *Bhava dasaka* (*bhava*): *suddhāṭṭhaka* + *jīvita rūpa* + *itthi* **or** *purisa rūpa* (determines female/male nature of the body)

Again, it is to be noted that *jīvita rūpa*, *itthi and purisa rūpa,* and the five *pasāda rūpa* are not "physical matter", but modes of energy in spin and vibration of *suddhāṭṭhaka.*

- That is analogous to different electron orbitals giving rise to different types of molecules in chemistry.

Components of the *Gandhabba* or "Mental Body"

10. A *gandhabba* is born with those 7 *dasaka* (i.e., *kammaja kāya*) and immediately the mind starts generating *citta* (thoughts), which are *vipāka citta* and for the most part in the *bhavaṅga*. Thus now the *gandhabba* has a *cittaja kāya* as well. Note that *cittaja kāya* is all MENTAL.

- Almost at the same time, both the *kammaja kāya* and the *cittaja kāya* start producing more *suddhāṭṭhaka* giving rise to the *utuja kāya*. This *utuja kāya* is similar to the "aura" that surrounds our bodies; in fact, that aura is part of our own (i.e., *gandhabba's*) *utuja kāya*. Some people claim to be

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able to see "body aura"; those with *abhiññā* powers can see them. Also, see "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."

- Thus the best way to visualize a *gandhabba* is to imagine a human with just the "body aura" (without the physical body). Since *kammaja kāya* consists of only a few *suddhāṭṭhaka*, and the *cittaja kāya* is just thoughts, something like an "aura body" is all a *gandhabba* has.
- Right now, this subtle body of my *gandhabba* overlaps my own physical body. All parts of my physical body are in the subtle body of my *gandhabba* (which is a blueprint for my physical body).
- While waiting for a physical body, this *gandhabba* can inhale scents from fruits, vegetables, etc. and acquire a subtle physical body (*karaja kāya*) too. Then it expands to the grown size of a human. But of course, it is only an "energy body" that we cannot see.
- Thus a free-standing *gandhabba* may have four types of "bodies": *kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya, utuja kāya,* and *karaja kāya.*

Gandhabba Outside the Physical Body

11. This *gandhabba* can see over vast distances and hear over large distances and travel instantly to remote destinations. **Sight does not need light, and sound does not require vibrations in the air.** It is equivalent to seeing and hearing with *abhiññā* powers. That is how those with *abhiññā* skills can see through walls and hear over vast distances; they have control over their *gandhabba kāya* or the *manomaya kāya*.

- However, since it has only a very fine body (like air), it cannot taste food or touch solid things. The *gandhabba* needs to be inside a dense human body to be able to touch, taste, or smell. That is why it has to take possession of a zygote in a womb and build a physical body.
- See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."

12. When a *gandhabba* builds a physical body (inside a womb), those seven *dasaka* — each of which are the "size of a *suddhāṭṭhaka*" — determine all critical functions. Furthermore, *gandhabba* has the blueprint for that physical body.

- The physical body (*karaja kāya*) of the human grow according to *kāya dasaka* and *bhava dasaka,* but also takes into account physical qualities mother and father (eye and skin color, as well as size are good examples).
- When inside a physical body, the external signals that come to the physical body via eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body touches, are converted in the brain into the form that can be sensed by the 5 *pasāda rūpa* (they are really the 5 *dasaka* with corresponding *pasāda rūpa*). This somewhat complicated process is discussed in "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction," among others.

Why Are Some Born With Deformed Body Parts?

13. The blueprint in the *kammaja kāya* of the *gandhabba* has all the details of physical organs as well. When the *utuja kāya* is formed, it has this blueprint. Some people are born without limbs because past *kamma vipāka* taken into account by the *kammaja kāya.*

- Some are born with physical eyes, but without the *cakkhu pasāda* in the *kammaja kāya*, so they will never be able to see; they are the ones who are born blind. Similarly, there are born deaf, and sometimes both. That is because the *gandhabba* in them does not have the *cakkhu pasāda* and *sota pasāda*.
- However, in some cases, the *gandhabba* may have the *cakkhu pasāda*, but during birth, the optical nerves in the brain may get damaged. In such cases, it may be possible to have vision restored.

Gandhabba Is The Bluprint For the Physical Body

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14. It is, in fact, the *gandhabba* that controls the otherwise inert physical body. There is a carbon copy of all parts of the physical body (including the nervous system) in the fine *utuja kāya* of the *gandhabba*.

- What is the mechanism used by the *gandhabba* to control the inert physical body? The easiest way to visualize this is to consider the following. If we put some iron dust on a piece of paper and move a magnet below the paper, we can see that those dust particles move along as one moves the magnet. If we move the magnet in a circle, dust particles move along that circle. In the same way, when the *gandhabba* moves its *utuja kāya*, the physical body follows that motion.
- Thus, what the *gandhabba* does is similar to what the magnet did in the above analogy. But it is a bit more complicated, because moving heavy body parts need much more energy. That is where the physical nervous system comes into play. The brain, in synchronization with the mind (*hadaya vatthu*), sends signals to muscles to move. Energy to move those muscles come from the food we eat.
- Both the "magnetic nervous system" or the "ray system" of the *gandhabba* AND the physical nervous system based on the brain are needed to move the physical body.

Two Nervous Systems

15. Thus, there are two nervous systems in the body: one is the physical nervous system known to modern science. The other is the very subtle nervous system (ray system) of the *gandhabba*.

- When they go "out-of-sync," our physical bodies start aching. Even in a perfectly healthy human, it is not possible to maintain a given posture for too long.
- *Kamma vipāka* can shift the nervous system (ray system) of the *gandhabba* away from that of the physical body. Then body muscles need to move to the new equilibrium position, causing us discomfort or even pain.
- We will discuss more important consequences that are experienced during meditation in future posts.

Physical Body Comes With a Price

16. The physical body can impart various other forms of suffering as well. It can develop diseases such as cancer in various parts of the body; body parts can break or injured.

- The effects that we have discussed above may be the reason that we humans (and animals) have this complicated mechanism involving repeated births in a single *bhava* using a *gandhabba* and multiple physical bodies.
- The *Brahmā* and even *Devas* do not suffer physical ailments; their subtle bodies can also last longer times, and do not need to be "regenerated" via this mechanism using an intermediary *gandhabba.*
- Another important aspect is that our physical brain slows down the generation of *javana citta* in a given time. The "signal processing" in the brain the brain is much slower than the very high-speed generation of *cittā* in the *hadaya vatthu*; see, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises." Important implications of this will also be discussed later.

2.7.7 Nibbāna in the Big Picture

July 8, 2016

Here we will discuss how one can get an idea about *Nibbāna* within the Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma.

1. In the posts in this series I described the wider world of 31 realms according to the Buddha, and why ALL living beings have been just meandering through these 31 realms from beginning-less time. We can summarize the results succinctly as follows:

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- The lowest four realms (*apāyā*) are where all beings suffer the most during the beginning-less rebirth process. Unfortunately, this is where each and every living being spends the most time in the long run. This is the real suffering that the Buddha tried to convey.
- The fifth realm or the human realm is where one is most likely to be able to grasp Buddha Dhamma and become a *Sotāpanna*. This is the only realm where one can experience (or at least see) both suffering and sense enjoyments.
- A *deva* in the next six realms is also capable of becoming a *Sotāpanna*, but due to the absence of much visible suffering, incentive to strive for the *Sotāpanna* stage is almost non-existent (think about a healthy, wealthy teenager!).
- The same is true for *rupi* and *arupi brahmā*, who enjoy *jhānic* pleasures in the higher realms.

2. Thus one can clearly see that as one proceeds to higher realms, suffering is reduced in stages. The worst sufferings are in the lowest 4 realms (*apāyā*), and we can see animal suffering if we pay attention and think especially about the animals in the wild. There are no "old animals" in the wild. As soon as they get a bit slow due to old age they are killed for food by stronger animals.

- One could try to stay away from the *apāyā* (in future births) by avoiding from immoral acts. But the problem with just that approach is that we have almost certainly done such immoral acts in our previous lives, and thus are likely to have accumulated enough *kamma* seeds to be born many times over in the *apāyā*.
- **Thus the key is to cleanse our minds of the worst defilements, which will prevent *apāyagāmī citta* from arising at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment**; see, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." Such thoughts cannot just be suppressed; they arise in a billionth of a second. Thus the practical way to do that is to reduce cravings (*āsavas*) in STAGES; see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas," and "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."
- As mentioned above, the first stage of the cleansing process is possible mainly in the human and *deva* realms, but the incentive to do that is virtually non-existent in the *deva* realms.

2. Another subtle reason for the uniqueness of the human realm is that one's future destiny is MOSTLY determined while in the human realm. Humans are the unique species who can access all 89 types of *citta* that are present in all 31 realms. Moreover, they are the ones who can generate the all important *javana citta* that can produce *kamma bīja* (seeds) for future existences (*bhava*).

- Here is a simile that hopefully will convey this idea: Human realm can be compared to a training school, and the other realms can be compared to where one gets employment depending on one's qualifications upon completing the training.
- Those who did not make progress and caused problems for others are born in the *apāyā* and will have to suffer the consequences. Another way to say this is to say that they cultivated *saṅkhāra* (or *gathi* or habits) suitable for a being in the *apāyā*: cruel and hateful *gathi* correspond to the lowest realm of *niraya* (hell); extreme greed correspond to the *pretha* realm; those who are lazy and depend on others are born in the *asura* realm; those with different combinations of those bad *gathi* are born in the animal realm.
- Once born in the *apāyā*, they are more like programmed machines. They just suffer their fate without having any way to even lessen the suffering (in contrast, humans are capable of devising ways to make their lives better).

3. This last point is worth discussing a bit more.

As we can see, animals just live their lives like robots. They are incapable of sorting out moral from immoral and also from being able to come up with ways to improve their lives. Birds have been building the same kind of nests for billions of years. Ants have been building the same types of anthills, and the dolphins (who are one of the animals with higher intelligence) have been the same way over billions of years.

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- In the same way, *rupi* or *arupi brahmā* also just live their serene lives until the lifetime is exhausted. It is like a nice vacation. Then they come back to the human realm and start over.
- It is mostly humans and *devas* who are CAPABLE of forging their own future, but the *devas* enjoy so much sense pleasure, they have no incentive to think about *Nibbāna*.

4. Continuing that analogy, those who do well in the training school can go to one of the 27 higher realms. those who cultivate *rūpa jhānā* are born in the 16 *rūpa* realms. Those who cultivate higher *jhānā* are born in the 4 *arūpa* realms. The *brahmā* in those 20 realms are like beings who are on a nice, very long vacation. They just live happy lives in *jhānic* bliss.

- Of course there are some *brahmā* who had attained a *magga phala* in either human or a *deva* realm previously and they can proceed to higher stages. And there are a few *rūpa* realms reserved for the *Anāgāmīs* only.
- But in general, the *rupi* and *arupi brahmā* are the ones who graduated with high qualifications and thus get to enjoy the fruits of those efforts for long times. Yet, when they come back to the human realm, they may be born into environments where they could go in a wrong path and fail next time around and thus could be born in the *apāyā*.

5. Those who want to enjoy sense pleasures without causing problems to others work on it by doing meritorious deeds and are qualified to be born in the 6 *deva* realms (according to the level of merits accrued). They may not have even known about Buddha Dhamma, but knew moral from immoral.

- Life in a *deva* realm is more like a vacations to a "pleasure island." Those who cultivate "*deva gathi*" (high moral character, but with attachment to sense pleasures) are qualified for those realms. *Devas* are more like humans but with fine bodies that do not age (until close to death), and are not subject to diseases. Thus if one really wants to "enjoy sense pleasures" one should focus more on doing good deeds instead of just focusing on making a lot money in this life, because this human life is so short and the human body is subjected to diseases and old age problems.
- However, *devas* can build up extreme attachment to sense pleasures and are capable of tailoring their future lives down to the animal realm. After their "pleasurable vacation" they could even come back to the animal realm instead of the human realm.

6. Finally, those who cultivate "human *gathi*" are born in the human realm. They are more like *deva gathi*, but generally have more attachment to sense pleasures at close contact.

- However, those humans who may have cultivated high moral values AND had some inkling of the *sansāric* suffering (via exposure to Buddha Dhamma) are like to come back to the human realm to "complete their training." That is because that is what they desired (*upādāna*).
- That is a very simple outline of the existence in the 31 realms.

7. Now, if one has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage in the human realm, then his/her number of possible destinations become less and better. In #7 and #8, we will discuss how a *Sotāpanna* goes through higher realms as he/she approaches *Arahanthood.*

- Of course that person will never be born in the *apāyā*, because those "*apāya gathi*" have been permanently removed via *Sammā Diṭṭhi* with a grasp of the *anicca* nature.
- A *Sotāpanna* starts to comprehend the futility and even dangers of sense pleasures (*kāma rāga*).
- Then one first loses the desire to "own" sense objects ("*vatthu kāma*") that provide sense pleasures; one is merely satisfied with enjoying them. Thus one has not given up all *kāma rāga,* just "*vatthu kāma*." Now one is at that *Sakadāgāmī* stage, and will not be born again below the *deva* realms. Thus one is freed from rebirth where diseases are possible (including the human realm) and one is said to be "healthy forever."

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8. When a *Sakadāgāmī* contemplates on the *anicca* nature more (while in the human or *deva* realms) he/she can remove *klesha kāma* and also *paṭigha* from their minds and become free of all *kāma loka* realms. Then one becomes an *Anāgāmī*, i.e., not coming back to the *kāma loka* ever again.

- But an *Angami* has not removed the liking for Dhamma, and thus will be born in one of the five *rūpa* realms reserved for the *Anāgāmīs*. He/she will attain *Nibbāna* from there.
- An *Anāgāmī* becomes an Arahant by removing *rūpa rāga*, *arūpa rāga*, *māna*, *uddhacca*, and remaining *avijjā*.
- Of course one can proceed all the way to the *Arahanthood* while in the human realm. An Arahant will not be born anywhere in the 31 realms at death. His/her mind becomes free of even a trace of matter that is subject to decay and destruction; see, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."

9. This gives a brief summary of how a living being goes from realm to realm in the rebirth process, until the *Arahanthood* is attained. It is NOT a random process. Everything happens due to causes. The following are two (related) ways to analyze that process.

- The key point to comprehend is that a birth in a given realm occurs because one has developed *gathi* suitable for that realm; see, "Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi."
- One develops any kind of *gathi* by cultivating corresponding *saṅkhāra*, i.e., one tends to think, speak, and act in ways suitable for that realm. This is what is described in detail in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

10. It is also clear why it is futile to seek happiness anywhere in the 31 realms.

- One could live for millions of years in *deva* realm with much higher sense pleasures than in the human realm (and without being subjected to diseases), but then one has to come back to human realm or even a lower realm.
- Even if one is born in the highest *brahma* world (31st realm) and lives 84,000 eons in *jhānic* bliss there (each eon is roughly 30 billion years!), one has to eventually come back to the human realm and start over. Then at some point after that, birth in the *apāyā* is unavoidable. This is why infinite time (or beginning-less time) is a concept that is hard to wrap one's mind around; see, "Infinity – How Big Is It?" and "Sansaric Time Scale."
- Thus one needs to contemplate whether it is worthwhile to seek happiness in a 100-year human life! I know by experience that this is not easy to fully grasp, even when logically proven, because our minds are enamored and blinded with sense pleasures. That truth starts to sink in when the mind loses more and more defilements (greed, hate, and ignorance) and start seeing the perils of sense pleasures to some extent.

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2.8 Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency

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What We Perceive is Limited

1. Many people try to analyze and interpret Buddha Dhamma in terms of what is readily perceivable through our six senses. However, there is much about this world that we are not aware of, as science has shown in recent years; see below.

- The Buddha said his Dhamma "had never been known to the world." But many people try to explain the core teachings of the Buddha using conventional concepts. Only a Buddha can truly perceive the true nature of this world with 31 realms; see, "Wider Worldview of the Buddha." A Noble disciple of the Buddha (one who has attained a *magga phala*) can start perceiving some aspects of the wider world.
- This has happened ever since Nagarjuana and other forefathers of "Mahayana Buddhism" tried to explain *Nibbāna* in terms of various concepts such as "*sunnata*" or "emptiness"; see, "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis" and "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?."
- The same thing happened to "Theravada Buddhism" too. Buddhaghosa, like Nagarjuana and others, was not even a *Sotāpanna*. He was a *Vedic brahmin* before converting to "Buddhism" molded and twisted Buddha Dhamma to fit his *Vedic* concepts; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."
- Buddha's *anapana bhavana* was replaced by the *Vedic pranayama* breath meditation, for example.

Buddhaghosa and Nagarjuna Were Not Noble Disciples

2. It is quite possible that Buddhaghosa, Nagarjuna, and others did not intentionally try to distort Buddha Dhamma, but just described Buddha Dhamma as they understood it with their background in *vedic* concepts.

- Even today, there are many "scholars." who write books explaining what "Buddhism" is. They are also explaining it in terms of their own mundane frames of reference.
- When you look at most of the books written today about Buddha Dhamma, it seems that there is not much difference between Buddha Dhamma and any other religion. They all teach "how to live a moral life."
- There is very little discussion, if at all, on the foundational concepts such as *anicca, dukkha, anatta, Paṭicca Samuppāda, Ānāpānasati, Satipaṭṭhāna*. Whatever discussed is mostly incorrect.

3. I think that is the biggest obstacle for most people in figuring out the true teachings of the Buddha Dhamma.

- We really need to contemplate what the Buddha meant by when he said, "my Dhamma has never been known to the world before."
- It is not something one can grasp within the "conventional framework", what is readily perceivable to a normal human with a defiled mind. It involves a wider world with 31 realms (we see only the human and animal realms), and a rebirth process, and is based on the Laws of *Kamma*; see, "Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta." Details at, "Origin of Life."

What is Perceivable to an Average Human?

4. First, let me clarify what I mean by "perceivable" or "comprehensible" to us as normal humans. Our six senses can "detect" only a tiny sliver of the "world."

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- At a base level, science today can account for only 4 percent of the mass of our universe; see, "The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality", by Richard Panek (2011).
- There are many, many things that have not been "discovered" by science (or philosophy) yet. In particular, nothing significant about the MIND has been discovered yet. For example, scientists are at a loss explaining how consciousness can arise in a brain made up of inert atoms and molecules.

5. Therefore, trying to gauge the validity of Buddha Dhamma **using only the known facts from science** is like a blind man trying to figure out what an elephant looks like by touching a leg of the elephant; see, "How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Diṭṭhi)?."

- A frog living in a well does not know anything about the wider world. Similarly, a normal human, including all the scientists, face the problem of trying to figure out the "reality" by only using data available through our limited six senses. Thus it is impossible for a scientific theory to be ever "complete" as proven by the mathematician Kurt Gödel; see, "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem."

Science Is Still Far Behind the Buddha

6. Most people think and believe that the only way to confirm what the Buddha taught is to see whether those teachings are compatible with science. However, it is not any different from believing that one can get an idea of what an elephant looks like by asking a blind man who has touched the leg of an elephant. OR asking a frog what the world outside the well looks like.

- This may sound ridiculous to many, but let us think back a few hundred years. Just 400 years ago, "science" believed in the geocentric model of the universe. That the Earth was at the universe and that the stars were embedded in a celestial sphere far above; see: WebLink: wiki: Geocentric model
- Not only science, but all other major religions tried to attune their religions to this model at that time. Most religions still adhere to those concepts; see the same Wikipedia article above.

7. But 2500 years ago, the Buddha clearly described our Solar system as a "*Cakkavāla*" or a planetary system. Not only that, he also said there are uncountable such systems in the universe. It is a waste of time trying to find such details about the universe.

- Through the years, and especially since the beginning of the 20th century, science has "re-discovered" some aspects of the Buddha's wider world, including the existence of billions of galaxies EACH OF WHICH contains billions of planetary systems like our Solar system.
- But someone living in the 19th century was likely to ridicule the idea of innumerable planetary systems (*Cakkavāla*) and could have said, "where is the evidence from science?." That aspect of Buddha Dhamma was not amenable to "science" at that time.
- **Just like that many aspects of Buddha Dhamma are not amenable to science at the current time. But with time, more and more will be shown to be correct as science advances.**

What the Buddha Taught

8. In *Abhidhamma*, it is described in detail how all types of energies in the universe are "stored" in orbital motions ("*bramana*" in Pali or Sinhala); see, "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."

- For example, planetary systems are planets orbiting stars. Those planetary systems combine to make galaxies and those galaxies also undergo circular motion in the shape of disks. See: WebLink: wiki: Retrograde and prograde motion - Formation of celestial systems
- Scientists discovered that atoms are basically electrons orbiting the tiny nucleus made out of protons and neutrons.

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9. If one is going to wait for the full confirmation of Buddha Dhamma by science, one is as foolish as those who lived five hundred years ago, and embraced the geocentric model and dismissed Buddha Dhamma as "exotic" or "mystical."

- We are fortunate to live in a time where science had made impressive progress and has confirmed many aspects of the Buddha's world view.
- Just as the invention of the telescope led to the discovery of a much bigger cosmos, the discovery of the microscope (and its sophisticated versions) led to a previously unknown "microscopic world" teeming with innumerable microscopic living beings. There are billions of such beings in a single human body. See, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!."

Scientific Tools Are Still Primitive

10. Science can accept only those phenomena that can be observed and measured with scientific instruments. Such scientific instruments are basically "extensions" for our six senses; see, "Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology."

- For example, while we cannot see the moons of the Jupiter with our naked eyes, we can see them with telescopes. While we cannot see those microscopic creatures in our bodies with our naked eyes, we can see them with sophisticated microscopes. These are just two examples of many.
- When the Buddha said there are innumerable beings in this world, people looked around and laughed. The Mahayanists are still under the impression that one could wait to attain the Buddhahood itself (not merely *Nibbāna*) until "everyone" is ready to attain the Buddhahood! However, they did not realize that all those billions of microscopic creatures on one's body must be included in the category of "everyone."

11. This is just the tip of the iceberg. While science has confirmed that there are uncountable planetary systems, it has not been able to find life on another planetary system yet. When that happens, the "wait for the Buddhahood" for the Mahayanists will become much longer.

- Similarly, the job of any "Creator" who looks after each and every being (even if just humans), will also become unbearably burdensome. That is because there are uncountable world systems with human beings as well.
- I am not trying to make fun at the expense of others, but merely trying to get the point across that, for those who can think for themselves, it is time to get rid of all such nonsensical beliefs and wrong views; these are all *micchā diṭṭhis*.
- Getting rid of such wrong views must be done before starting any fruitful meditation. Purification through "correct views" comes before "purification through formal meditation." *Sammā diṭṭhi* or "correct views of this world" comes first in eightfold Path.

12. When we hear about something that cannot be explained with the CURRENT SCIENTIFIC KNOWLEDGE, we categorize them as "esoteric" or "mystical." Of course, there are many such "made up theories" that are out there without any substance. However, Buddha Dhamma can be SHOWN TO BE CONSISTENT with all our knowledge of the world.

- If we can bring back someone who had died before the 20th century and tell him that we can "see" an event going on in a distant country in real time, he will not believe it. If we turn on a television and show him the actual event taking place, he will be flabbergasted; he will refuse to believe it saying it is some sort of a magic trick.
- But now we know that the visuals and sounds of that event can be transformed and transmitted over long distances almost instantaneously, and can retrieve those signals by "tuning a television set" to the correct frequency.
- *Kamma vipāka* (energy stored) or rebirth taking place at a distant location work the same way. Even though we cannot "see" or perceive, that energy can materialize when the conditions become right; see,

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"Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." It will take some time to really sink in these concepts, but the more you read, the more you will understand.

Self Consistency Is Critical

13. There are two key methods used in science to verify a given scientific theory. They have some basic axioms that appear to be inviolable. Then all other currently accepted scientific theories must be CONSISTENT with that axioms.

- If a currently accepted scientific theory is proven to be inconsistent with a newly discovered phenomenon, then that scientific theory is discarded and a new theory is adopted.
- No scientific finding up-to-date has shown to be inconsistent with pure Buddha Dhamma as given in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- However, there are many things in Buddha Dhamma that have not been confirmed by science. More are being confirmed as new findings emerge.
- And, Buddha Dhamma is self-consistent. Thus my obsession with making sure all my posts are inter-consistent.

14. There are two ways to test the validity of the Buddha Dhamma. First is the self-consistency within the foundational concepts, such as *Tilakkhaṇa*, Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, etc. Second is the compatibility with "new findings" by science.

- Here "new findings by science" does not necessarily mean the explanations given by science depict the "absolute truth." That is because scientific explanations can change with time (for example, the geocentric model had to be changed).
- If science finds evidence for life in outer space, that will be consistent with Buddha Dhamma. However, what science proposes as how such life arose may not be the correct one.

Power of a Purified Mind

15. One needs to contemplate on the implications of these points (and there are many as I will mention in other posts). How can a human being who lived 2500 years ago was able to come up with such an elaborate way of describing our world? Those are just beginning to be "re-discovered" by the efforts of thousands of scientists over many generations.

- It is quite clear that the Buddha was able to transcend all "normal human capabilities" by purifying his mind. Thus Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem does not apply to Buddha Dhamma; see #5 above.
- Thus his Dhamma may not to "amenable" to the basic frame of reference that we all have as normal human beings. Concepts like rebirth and *kamma vipāka* may sound mysterious. The only way to see the truth in such concepts is to put them to the standard scientific method as discussed above.

16. The fact remains that the Buddha was able to see those and much more just by purifying his mind. And science has not yet figured out the "Power of the Human Mind."

- Modern science is way behind Buddha Dhamma regarding the mind; see the "Abhidhamma" section.
- A human can purify the mind to the level of a Buddha only once in many eons on the average. However, it is possible for each of us to purify our minds to enough extent to see many facts about the nature that science is unaware of.
- **The sense of relief and well-being that one can achieve by purifying one's mind is beyond any sensory pleasure.**

17. For example, while one can enjoy even the best food on Earth only while eating that food. How long does that last? *Jhānic* experiences (*Ariya* or even *anāriya jhānā*) can be longer.

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- However, the "base level" of "cooling down" or *Nibbāna* or "*niveema*" or "*nivana*" that comes at the *Sotāpanna* stage is forever. There is no comparison to any briefly-lived sensory pleasure or even "*jhānic* pleasures."

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2.9 Saṃsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory

Revised May 22, 2018

1. In order to really understand the Buddha's message, one needs to grasp the unimaginable length of the *saṃsāra* (the rebirth process). The Buddha said that there is no discernible beginning to sentient life. It always existed, and it will exist until one attain *Nibbāna*.

- Infinity is a mind-boggling concept; see, "The Infinity Problem in Buddhism."

2. This a bit difficult concept for many, because many cultures/religions have the concept of a set time of Creation. If there is a First Cause (such as Creation), then there must be a time that everything got started. But if there is no Creation, then there cannot be a set time for a beginning.

- Even as recently as at beginning of the 1900s, Lord Kelvin, one of the top scientists of the day, estimated that the age of the Sun was < 40 million years based on gravitational contraction (atomic structure was not known at that time), and our knowledge of the universe was pretty much limited to the Solar system.

3. Vindication of the Buddha's teachings on the long *saṃsāra* started at the beginning of the 1900s with the advent of quantum mechanics and relativity: Discovery of radioactivity in 1898 by Becquerel and Einstein's explanation of the photoelectric effect in 1905 led to the quantum theory of atomic structure, which in turn led to the correct picture of atomic fusion as the source of solar energy.

- So, by 1956, the age of the solar system was known to be > 4 billion years. Yet, even billions of years is hardly the same as "beginning-less time!"

4. But there was more to be discovered. By 1929, Edwin Hubble proved that the distant galaxies are moving away from each other and from our galaxy, and that our galaxy is but just one of many galaxies. This was a vast understatement since now we know that there are billions of galaxies in our observable universe! And they are flying away from each other, i.e, the universe is expanding.

- The discovery of the microwave background radiation in the 1960s led to the conclusion that our universe started off with the "Big Bang" about 14 billion ago.
- However, it is just a theory.

5. The most accepted explanation for such "big bang origin of the universe" is the inflationary theory of Alan Guth (see, "The Inflationary Universe" by Alan Guth, 1997). In the inflation theory, if one "Big Bang" is possible, then it is a given that many other "Big Bangs" are possible. The total energy of our universe is completely consistent with adding up to zero.

- If a universe requires a sum total of zero energy to produce, then "the universe is the ultimate free lunch," as Guth explains in his book (pp. 247-248). Thus, implied in the inflation theory is the existence of multiple universes.
- According to the "cyclic theory" model, which is an alternate theory, the same universe comes to a "Big Crunch" which leads to another Big Bang, and the whole process keeps repeating. So, there is no beginning to time either; time is infinite.

6. There are several theories currently being explored in quantum mechanics that are related to cosmology. There is one theory that requires a universe being existing for each possible event! So, there may be an infinite number of parallel universes. For example, see "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011). In all these theories there are multiple universes that always exist.

- If that is not enough to boggle one's mind, there is another theory in quantum mechanics called the "Many Worlds Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics." It speculates that multiple universes are created at each time a quantum event takes place!

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7. Buddha's explanation of how the universe operates is detailed in the *Aggañña Sutta* (DN27). However, all English translations available today are not correct. A good translation of the *sutta* with details would need to a good background in Buddha Dhamma.

- I provided a summary of that "Buddhist Cosmology" in a recent discussion at the discussion forum: "WebLink: Multiverse: Different Physical Laws and Different Dhamma?."
- Also see, "Infinity – How Big Is It?."

8. I would like to close this essay with a simile from the Buddha that he used to describe the unimaginable length of *saṃsāra*, and to point out that our time in this life is less than a blink of an eye compared to the length of *saṃsāra*. The Buddha used a great eon as the measurement unit to help his followers visualize the enormous length of *saṃsāra*.

- In Buddha Dhamma, the Earth keeps going through a cyclic process: it forms, stays in that state, starts being destroyed, and stays in that destroyed state. That whole process takes a great eon (*mahā kappa*) , and then the whole process repeats, again and again.
- The length of a great eon (*mahā kappa*) is said by the Buddha to be longer than the time it would take a man to wear away a mountain of solid granite one *yojanā* (about 7 miles) around and one *yojanā* high, by stroking it once every hundred years with a silk cloth.
- These days scientists use the word "eon" to denote the duration of a universe (from the "big bang" either to a "big crunch" or just fading away). That will be proven to be incorrect in the future. I hope I will live to that day!

9. Just for fun, I estimated the mass of the material that needs to be removed by the silk cloth each time (this happens every 100 years). Using a 7-mile cube of stone with a density of 2515 kg per cubic meter, I calculate the mass of the mountain to be 3.5 x 10 ^6 kg.

- Assuming the lifetime of our Solar system to be 10 billion years, I calculate the mass removed by each stroke is about 36 grams or about 1.2 ounces. This appears to be a reasonable number!
- So, a *mahā kappa* in Buddha Dhamma turns out to be approximately an eon as perceived by the scientists. When we try to visualize the wearing of a mountain we can imagine how long a time period that is.

10. Yet, that is still nothing compared to the length of the *saṃsāra*. Infinity is a concept that is hard to wrap one's mind around; see, "Infinity – How Big Is It?."

- One day the *bhikkhus* asked the Buddha how many great eons had already passed and gone by. The Buddha told them, "Suppose, *bhikkhus*, there were four disciples here each with a lifespan of hundred years, and each day they were each to recollect a hundred thousand great eons. There would still be great eons not yet recollected by them when those four disciples pass away at the end of a hundred years. Because, *bhikkhus*, this *saṃsāra* is without discoverable beginning."
- Another simile given by the Buddha to indicate the length of *saṃsāra* is the following: Each and every living being has been one's mother, father, or a close relative in this unimaginably long *saṃsāra*.
- One could get an idea of why infinity is so hard to fathom by reading about what scientists say about infinity; a very entertaining book is "The Beginning of Infinity" (2011) by the physicist David Deutsch.

January 24, 2019: Relevant post: "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

July 20, 2019: New series on "Origin of Life."

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2.10 Evidence for Rebirth

Revised January 18, 2020; September 3, 2020

Introduction

Most people in Western societies are not familiar with the concept of rebirth. However, that is changing, because there is a lot of evidence emerging, and scientists and philosophers are beginning to take it seriously.

- One needs to look at the mounting evidence without any preconceived ideas. There is no plausible way to explain these accounts from a purely "materialistic" point of view, i.e., that consciousness arises from inert matter.
- Here is a video of a recent discussion on Western research on children's past lives, Near Death Experiences, etc:

  WebLink: Youtube: Is There Life after Death? Fifty Years of Research at UVA

Rebirth Accounts

The late Professor Ian Stevenson at the University of Virginia conducted over 20 years of research on the authenticity of rebirth accounts, which is being continued by Professor Jim Tucker.

- Several books about rebirth have been written by these two professors. A good book is "Twenty Cases Suggestive of Reincarnation" by Ian Stevenson. By the way, Professor Stevenson became a Buddhist later on in his life presumably because of his studies (see, "Rebirth as Doctrine and Experience" by Francis Story (2003); first edition 1975). He mentions this in the introduction he wrote to this book by Francis Story; I have scanned that introduction: "Introduction to "Rebirth by Francis Story – Ian Stevenson."

Here is a video that discusses the work of the late Dr. Ian Stevenson, Dr. Jim Tucker, and colleagues at the University of Virginia:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Evidence of Reincarnation

In their book, "Soul Survivor: The Reincarnation of a World War II Fighter Pilot", by Bruce and Andrea Leininger detail the amazing story of their son's recount of a past life, mentioned in the above video. Here is an ABC News report on the story:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Reincarnation - Airplane Boy

Here is another story of the rebirth of a Civil War General:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Reincarnation, BORN AGAIN?

Here is a three-year-old chanting Buddhist suttā (and doing a very good job). Can a three-year-old memorize such complex lines of suttā?

WebLink: YOUTUBE: 3-year-old boy in Isan chants in Pāli

- Also see the post, "Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years." This is a true story about a boy (Dhammaruwan) who recited complex and lengthy Pāli *suttā* at five years of age, that sounded very different from current chantings. Furthermore, he remembers accounts of his previous life 1500 years ago, when he accompanied the famous Buddhaghosa on his trip to Sri Lanka.

Child Prodigies

Another piece of evidence comes from child prodigies. Here is the story about Jake Barnett from a 60 Minutes report:

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WebLink: YOUTUBE: Jacob (Jake) Barnett "Math and Science Prodigy" on 60 Minutes

Evidence for Rebirth Much Stronger Than Perceived

1. Many people say that direct "proof" for rebirth cannot be given; it is actually the other way around. If one's memories are in the brain (as science believes), then all those memories will be lost when one dies. There is no "physical connection" between the brains of those involved in the rebirth stories.

- **Therefore, even if just one of those rebirth accounts can be proven to be true, then there is no way to explain that in any way other than rebirth. How can the brain in this life recall memories from the brain in a previous life?**
- If there is a connection between two lives that lived in two geographical locations (also separated by time), there is no explanation for that in current science, i.e., no way to make a connection between the DNA of those two "persons." A purely materialistic view cannot explain it.
- Recent findings in science show that matter in different locations are entangled at a fundamental level; see, "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected." Also, "a living being just goes from one physical body to another"; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."

2. Also, it is by having this presumption of rebirth that all of the seeming anomalies and inequalities of life can be explained; see, "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths."

- And how could we ever explain the birth of such prodigies as Jeremy Bentham, who already in his fourth year could read and write Latin and Greek? John Stuart Mill, who at the age of three read Greek and at the age of six wrote a history of Rome? Babington Macaulay, who in his sixth year wrote a compendium of world history? Beethoven, who gave public concerts when he was seven; or Mozart, who already before his sixth year had written musical compositions? Voltaire, who read the fables of Lafontaine when he was three years old?
- Does it not seem infinitely more probable that all these prodigies and geniuses, who in many cases came from illiterate parents, had already in previous births laid the foundations for their extraordinary faculties?

Here is a list of child prodigies from Wikipedia. You will recognize many of the names:

List of Child Prodigies

Here is the link to Wikipedia article on child prodigies:

Child Prodigy

Healing with Hypnosis

The late Dr. Richard Feynman was skeptical about the claims in hypnosis studies until he subjected himself to hypnosis in two different occasions. In both instances, he verified for himself that if done correctly hypnosis works. He describes these two cases in his book, "Surely You're Joking, Mr. Feynman!" (1985), pp. 66-68.

- Therefore, hypnosis provides yet another set of "supporting material." There are many cases of people remembering past lives when hypnotized. It is hard to evaluate the validity of most such cases.
- However, there is a branch of hypnosis that uses it as therapy. Some people seem to have "phobias" based on a horrific event from a past life. They cannot figure out why they have these phobias, but when a hypnotist brings out that experience, they become cured. Here is a 20/20 documentary of three such cases, where they vouch for the authenticity of the therapy sessions:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Past Lives

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There are hundreds of youtube videos on rebirth stories and also many on child prodigies and hypnosis-based curing of certain ailments.

Following books are also good reads:

- "Many Lives, Many Masters", by Brian Weiss (1988).
- "Many Mansions: The Edgar Cayce Story on Reincarnation", by Gina Cerminara (1988).
- "Children's Past Lives: How Past Life Memories Affect Your Child" by Carol Bowman (1998)
- "Return to Life: Extraordinary Cases of Children Who Remember Past Lives", Jim B. Tucker (2013).

OBE and NDE Studies

There is an ever-growing number of reports of Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE) and Near-Death Experiences (NDE) that not only support rebirth, but also are consistent with the concept of a "*manomaya kāya*"; see, "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya" and other related posts.

Here is a popular youtube video on presentation of a physician on Near-Death Experiences:

WebLink: youtube: From life to death, beyond and back | Thomas Fleischmann | TEDxTUHHSalon

There are many youtube videos, but here are three recent books on these two subjects:

- "Consciousness Beyond Life", by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies by a renowned cardiologist.
- "Brain Wars" by Mario Beauregard (2012) is a book by a scientist on NDE, OBE, and the mind-body problem in general.
- "Dying to be Me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing", by Anita Moorjani (2012) is a personal story of a cancer survivor who had been diagnosed to die within a few weeks but had an "unexplainable recovery" within days during which time she had an "out-of-body experience."

Discussion

1. Some of you may be wondering whether there is an inconsistency here. I have repeatedly mentioned that the Buddha clearly stated that it is extremely rare to be born a human. Yet, from the above rebirth case studies it appears that people have been born in the human realm in successive lives. If it is so hard to attain a human birth, how can this be?

2. There is nothing inconsistent. The key problem here is another misinterpretation. "*Bhava*" or existence is not the same as a "*jati*" or a birth; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein".

- A living being, upon exhausting the *kammic* energy for one existence, grabs hold of another strong *kammic* potential for the next existence. A human existence (*bhava*) can last thousands of years. Yet, each human birth (*jāti*) lasts only about 100 years. Therefore, there can be many births (*jāti*) within human existence (*bhava*.)
- In between successive human births, that human lives in para loka with just the "mental body" or *manōmaya kāya*. Another word for that entity is *gandhabba*. The concept of *gandhabba* is explained in simple terms at, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- The same is true for the animal realm. The life of a dog is less than 20 years, but a "dog *bhava*" can last thousands or more years.

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3. Thus, if one has done a highly meritorious deed, and at some point in *saṃsāra* (rebirth process) latches on to that "*kamma* seed" (see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka"), that energy may be able to sustain that existence for many rebirths.

- In these cases, when physical death occurs BEFORE exhausting the energy of the *kamma* seed, the *manomaya kāya* (also called *gandhabba*) leaves the dead body and waits until a suitable womb is ready; see, "Manomaya Kāya and the Physical Body." In this case, the *gandhabba* may carry the physical resemblance to the next life, including scars of any significant wounds, birthmarks, etc.
- When rebirth takes place there, the new physical body could have many resemblances to the old body. In many rebirth cases, such physical resemblances have been confirmed (as in the case of the civil war general in one of the above videos).

4. In summary, it is important to remember that in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, it is "*upādāna paccayā bhavo*," i.e., grasping or craving (*upādāna*) that leads to existence (*bhava*);): for example, existence as a dog.

- That existence (*bhava*) may have enough *kammic* energy to support many repeated births as a dog. Therefore, once a given *bhava* or existence is grasped, the next step of "*bhava paccayā jāti*," will lead to repeated births as a dog until that *kammic* energy is exhausted; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

5. On the other hand, if the *kammic* energy for that "*bhava*" has run out by the time death occurs, then a new "*bhava*" will be grasped at the death moment.

- For example, a human may exhaust the *kammic* energy for that human existence (*bhava*) and grasp a *kammic* seed for a *bhava* (existence) of an elephant. In that case, an "elephant *gandhabba"* will come out of the dead body of the human. Then it will stay in that "mental body" until a matching "elephant womb" appears. That means the mother elephant needs to have *gati* similar to this new elephant.

6. It may be difficult to grasp these concepts initially. One needs to look up the links given and may need to go back several layers to grasp these ideas. It is not possible to explain everything in one post. Buddha Dhamma can be very deep, if one wants to really comprehend how nature works.

You may want to read the posts in the section on "Origin of Life" and "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

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2.11 Power of the Human Mind

- Power of the Human Mind – Introduction
- Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna
- Power of the Human Mind – Anariya or Mundane Jhānā
- Power of the Human Mind – Ariya Jhānā
- Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā?

2.11.1 Power of the Human Mind – Introduction

Revised August 27, 2018

1. Most people know about Buddha Gotama as a very intelligent and compassionate human being. In "Dhamma and Science – Introduction," I pointed out the similarities and differences between a scientist and a Buddha. Here I want to discuss in detail the incomprehensible complexity of a human mind, and how a Buddha achieves the peak performance of that complex entity.

- As I pointed out in "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem," a normal human mind works within the sense sphere of a normal human and thus inherently incapable of providing a complete theory about our world; but the mind of a Buddha can transcend our sensory experience and see the whole of existence.
- Here I point out, in a systematic way in a series of posts, the progression of the human mind to higher levels achieved by purifying the mind (not by merely learning), and why a Buddha is at the very pinnacle. At the end of this series you will see why no other human being, no matter how intelligent, can even remotely approach the mind of a Buddha.

2. In the "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," we discussed the 31 realms of existence as laid out by the Buddha.

- Out of these, the human realm is at the fifth level (and our knowledge base is limited to our sensory experience within it, and Godel's Incompleteness Theorem applies to any theory derived within it). There are four realms below the human realm, AND 26 realms above.
- Out of the 31 realms, we can see only the human realm and the animal realm (which is one of the four lower realms or the *apāyā*). But we can access the thoughts enjoyed by the beings in the higher realms, AND we can access the transcendental (*lokuttara*) *cittā* too. Please do not put too much significance initially to the number of *cittā* in each realm, etc. Be patient with me as I need to lay out the "big picture" first.
- As we proceed systematically in a few posts, you will see various connections to other concepts discussed in other parts on the site, and eventually all fit together. This is why I keep saying that it is a complete and self-consistent world view on a scale unimaginable to a normal (unpurified) human mind.

3. The types of thoughts (*cittā*) that can be experienced in the whole of existence (31 realms) is 89 (or 121 depending on the scheme); see, "The 89 (or 121) Types of Cittas." In the three main *lokas* (or planes) of *kāmaloka, rupaloka,* and *arupaloka*, different types of *cittā* are of common occurrence. **While most of the 89 *cittā* are possible in all three *lokas*, normally a subset of *cittā* operate mostly in a given realm.**

- For example, in the *kāmaloka*, only 54 *cittā* are mainly experienced. The *kāmaloka* consists of the lower eleven realms, with sixth through eleventh shells representing the realms of the *devas*. Beings in these 11 realms have all six sense bases, and in the *deva* realms the sense pleasures are higher than in the human realm.

4. Out of all 89 types of thoughts, only 12 are immoral or *akusala cittā* and these are experienced only in *kāmaloka*; see, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

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- In the higher 20 realms belonging to the *rupaloka* and *arupaloka*, only *jhānic cittā* are mostly present, and *akusala cittā* normally do not arise.
- So, as one can imagine, the beings in the lower realms entertain more immoral *cittā*, and with higher frequency too. Human realm is kind of in the middle, with both moral and immoral *cittā*.
- Mostly *vipāka citta* arise in the lowest four realms; they basically "pay for their previous *kamma*." It is said that the beings in the lowest realm, *niraya* (hell) experience basically two immoral *cittā* based on hate, because of the high degree of suffering there.

5. The human realm is unique in that the human mind can access not only the *cittā* in the rūpa and arūpa lokas, but also the eight types of cittā that transcend the 31 realms. These *cittā* are the four path (*magga*) *cittā* for the four levels of *Nibbāna* (*Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant*), and the corresponding resultant (*phala*) *cittā*. Thus all 89 types of *citta* are possible for a human.

- Beings in the higher realms can also attain the 8 *magga/pahala citta*, but do not normally experience the *cittā* that are typical of the lower realms.
- Furthermore, the most potent *cittā*, those with highest *javana* (impulse) power in "*mahā kusala citta*." They are accessible mostly by humans and those in higher realms; see,"Javana of a Citta – Root of Mental Power." More posts will follow in the future.
- **This is the basis of the power of the human mind.** It is possible for a human to attain the mindset of a being in the lowest realm (*niraya*) and it is possible also to go all the way up to the mindset of a Buddha.

6. The *cittā* in the *rupaloka* and *arupaloka* are easily categorized according to the *jhānic* states. These are the same jhānic states attained by people via meditation.

- A human can attain all eight *jhānic* states, and the lower four correspond to the *rupaloka* and the higher four to the *arupaloka*.
- By the way, the Buddha never referred to the *arupāvacara* states as *jhānā*. Rather they are referred to in the *suttā* by their names: *ākāsānancāyatana*, *viññānancāyatana*, etc.
- Each *jhānic* state correspond to three types of cittā: wholesome (*kusala*) *citta* and the corresponding *vipāka* (resultant) *citta* are two; when the same *jhānic kusala citta* experienced by an *Arahant* it is called a *kriyā* (functional) *citta*, because it does not lead to a *vipāka citta*.

7. In the 16 realms belong to the *rupaloka*, where only two physical sense faculties (eye and ear) are active. These beings have very fine (less dense) bodies.

- In *rupaloka* 15 types of thoughts (*citta*) are mostly experienced corresponding to the five *jhānic* factors: *vitakka, vicara, pīti, sukha, ekggata*; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Anariya or Mundane Jhānā." These are the lower five *jhānic kusala cittā*, corresponding five *vipāka cittā* and five *kriyā cittā* (the last five are effective only for the *Arahants* who get into these *jhānic* states).
- The highest four realms represent the *arūpa lokas*, where beings have ultra fine bodies and only the mind faculty; no physical senses. Here there are only 12 types of *jhānic citta* mainly present. These are the higher four (fifth through eighth) *jhānic kusala cittā*, corresponding four *vipāka citta*, and corresponding four *kriyā citta* (which are effective only for the *Arahants* who get into these *jhānic* states, which do not have corresponding *vipāka citta*).

8. The *rupaloka* and *arupaloka* are collectively known as *Brahma* realms, which comprise the higher 20 realms. In the *Brahma* realms, beings are mostly devoid of both greed and hate, but they have dormant ignorance (*moha*) in their kamma seeds; see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." In the deva worlds (which belong to *kāmaloka*), those beings are mostly devoid of hate-rooted *cittā*, but have greed-rooted *cittā* since they enjoy sensual pleasures.

- It is possible for a human to attain any of those *jhānic* states via *samatha* meditation, and one does not have to be a Buddhist to attain those mundane or *anāriya jhānic* states.

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- Those *anāriya jhānic* states are temporary; a *yogi* in a *jhānic* state can be "taken out" of the *jhāna*; see the next post. They may be lost if one does not keep practicing, and the ability to enter such *jhānā* is lost when one dies, i.e., he/she may not have the ability to get into *jhānā* in the next life, even if they are born human.
- **However, if one dies while in even an *anāriya jhānic* state, he/she will be born in the corresponding *rupaloka* or *arupaloka***. Yet, a being who gets into even the highest *arupaloka* via *anāriya jhānā* will end up eventually in the four lower realms (*apāyā*).
- However, *Ariya jhānā* are permanent. Once one gets into an *Ariya jhāna*, it will hold through future lives.

More information with references to *suttā* at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

2.11.2 Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna

March 24, 2017; revised April 28, 2018

1. There are many misconceptions about the relationship between *jhāna* and *magga phala* (the four stages of *Nibbāna*). Some view that *jhāna* are necessary to attain *magga phala*, and others believe that being able to get into *jhāna* means one has attained *magga phala*.

- The first assumption is wrong, and the second is true if one has attained an *Ariya jhāna*.
- We can resolve these issues by looking into what are meant by *jhāna* and *magga phala*, and also the difference between *anāriya* and *Ariya jhāna*.

2. One attains *magga phala* (various stages of *Nibbāna*) by permanently removing greed, hate, and ignorance (about the nature of this world or *Tilakkhaṇa*): "*Ragakkhayo Nibbanan, Dosakkhayo Nibbanan, Mohakkhayo Nibbanan*."

- This can also be stated as "one needs to remove 7 *anusaya*" or equivalently "10 *saṃyojana*" to attain *Nibbāna*. At the *Sotāpanna* stage one removes 2 *anusaya* and 3 *saṃyojana*; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."
- The most commonly used evaluation is that a *Sotāpanna* has removed the three *saṃyojana* of *sakkaya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā*, and *silabbata paramasa*.
- Therefore, a **critical first step** for attaining *magga phala* is to be exposed to the correct interpretations of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."
- The **second step** is, of course, to grasp the *anicca* (and *dukkha* and *anatta*) *saññā* to some extent; see, "What is Saññā (Perception)?."

3. *Jhāna* (sometimes written as "*dyāna*") can provide blissful bodily sensations. These arise due to the "cleansing of the physical body and the nervous system" induced by "defilement-free" thoughts; see, "Jhānic Experience in Detail – Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."

- ***Jhāna* are mental states corresponding to *rupavacara* and *arupavacara* relams; they still belong to "this world" of 31 realms.** Just like the human realm is "more peaceful in general" than the animal realm, *jhānic* states are "more peaceful in general" than the human realm.
- We all have been born in most of the 31 realms (except for the realms reserved for the *Anāgāmis*) an uncountable times, and thus had attained those *jhānic* states uncountable times in previous lives.
- Even this second phenomenon of *jhāna* is completely outside the realm of modern science. Scientists cannot explain *jhānic* phenomena, but soon they will not be able to ignore these as "hallucinations" because more and more people are attaining *jhāna*.

4. There are two main factors that come into play in cultivating *jhānā*.

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- Some people have cultivated *jhānā* in their recent previous lives and are able to get into *anāriya jhānā* very quickly. For a few it comes without any effort, just lying on the bed (by the way this can be any person who lives a moral life, whether exposed to Buddha Dhamma or not).
- The second factor involves the "cleansing of the physical body", as we discuss below. **This means the actual physical body with its nervous system**, in addition to cleansing the mind.

5. My late Noble teacher, Waharaka Thero, has given the following simile to explain the main difference between a *jhāna* and *magga phala*. I hope you have at least heard about — preferably seen — an old oil lantern with a glass enclosure where the wick is soaked in oil or gasoline that comes up through the wick from a built-in reservoir.

- If gasoline is contaminated, the glass enclosure gets dirty quickly. In the same way, our defiled thoughts leads to a "contamination effect" in our physical body.
- Many body ailments, including bodily pains and even some diseases COULD BE reduced by cleansing one's mind. Of course, those initially arise due to *kamma vipāka*, and the stronger ones may not be overcome by this process; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

6. Our thoughts can be compared to the burning wick and the physical body to the glass enclosure, in the above simile. When the thoughts become defiled, the body will be "contaminated" giving rise to discomforts and even diseases. We will discuss the causes below.

- The glass enclosure of the lamp needs to be taken out and cleaned in order to get the lamp to shine bright again, i.e., to make the "body of the lamp" clean again.
- In contrast, there is a built-in mechanism for our bodies to be cleansed.
- This built-in mechanism is our *cittaja kaya* or our thoughts. We can state the basic mechanism this way: The *javana citta* in our thoughts (*cittaja kaya*) produce good or bad energy fields called *utuja kaya*. These are actually *rūpa* below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage (very fine), which are analogous to electromagnetic waves in physics.
- Bad thoughts associated with *dasa akusala* lead to the contamination of the body, and good thoughts generate *utuja kaya* that can clean-up such contamination.
- The "Search box" on the top right can be used to find more relevant posts, if one needs more information on these terms.

7. This *utuja kaya* (which is really an energy field) can and does affect our physical body. This is why people who are depressed, or have high levels of anger or greed, are more likely to be subjected to ailments and diseases, and people with joyful mindsets have relatively healthy bodies.

- This effect can be enhanced via *nirāmisa sukha* that arises due to "moral living." The more one stays away from the *dasa akusala*, the more happier one becomes, and starts feeling "*sukha*" in the body itself. It may not be fast, but it definitely happens over time.
- It can be much more enhanced by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*. **The difference here is that one will then stay away from *dasa akusala* mainly because one would have realized the fruitlessness and danger of seeking sensual pleasures by committing *dasa akusala*.**

8. I have discussed — starting with basics — how our thoughts can affect our well-being in the "Living Dhamma" section. Understanding those basic concepts is crucial in order to understand deeper concepts and to do *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* effectively as discussed later in that section.

- When defiled thoughts are suppressed at least for short times (during a *desanā* or while reading Dhamma), one's mind becomes joyful and one will be able to get to *samādhi* for a short time (*tadanga pahāna*).

  [***pahāna*** : *(nt.)* removal; giving up; abandoning; avoidance.

  pahāna : 'overcoming', abandoning. There are 5 kinds of overcoming:

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(1) overcoming by repression (*vikkhambhana-pahāna*), i.e. the temporary suspension of the 5 hindrances (*nīvarana*, q.v.) during the absorptions, [***vikkhambhana*** : [nt.] arrest; elimination; discarding; suppression.]
(2) overcoming by the opposite (*tadanga-pahāna*),
(3) overcoming by destruction (*samuccheda-pahāna*),
(4) overcoming by tranquillization (*patipassaddhi-pahāna*),
(5) overcoming by escape (*nissarana-pahāna*).

(1) "Among these, 'overcoming by repression' is the pushing back of adverse things, such as the 5 mental hindrances (*nīvarana* q.v), etc., through this or that mental concentration (*samādhi*, q.v.), just as a pot thrown into moss-clad water pushes the moss aside....

(2) " 'Overcoming by the opposite' is the overcoming by opposing this or that thing that is to be overcome, by this or that factor of knowledge belonging to insight (*vipassanā* q.v.), just as a lighted lamp dispels the darkness of the night. In this way, the personality-belief (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi*, s. *diṭṭhi*) is overcome by determining the mental and corporeal phenomena ... the view of uncausedness of existence by investigation into the conditions... the idea of eternity by contemplation of impermanency ... the idea of happiness by contemplation of misery....

(3) "If through the knowledge of the noble path (s. *ariyapuggala*) the fetters and other evil things cannot continue any longer, just like a tree destroyed by lightning, then such an overcoming is called 'overcoming by destruction' " (Vis.M. XXII, 110f.).

(4) When, after the disappearing of the fetters at the entrance into the paths, the fetters, from the moment of fruition (*phala*) onwards, are forever extinct and stilled, such overcoming is called the 'overcoming by tranquillization'.

(5) "The 'overcoming by escape' is identical with the extinction and *Nibbāna*" (Pts.M. I. 27). (App.).]

- If one spends more and more time doing such activities, the length of this calm mindset (*samādhi*) can be lengthened, even up to weeks (*vikkambana pahāna*).
- That may not be *jhāna* yet, but it is possible to get into *jhāna* by increasing one's efforts by either *samatha* or *vipassana* meditation.
- For some people, it is easier to get *jhāna*, because they had cultivated *jhānā* in recent previous births.

9. The power of the *javana citta* are increased when one is in *samādhi* and is even more when one gets to a *jhāna*. The "body cleansing effect" is enhanced and one starts feeling joy in the face, *sukha* in the body.

- This can be compared to the wick in the oil lamp generating a "high-power laser light" that automatically cleans the dirty glass enclosure.
- That bright "*utujaya kaya*," which are also called "*kirana*" (or electromagnetic waves in physics), can burn those long-accumulated "bad deposits" in our bodies and also "straighten out" the nervous system.
- This is the first confirmation of the effect of the mind on the body for someone starting on the Path. One can actually convince oneself that the body CAN BE affected by one's thoughts.

10. All this can be done by just SUPPRESSING the *pancanivarana* for long times, see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

- Even before the Buddha, ancient *yogis* were able to get to *jhāna* by SUPPRESSING defiled thoughts or *pancanivarana*. They did this mainly by staying away from sensual objects (usually in a forest or in an isolated place).
- In fact, they were able to cultivate powerful *abhiññā* and even travel through the air. Therefore, it is possible that those who get into the fourth *anāriya jhāna* will also experience the "white light" surrounding them.
- As long as one's mind can be kept away from greedy and hateful thoughts, such states of *samādhi* and *jhāna* can be maintained for long times (*vikkambana pahāna*).

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- This is related to the fact that how people can go to even *anāriya* meditation retreats (breath meditation) and attain a sense of peace for many days at a stretch. However, when they come back and get back into the regular lifestyle, it slowly fades.

11. The problem is that those effects, no matter how powerful, are only temporary with *anāriya jhāna*. They have not removed the root cause for getting attached to greed and hate. They remain hidden deep down as *anusaya/saṃyojana*.

- This is discussed in detail in "Power of the Human Mind – Anāriya or Mundane Jhāna."
- *Jhāna* belong to the 31 realms: "Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi."

12. Now we are getting closer to see the difference between *anāriya* and *Ariya jhāna*.

- The main difference difference between them is that *Ariya jhāna* are permanent since they are attained via REMOVING and not just SUPPRESSING some of those *anusaya/saṃyojana*.
- Once removed via wisdom (*paññā*) when attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*, some of those *anusaya/saṃyojana* are permanently removed from one's mind (*ucceda pahāna*).
- After that, no matter how strong an attractive/hateful sense input comes in, strong defiled thoughts CANNOT arise in a *Sotāpanna*; see, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta," and other relevant posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."

13. The remaining key to the puzzle is that it is possible to attain *magga phala* just by getting into *samādhi* and not necessarily to *jhāna*.

- There are many types of people based on their *gathi* (personalities) and capabilities: *saddhā, viriya, samādhi, sati, paññā*. In fact, the *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* are separated into five *Nikāyas* based on that so that people can study appropriate *suttā* for them, see, "Nikāya in the Sutta Piṭaka."
- Without getting into details, people with predominantly *paññā indriya* can attain *magga phala* without going through *jhāna*.
- Others can go through *jhānā* to attain *magga phala*. This is not clear-cut, but just to get an idea.

14. The bottom line is that *jhānā* can be quite helpful in getting to *magga phala*. **Furthermore, one may attain both within reasonably short times.** But *magga phala* (at least the *Sotāpanna* stage) comes before *Ariya jhāna* are attained.

- The reason is that *ucceda pahāna* mentioned in #11 that is necessary for the *Ariya jhāna*, cannot take place unless one has comprehended the *Tilakkhaṇa* and attained the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- One normally attains *Ariya jhāna* by recalling the (stage of) *Nibbāna* that one has seen, and the "cooling down" that one has thus experienced; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Ariya Jhānā."

15. For people with high levels of *paññā*, even brief state of *samādhi*, called *tadanga pahāna* (see #7 above) is enough to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage. A famous example is Bahiya Daruchiriya who attained the *Arahantship* upon hearing just a single verse.

- Then there are accounts of many people who attained the *Sotāpanna* stage via *vishkambana pahāna* (see #7 and #9 above), mainly while listening to a *desanā* by the Buddha.
- For example, Alavaka yaksa (not a *niraya yaksa* but a *deva yaksa*) threatened the Buddha just before sitting down to listen to a *desanā* and attained the *Sotāpanna* stage during the *desanā*. Aṅgulimāla chased the Buddha with the intention of killing him, but attained the *Sotāpanna* stage immediately afterwards.
- More information on the three kinds of *pahāna* can be found at, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika."

16. Therefore, there can be people with *magga phala* without any *anāriya* or *Ariya jhāna*.

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- If there are people with *magga phala* without *jhāna*, they cannot not experience the "*jhānic sukha*" in the body. Even though they do not generate "bad thoughts" to further contaminate their bodies, they have not cleansed the old contaminants. *Jhānic javana citta* (that can run continuously for long times, compared to just 7 *javana citta* in a normal *citta vīthi*) are like laser beams that can clean contaminants in the body even in an *anāriya jhāna*; see, #4 of "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."
- In the simile of #4 above, this is like a wick not emitting any more smoke, but the glass enclosure not yet cleaned.
- Of course, it would be easier for a person with *magga phala* to attain *Ariya jhāna,* and they will not attain *anāriya jhāna*.

17. Finally, from the above discussion it appears that the only way to confirm the attainment of the *Sotāpanna* stage is to see whether one has removed the three *saṃyojana* (*sanyojana*) of *sakkaya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā*, and *silabbata paramasa; see,* "*Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?*."

- And that cannot be determined by anyone else, but oneself.

18. April 28, 2018: I found a *desanā* by Waharaka *Thero* where he present clear evidence that *jhāna* are not necessary to attain *magga phala*:

WebLink: Download "Are Jhāna Required for Magga-Phala"

- The main point the *Thero* makes is that we know that there are *jāti Sotāpannas* born in the human realm. But if a *jhāna* was REQUIRED to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, then that person WOULD NOT be born in the human realm, but in a *brahma* realm corresponding that *jhāna*.

More information with references to *suttā* at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

2.11.3 Power of the Human Mind – Anariya or Mundane Jhānas

1. The 54 types of *cittā* (thoughts) belonging to the *kamaloka* (called *kamavacara cittā*) are not very strong; they can just have enough power to grasp the thought object (*arammana* in Pāli or *aramuna* in Sinhala).

- The power of a thought comes from *javana*; see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power" for an analysis based on *Abhidhamma*.
- But the *jhānic cittā* belonging to the *rupaloka* and *arupaloka* have much more power and have a firm grasp of the object. This is why it is possible for someone who can get to the fourth *jhānic* state to acquire some capabilities that exceed the "normal" human potential, like telekinetic (move things with the mind) or the ability to see or hear from long distances; see below.
- The Pāli word "*jhāna*" has two roots: "to concentrate" and also "to burn up."

2. The *Anariya* or mundane *jhānā* are attained simply by SUPPRESSING the five hindrances. One simply focuses the mind forcefully onto one thought object, not letting those five hindrances come to surface.

- Since there is only one *citta* at a time (even though there are billions of *cittā* a second), when one forces the mind to one thought object, the five hindrances are kept at bay, and one feels the serenity of a mind unpolluted by the hindrances. **This is called *samatha* meditation.**

3. Thus attaining mundane *jhānā* is purely a mechanistic process. While some Buddhists use them to calm the mind before getting into insight (*vipassana*) meditation, it is used widely by the Hindus. Even before the Buddha, there were many Hindu *yogis* who could attain the highest *jhānā*.

- There are many reports of people of other faiths also attaining such *jhānic* states (see, for example, "Interior Castle" by the Christian nun St. Teresa of Avila; edited by E. Allison Peers, 1946, for a fascinating description of "seven mansions" which seem to correspond to these *jhānic* states).

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- But such *jhānic* states are not permanent; one could lose them in an instant, if the moral conduct is broken and defiled thoughts (*anusaya*) come to the surface (*anusaya*).

4. There are many techniques for conducting such *samatha* meditation. The popular ones are breath (whether focusing the mind on the breath at the nostrils or on the rising/falling of the stomach) and *kasina* meditation (where a certain object, for example a colored disk is used to focus the attention on). As one's mind gets absorbed in that object, the five hindrances are suppressed, and the mind advances to higher and higher calm states.

- Obviously, it is easier to attain *jhānic* states via *samatha* meditation if one follows at least the five precepts (not killing, stealing, sexually misbehaving, lying, or taking drugs or alcohol). This is because the greedy and hateful thoughts are at a lower baseline state for a person observing the five precepts.
- If one abstains from all ten immoral acts (*dasa akusala*), then it is even easier to calm the mind and to attain these *jhānic* states; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

5. The five *jhānic* states corresponding to the *cittā* in the *rupaloka* themselves are related to the five hindrances. To get to the first *jhānic* state, one needs to suppress the five hindrances; this is done by developing five *sobhana* [beautiful qualities of consciousness] mental factors (*sobhana cetasika*) to counter the five hindrances:

- *Vitakka* inhibits the hindrance of sloth and torpor (*thina middha*). This is how one trains to direct the mind to one thought object, say the breath. Vitakka is normally translated as "initial application", but it comes from "*tharka*" or going back and forth among many *arammana* (thought objects); when this is stopped one has "*vitharka*" or *vitakka*, i.e., staying on one thought object, for example, breath or a *kasina* object.
- Sustained application (*vicara*; pronounced "vichāra") is the continued presence of the mind on that object, i.e., maintaining concentration on that object; *vicara* comes from stopping "*chara*" or moving around. *Vitakka* and *vicara* are compared to a bee flying towards a flower and then buzzing and hanging around the flower while extracting honey from it. *Vicara* serves to temporarily inhibit the hindrance of *vicikicchā*.
- As the mind gets absorbed in the object, thoughts of ill will are suppressed and zest or mental happiness (*pīti* or "*preethi*") arises in the mind. This is the *jhānic* factor of *pīti*, and it suppresses the hindrance of ill will (*vyāpāda*). This happiness is felt mainly on the face.
- The body becomes light due to physical happiness (*sukha*). This *jhānic* factor counters the hindrance of restlessness and worry (*uddhacca kukkucca*).
- Thus the mind now becomes totally absorbed in the thought object, and one has one-pointedness (*ekgaggata*). This is the primary *jhānic* factor in all *rupaloka jhānic* states and the essence of concentration (*samādhi*). This one-pointedness temporarily inhibits sensual desire (*kamachanda*).

When all five jhānic factors are present, the five hindrances are temporarily suppressed, and one is in the first *jhānic* state.

6. The higher *jhānā* are attained by **successively eliminating** the grosser *jhāna* factors and by refining the subtler *jhāna* factors through sustained concentration.

- Thus in the *Abhidhamma* it is stated that there are five *jhānic* states, where the last four are attained by the elimination of a *jhāna* factor at each stage; thus in that method, the second *jhāna* is attained by removing *vitakka*. But in the *suttā*, the Buddha expounds the *jhānā* as fourfold, where both *vitakka* and *vicara* are removed to get to the second *jhāna*. Therefore the difference comes in at the second *jhāna*.
- For someone cultivating *jhāna*, this is not of any practical concern. In practice, it is not easy to distinguish between two steps of removing *vittakka, vicara*; they seem to go away together. That is probably why the Buddha just combine them into one *jhāna* in the *suttā*.

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Possible Perils of Mundane Jhānā

First of all, the *anāriya* (mundane) *jhānā* are not stable as *Ariya jhānā*. A *yogi* can be taken out of the *jhāna* by the *anusaya* (temptations) triggered by an external stimulus, for example seeing an attractive woman or hearing a seductive voice; see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- There is this story about a *yogi* who was travelling by air with *abhiññā* powers and saw a flower in the shape of a woman (called "nārilathā") and lost the *jhānic* state and came down; there is another such story where the *yogi* heard the singing of a woman and had to face the same fate.
- In contrast, when someone gets into an *Ariya jhāna*, that *jhāna* cannot be broken by any such influence even though the yogi may see or hear such external stimuli; see, "Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā," and "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga."
- Thus even though the yogi may have not removed some *āsavas*, the *anusaya* are PREVENTED from arising in an *Ariya jhāna*; this is because the object of concentration (*arammana*) in an *Ariya jhāna* is not a mundane object, but *Nibbāna*.
- **June 8, 2018**: **The critical differences between *Ariya* and *anāriya jhāna* discussed in** "Pathama Mettā Sutta."

1. There are many people even today, who can get into these mundane *jhānā*. But it is not a good idea to attain such mundane *jhānā* at or above the fifth *jhāna*.

- This is because, if someone dies while in such an *arūpa jhānic* state, he/she will be born in the *arūpa loka*: it is not possible to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage in the *arūpa loka* because the eye and ear faculties are not present (so one could not learn Dhamma), and thus cannot become a *Sotāpanna*. Thus one would spend a very long time there, and has to start all over when one returns to the human world. Once in the human world, it is possible that one could accumulate bad kamma *vipāka* and be destined to the *apāyā*.
- Thus it is better to make the effort to become a *Sotāpanna*, rather than seeking any *jhāna*. A *Sotāpanna* will never be born in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms).

2. There is yet another danger in attaining these mundane *jhānā*. Even before the *jhānā*, one could start seeing objects of one's liking (such as religious figures of any religion, religious symbols, colorful lights, etc).

- Thus many people tend to believe that they have attained some of sort of advancement in meditation or in their belief system; some Buddhists may believe they have attained *Nibbāna* or something close to it. It could be dangerous to play with such illusions. **When such lights or other images appear, one should completely ignore them.** I used to see them too, but luckily I found my teachers before getting heavily involved with these illusions.

3. It is said that in some rare instances, lowly spirits try to convince meditators that they are *devas* or *brahmā* (beings in the realms higher than the human realm). It is dangerous to get involved with them too. It is possible that some of the horror stories we hear from time to time about people killing their own families were committed under such influences.

Extrasensory Perceptions and Powers (*Abhiññā*)

1. When one attains and perfects the fourth *jhāna*, one could start developing several extra sensory perceptions and powers, which could take considerable effort. No reports are available on anyone with ALL these abilities at the present time. However, when one attains the *Arahant* stage, certain extra sensory powers can be attained if cultivated, including the last one on the following list, the ability to "see" the past lives:

- Psychokinesis (*iddhividha*) or various manifestations of the "power of will."

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- Clairaudience (*dibbasota*), the faculty of perceiving sounds even at long distances, far beyond the range of ordinary auditory faculties.
- Clairvoyance (*dibbacakkhu*), which enables one to see far events as well as heavenly worlds (i.e., other beings that are not visible to normal human eye).
- Telepathy (*cetopariya ñāna*), which enables one to comprehend the general state as well as the functioning of another's mind.
- Ability to recollect one's own past lives (*pubbenivasanussatinana*).

2. It is possible for a *yogi* to develop the *abhiññā* to the extent that he/she can see past lives through half of a *Mahā Kappa* (which can be taken to be roughly 15 billion years). The ancient *yogis* with such power saw that the *Mahā Brahma* has been there all through that time period. Therefore, they came to the wrong conclusion that the *Mahā Brahma* was the one who created the world at that time in the past.

- Those yogis who are born in the *asanna* realm spend 500 *Mahā Kappas* there like a lifeless log (no thinking, that is what *asanna* means). When they exhaust that lifetime, they normally are reborn in the human realm, and because of this past "*gathi*" to cultivate *jhānā*, they may again develop *abhiññā* powers. Now they look back at past lives, but do not see any because they can look back only half of a *Mahā Kappa,* which is only a thousandth of the duration of the past life. Thus, they also conclude erroneously that they are "new" beings, who did not have any past lives.
- The Buddha, upon his Enlightenment, could see thousands of *Mahā Kappas* in the blink of eye. This is why he said there is no discernible beginning to life.
- An *Arahant* **with *abhiññā* powers** can see back through numerous *Mahā Kappas* since *Ariya jhānā* are much more powerful.

3. Further details can be found in:

- "The Manuals of Dhamma", by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw (2006), p. 105.
- "Abhidhammattha Sangaha – Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma" by Bhikkhu Bodhi (1999), p. 344.

4. These kinds of direct knowledge are all mundane and are dependent on the mastery of the fourth *jhāna* and focusing attention on these tasks. The Buddha discouraged *bhikkhus* from pursuing these mundane powers, and also **prohibited** *bhikkhus* from public display of such powers, calling them "childish." That is because all these powers are temporary. Since one has not removed *avijjā* (ignorance) and has only suppressed greed (*lobha*) and hate or ill will (*dosa*), they can resurface any time and remove all those achievements.

- One good example from the Buddha's time was Devadatta, who was a brother of princess Yasodhara. Devadatta became a monk and developed the mundane *jhānā* and attained those direct knowledges described above. He could perform many "miracles", and one time he appeared in the bedroom of Prince Ajasattu to impress him. But when Devadatta went against the Buddha and at one time injured the Buddha, he lost all his mundane powers and ended up in the lowest realm (*avici niraya*) because of those offenses.

By now one should be able to get a sense of the potential of the mind. With even these mundane *jhānā*, a human can access the higher realms of existence and also attain super normal powers, but these mundane *jhānā* are at a much lower level than *Ariya jhānā*.

Next, "Power of the Human Mind - Ariya Jhānā", …….

2.11.4 Power of the Human Mind – Ariya Jhānā

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1. We saw in the previous post that *Anariya jhānā* are attained via focusing the mind (*vitakka*) on ANY thought object (*ārammaṇa*).

- That *ārammaṇa* could be breath, a *kasina* object, or any other religious symbol of any religion. Then keeping the mind there (*vicāra* or sustained application) helps one to get to a *jhāna*.

2. Therefore, *anāriya* or mundane *jhānā* are attained by SUPPRESSING the five hindrances via concentrating on mundane objects (breath, a *kasina* object, etc.) On the other hand, *Ariya jhānā* are attained via using *Nibbāna* as the *ārammaṇa* (thought object.) However, *Nibbāna* is not "an object" in this world, so what is meant here is to recall some "cooling down" that one has experienced.

- One can start "cooling down" first by living a moral life and by staying away from *dasa akusala*; see, "Living Dhamma."
- When one comprehends the Three Characteristics (*Tilakkhaṇa*) of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* at least to some extent, there is definitely more permanent "cooling down" over time. One can look back and notice such a "cooling down." For example, one may not "flare-up" at the slightest provocation as one used to, or one may have lost cravings to some extent, etc. That is what needs to be recalled while cultivating *Ariya jhāna*; see #4 below for the *kammaṭṭhāna*.

3. Thus the key is to first experience some "cooling down" by comprehending the Three Characteristics of "this world" of 31 realms. One examines the real-life situations and understands that no lasting happiness is possible, either in this life or anywhere in these 31 realms; see. "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations," and "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?."

- This gives rise to *nirāmisa sukha* (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?") of *Nibbāna*, i.e., some sort of a "cooling down", over time. How long it takes to experience some "cooling down" will depend on the person.

4. When one has experienced some "cooling down" that one can recall, then one can use it in a *kammaṭṭhāna* to cultivate *jhāna*. This procedure is more effective for those who have attained the *Sotāpanna* stage. One can sit in a quiet place and recite the following *kammaṭṭhāna*:

- "*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ, yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti*," which means, "It is the only peace, the only happiness: prevent *saṅkhāra* from arising (via) eliminating *taṇhā* and excess greed, and thus stopping the arising of defilements, which is *Nibbāna*." This needs to be done while recalling an instance of one's own "cooling down"; see #3 above.
- However, the above procedure is not much effective unless one has at least some understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* and has experienced some "cooling down"; it can be used to quickly enter a *jhāna* that had been cultivated.

5. Thus the difference between the mundane and *Ariya* versions of *samatha* meditation is the meditation object, and this is the reason that *asaññā jhānā* are avoided in the *Ariya* meditation. In the former, one can focus on ANY object; in the latter one focuses on *Nibbāna*. **Thus, *vitakka, vicāra* for *Anariya samatha* meditation becomes *savitakka, savicāra*, emphasizing the focus on *Nibbāna*, with the prefix "*sa*."**

- "*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ*, ……." cannot be used just as a chanting without understanding what is meant by heart. Thus the chant will become more and more effective as one starts feeling the *nirāmisa sukha* at least to a certain extent. (One does not chant out loud; one could just say it in the mind to oneself or say it very quietly meaningfully).
- One could also start with any *Anāriya samatha* meditation (the breath meditation is easy to do), and once starts feeling the calmness and early stages of *nirāmisa sukha*, one could permanently switch over to the *Ariya* version, by contemplating on *anicca, dukkha, anatta* and recalling one's own "cooling down."

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6. Another thing to remember is that *nirāmisa sukha* has no equivalent sensation in any type of *āmisa sukha* or sense pleasures that are available with the five physical senses. It is more like a relief sensation. When one has a headache and it goes away, one feels a relief, a calmness, a peace of mind. The *nirāmisa sukha* is something like that. The more *nirāmisa sukha* one feels one becomes calm inwardly AND outwardly.

- When one gets into *jhānā*, *jhānic* pleasure can be felt in the body.
- In the post, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta," I have explained how a *Sotāpanna* automatically removes the five types of *citta* that are responsible for rebirth in the *apāyā* (the lowest four realms). In that discussion, it was also shown how *vicikicchā* is responsible for such bad *kamma*, and how contemplation on *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) can remove *vicikicchā*, and also four other greed-rooted *cittā* that arise because of the wrong views.

7. Thus as one contemplates on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, one automatically starts **reducing, not just suppressing the hindrances.**

Jhānic states are mental states of the *Brahma* realms lying above the realms in the *kāma loka*. In any realm in *kāma loka*, including the human and *deva* realms, *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are present. Both *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are absent in *Brahma* realms, as in *jhānic* states.

One gets to *anāriya jhāna* by SUPPRESSING *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*. One gets to *Ariya jhāna* by REMOVING *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha.*

- The two hindrances of *kāmacchanda* and *vyāpāda* were reduced to *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* levels at the *Sotāpanna* stage. *Kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are reduced further at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage, are removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage. Thus it is only an *Anāgāmī* who has REMOVED *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha.*
- As one moves to higher stages of Nibbāna, it should become easier to attain *jhānā*.

8. In summary, *Ariya jhānā* are permanent in nature compared to *Anāriya jhānā*. By that, I do not mean that one will be permanently in a *jhānic* state. What I mean is that it will be possible for one to attain the *jhāna* at will.

- On the other hand, *anāriya jhāna* can be "lost." By that I mean one who has cultivated *anāriya jhāna* may lose the ability to get to that *jhāna*. The best example is Devadatta who attained the highest *anāriya jhanas* AND also cultivated supernormal (*iddhi*) powers. He lost all that and ended up in an *apāya*.
- The clearest distinction of an *Ariya jhāna* is that once in the *jhāna*, the *jhāna* cannot be interrupted by *anusaya* or a lustful or a hateful thought. Even if one forcefully tries to think about such a thought, it does not "stick"; the mind rejects it; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjhaṅga."
- One can contemplate Dhamma concepts (*savitakka, savicāra*) while in a *jhāna*. Only *vitakka* and *vicāra* are reduced at the first *Ariya jhāna*, and completely eliminated at higher *jhānā*. Doing insight meditation (contemplating on *anicca, dukkha, anatta* or any Dhamma concept) can be done with a clear, bright mind.
- All *jhānā* are mundane in the sense that they provide the jhānic experience in the *rūpaloka* and *arūpaloka*, which still belong to the 31 realms of existence. The *Nibbānic* bliss is the ultimate bliss.
- The *nirodha samāpatti* that can be attained by an *Arahant* is incomparably better compared to any *jhāna*. An *Arahant* can enjoy the sensation of *Nibbānic* bliss continually for up to seven days in *nirodha samāpatti.*
- Thus ultimately what is most important is the purification of one's own mind; see, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

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9. One gets to the first *Ariya jhāna* by removing (*uccheda pahāna*) *kāma rāga*, whereas one can get to the first *anāriya jhāna* by suppressing (*vikkhambana pahāna*) *kāma rāga*. **Therefore, one will be an *Anāgāmī* by the time one gets to the first *Ariya jhāna*.**

- This is discussed in detail and evidence from the *Tipiṭaka* provided in the post: "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna."
- Even some followers of Waharaka *Thero* in Sri Lanka do not seem to understand this point. However, Waharaka *Thero* has clearly explained this in the following short *desanā* (in Sinhala): "WebLink: Ariya and Anariya Jhāna (Audio)."

More information with references to *suttā* at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

2.11.5 Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā?

April 23, 2017; revised July 15, 2020

1. Learning Dhamma (or following the Path) is very different from learning mundane subjects like history, economics, or even science and mathematics.

- *Ariya jhāna* and subsequent *abhiññā* powers are realized as "by products" after one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage. Of course, only some of those can cultivate *jhāna* and subsequent *abhiññā* powers.
- Even attaining *magga phala* does not have set procedures, other than following the Eightfold Path. However, *kammaṭṭhāna* based on one's personality can be helpful.
- The most important thing is to cleanse one's mind. Things just become clear with a purified mind.

2. There is an excellent example described in the *Tipiṭaka*. There were two *bhikkhus* at the time of the Buddha called Mahāpanthaka and Cūḷapanthaka. They were brothers and Ven. Mahāpanthaka was the elder. Ven. Mahāpanthaka had been trying to teach a certain verse (*gāthā*) to Ven. Cūḷapanthaka for **six months**, but Ven. Cūḷapanthaka was unable to memorize it.

- Ven. Mahāpanthaka got frustrated and asked Ven. Cūḷapanthaka to disrobe and he left crying. The Buddha saw this incident and realized that Ven. Cūḷapanthaka had very unique hidden capabilities.
- He gave proper instructions to Ven. Cūḷapanthaka, and Ven. Cūḷapanthaka was able to attain not only the *Arahantship* but also attain vast super-normal (*abhiññā*) powers within the same day. The trick for Ven. Cūḷapanthaka was to go beyond a certain sticking point that had been blocking his mind.
- **He recited not one but 500 *gāthā* that day.** There are many reports of his *abhiññā* powers. One time he made 999 copies of himself and they were all engaged in various activities at the temple.
- The point is that none of that was gained via "book knowledge." Once the breakthrough came with the instructions from the Buddha, the rest of it came gushing through immediately.
- **No one taught him how to memorize all those 500 verses or how to cultivate *abhiññā* powers.** A decent version of this story can be found at WebLink: Dhammapada Verse 25 – Cūḷapanthaka Vatthu.

3. Another example is how Ven. Ānanda attained the *Arahanthood* and many *abhiññā* powers overnight. Three months after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, the first Buddhist Council (*Sangāyana*) was set to take place, and the day before that Ven. Ānanda had not attained the *Arahantship*. He had been a *Sotāpanna* while the Buddha was alive.

- Since only "*sivpilisimbiya*" *Arahants* (those with *patisambhida ñāṇa* ['analytical knowledge' or 'discrimination']) were allowed to attend the *Sangāyanā*, Ven. Ānanda was under pressure to attain the *Arahanthood*. Despite his efforts, he had not attained the *Arahantood* the night before, and he decided to lie down to take a rest. As he was getting into bed while thinking about a *Dhamma* concept, he attained the *Arahantship* while not in any of the four postures (was not on the bed yet, but was off the ground).

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- Simultaneous with that he acquired many *abhiññā* powers too. The next day, when he went to the *Sangāyanā* hall, everyone was inside. He stood by the door and announced that he had attained the *Arahantship* and requested the door to be opened. One of the *Arahant* asked Ven. Ānanda to remove doubts of everyone present about his attainment.
- So, Ven. Ānanda went inside through the closed door, traveled through air and took his seat. Then it was clear to everyone that he had not only attained the *Arahantship*, but also had cultivated *abhiññā* powers overnight; see, "WebLink: Ānanda -The Guardian of the Dhamma."

4. Waharaka Thero has given the following simile to understand what happens when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, and WHY it takes only a fraction of second.

- Suppose person X is running back and forth past a sign that has written on it some information in small letters. It is not possible to read the sign while running, no matter how many times you run past it.
- But suppose X stops for a few seconds to read the sign, then resumes running back and forth again. Now that he has read the message that is on the post, he KNOWS what is written on the post, even though he again cannot read it while running.
- In the same way, it takes only a fraction of a second to the mind to grasp the true nature of this world (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) when the mind is calm AND if one has learned enough background material (in the simile, he must know the language the sign was written in).
- While one is gathering this supporting material one is a *Sotāpanna Anugami*. Then the *Sotāpanna phala* moment can come at any time. It comes and goes even without one realizing it. Only weeks or months later, one will start realizing the permanent change in oneself.

5. This is why I said in #1 above, that there are no set procedures for making progress on the Path or developing *abhiññā* powers (of course *anāriya* techniques are different). As one makes progress, one will AUTOMATICALLY receive the results based on one's progress.

- One will automatically attain *magga phala*.
- One may also attain *Ariya jhānic* states subsequently, if one had cultivated them in recent previous lives. For others, it may take some time to cultivate *Ariya jhāna*. As I described in a previous post, *jhāna* are very different from *magga phala* and it may not be easy to verify whether one has attained *Ariya* or *anāriya jhāna*; see, "Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna."
- While certain meditation techniques COULD be helpful, the two main factors are *kusala sīla* (moral living) and comprehending the real nature of this world, i.e., *Tilakkhaṇa*.

6. Our goal should be to eliminate future suffering by cultivating wisdom (*paññā*), and thereby getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi*.

- Of course, learning correct *Dhamma* is a joyful experience which can motivate one to learn further and thereby help comprehending the true message of the Buddha.
- The key is to not confuse "learning" with just "memorization." One needs to get the key idea or *saññā* of a given concept. When one gets the *saññā* of a concept, one will never lose it: "What is Saññā (Perception)?."

7. This website with hundreds of posts could discourage people, thinking that one needs to memorize all these different things to learn *Dhamma*.

- It is not necessary to MEMORIZE ANYTHING. Most of the material on the website is for REFERENCE. If one forgets some details about a concept it is easy to use the menu system, "Search" button on the top right, or the Pure Dhamma – Sitemap to locate relevant posts.
- However, listening to *desanā* or reading *Dhamma* (and then grasping concepts, not memorizing) is an essential part of learning (grasping concepts).

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- Getting into *jhānā* or attaining *magga phala* do not have set procedures. They will AUTOMATICALLY be realized as one follows the Path and one's wisdom grows.
- The key is to stay away from *dasa akusala*, live a moral life, and comprehend the key message embedded in *anicca, dukkha, anatta* by learning *Dhamma* and contemplating.
- By the way, there is a connection between *dasa akusala* and *anatta* as we discussed last week; see, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link." So, *anicca, dukkha, anatta* are related to *dasa akusala*.

8. Memory and wisdom are two different things, even though somewhat related. In order to comprehend the message of the Buddha, one should cultivate wisdom (*paññā*) instead of memorizing verses. Let us take a simple example to explain this.

- A child can learn addition by just memorizing. Then he/she would be able to give the right answer to the addition of two numbers that has been memorized, but will not be able to add two randomly chosen numbers.
- However, if the child is taught HOW TO add two numbers, using a technique like using the fingers in the hand to represent numbers. it will be possible to "see" WHY two plus three equal to five. Then the child will be able to add any two numbers.
- Once that is grasped, it would easy for the child to then learn subtraction, multiplication, and division.
- However, it will be an impossible task to MEMORIZE the addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division of ANY two numbers.

9. There is a basic difference between "real learning" (grasping concepts) and memorization (just blindly following rules/instructions).

- This is a concept that is hard to grasp for many these days, because we are so much used to "book learning." There are many people who can repeat certain tasks mechanically without even bothering to think through. And then when the situation changes somewhat they do not know how to handle the "new situation."

10. The message of the Buddha is unique. It goes far beyond moral living. Some people think that by living a moral life one would be able to get an afterlife in heaven forever.

- On the other end of the spectrum, another set of people believe that killing those who are unfaithful to their God can also lead to a heavenly life, which should be beyond belief for any reasonable person.
- However, if a mind is contaminated from an early age, such dangerous ideas sink into the mind and are very hard to change.
- Both those extremes are faith-based.
- Hopefully, one would be able to see that there is a key element of reasoning, not faith, involved in Buddha Dhamma. It can be grasped by a reasonably moral person. It can be followed to a very deep level if desired.

11. Buddha Dhamma cannot be learned by books or with this website. But they can help by providing (correct) information; if it is incorrect information, then it would be just a waste of time.

- Since Buddha Dhamma is really different from any other religion or philosophy, one first needs to get that basic information from someone who really knows the fundamentals (*kamma/vipāka, dasa akusala, Paṭicca Samuppāda*, etc) and then the deeper aspects like *anicca, dukkha, anatta* once the basics are absorbed.
- It is not possible to even absorb the fundamentals, unless one is already living a moral life. It may sound hard to believe, but a defiled mind CANNOT absorb Buddha Dhamma.

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- **A defiled mind is like a dirty cloth, which cannot be made colorful by soaking in a dye. The cloth needs to be cleaned in order to absorb the dye and to become bright.**
- Therefore, the first step is to stay away from the worst of the *dasa akusala*, which are also called "*panca dushcharitha*" or "five immoral qualities": killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and alcoholism/drug use.

12. What is discussed in the *Kalama Sutta* is this very first step: Understanding that what one does not like to be done to oneself, another wouldn't like either. No one likes to be hurt and to put to misery. Any normal human should be able to comprehend that simple concept.

- That step needs to happen before one starts on the five precepts or moral conduct (*panca sīla*) which are deeper; see "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them."
- Only then one can start comprehending the deeper concepts like *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* the Four Noble Truths, and start on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."
- The ability to understand deeper concepts gets easier as one purifies one's mind.

13. Even though this website will be a useful resource, one should not start memorizing key concepts. First of all, it is not possible to do that. There is so much material that it is impossible to remember everything. But it is essential to read various aspects and try to "fill in gaps" in the "big picture."

- Of course, I myself do not remember all the details. But I do know where to refer to get any needed information. It is all in the *Tipiṭaka*, and the late Waharaka Thero has clarified the key terms for us, so that we can find our own way gradually.
- It becomes easier to analyze a given concept as one progresses. The more one grasps about a concept (not merely memorize the wording), the meanings (and how to use them in other situations) start to come flowing through.
- At some point, when one starts comprehending key concepts, one will be able to see connections among different aspects and start seeing the big picture or to make that big picture even more clear. That is when a *Sotāpanna Anugami* becomes a *Sotāpanna*.

More information with references to *suttā* at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

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2.12 Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) – How Does it Happen?

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Introduction – Unseen Mental Energy

1. Even some Buddhists are skeptical that merits can be "transferred" to other beings: It does not appear to be "scientific." However, Buddha Dhamma is far ahead of science, and this is another example. Even though the vocabulary is different, mechanisms of "energy transfer" (mental energy) are also explained in Dhamma.

- It is possible to transfer the merits of a good deed, and also many other versions of "mental energy."
- **The basic idea can be thought of as follows.** Suppose one has a lighted oil lamp, and many others have oil lamps that they are unable to light. Wouldn't it be better to let others use one's lamp's flame to light their lamps?
- Of course, it is not possible to "create" many oil lamps starting with one. But it is possible to make thousand other lamps by sharing the flame of one oil lamp. In the same way, the receiving person needs to have a essential ingredients to reap the benefits, as explained below. But since all those lamps will be useless without a way to light them, the person providing the light is doing an excellent service.
- One "giving merits" is doing *pattidāna* or "conditions" for good *kamma bija* (or *bīja*) to germinate. The receiver must have good *kamma bīja* or "root causes" and receive those *pattidāna* willingly, which is called "*puñña anumodanā*" which rhymes as "*puññānumodanā*." [***pattidāna*** :[nt.] transference of merit or share.]

What is *Anumodanā*?

2. *Anumodanā* means the receiving mind is becoming joyful with the merits it received ("*anu*" + "*odanā*," which rhymes as "*anumodanā*"). The giver is giving ("*dāna*") the "*paccayā*" or the auxiliary causes. (The common word is "*pratyaya*" but that is the incorrect Sanskrit word; the correct Pāli word is *paccayā*). It is *paccayā* that represents "*pati*" in "*pattidāna*" (pronounced, "*paththidāna*").

- Other than in direct giving (see below), the giver cannot make the receiving party "receive what is intended" unless the person receiving has a mindset that is attuned to receiving.
- It is the receiving person that is doing the "*puñña anumodanā*," i.e., gladly receiving the *pattidāna* of the giver and becoming joyful with the merits received. That is also called "*pattānumodanā*." [***pattānumodanā*** :[f.] transference of merit.]

Giving Can Be Mental Too – *Dāna* and *Pattidāna*

3. Giving and receiving can be done in many ways:

- The direct way of giving/receiving is when one gives money or something material. It is deducted from the giver's ledger and is added to the receiver's: Transfer is complete.
- When a teacher teaches a classroom full of kids, he/she is giving instructions the same way to all the kids. But how much a particular kid "receives" or comprehends depends on that specific kid's ability to receive.
- A radio/television station is broadcasting a program. But the reception of the program by a radio/TV depends on the quality of that receiving device. Furthermore, it has been "tuned" to the correct station.
- This transfer can happen instantaneously or with a time lag, because that mental energy is in the "*nāma loka*" and is accessible at any time; see, "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka," "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis," and "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

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4. Therefore, only in "direct giving," the amount received is the same as given. The amount received in the other other two "indirect giving" methods depends on the receiver. A similar mechanism is at work when one does a good deed and "transfers merits" to another person who may be far away.

- All intentions have *kammic* energy. You may remember that the Buddha said, "*Cetanā ahaṃ bhikkave kammaṃ vadāmi*," or "*Bhikkhus*, I say that intention is *kamma*." **And kamma is the vital potential energy for everything in this world. [***Cetanāhaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi. Cetayitvā kammaṃ karoti— kāyena vācāya manasā*. AN 63. Nibbedhikasutta**]**
- People very much underestimate the power of the human mind. Those who have experienced at least anāriya jhānā can sense at least a little bit about the power of the mind; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Introduction" and the two follow-up posts.
- Direct giving is "*dāna*"; indirect giving is "*pattidāna*." These are two of the ten meritorious deeds (*puñña kamma*); see, "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

Giving Merits – *Pattidāna*

5. One such mechanism is the *anantara-samanantara paccayā*; see "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." This is a universal law governing how *kamma* and *kamma vipāka* operate (*kamma niyama*). Many people pronounce "*niyama*" as "*niyaama*," but "*niyama*" is the Pāli or Sinhala word for "principle."

- Thus *kamma niyama* are the universal laws of *kamma* (like the law of gravitation).

6. Suppose one is "transferring merits" by sincerely saying that "May so and so receive merits from this good deed that I have done." One could do *metta bhāvanā* by saying, "May all beings be free from the suffering in the *apāyā*" or some version of it. In both cases, one is BROADCASTING one's intention.

- However, just because one is doing such a "giving," the intended recipient may not receive the benefits UNLESS the recipient has a matching mindset. It is just like the case of a radio/TV, where the receiving device need to be set to the "right frequency" to receive the signal.
- That is explained in the post, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." Don't be discouraged by those Pāli words. Sometimes, as in the case of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, it is best to use the Pāli words and to understand the meaning of them.

7. Transfer of merits is efficient when the giver and the receiver are together, and each is aware of the other's intention. For example, in Asian countries, it is customary to transfer merits to deceased relatives. Alms-giving to the *Saṅgha* and *pattidāna* offered to the deceased relative belong to this category.

- The deceased party can receive merits if it is in a state where it can receive such merits, for example, if it is in a *gandhabba* state.
- But if the deceased is reborn an animal or human, then it cannot receive full benefits, even though it may benefit to some extent.

Dhamma Dāna Is The Ultimate Giving

8. It is possible to "give Dhamma" or to "give *kusala*" too. The Buddha said, "*sabba dānaṃ Dhamma dānaṃ jināti*" or, "from all kinds of giving, Dhamma giving is the most meritorious."

- When the Buddha gave a discourse, those who were listening "received" Dhamma or *kusala* in varying degrees. Some became *Arahants*, some attained the *Sotāpanna* stage, etc during the discourse itself. But others did not achieve any stage but possibly still accumulated merits of *kusala*. *Kusala* ("*ku*" or "*kunu*" or "dirty"+"*sala*" or "remove", and thus shedding defiled thoughts from the mind). That means gaining wisdom, non-greed, non-hate AND discarding greed, hate, and delusion.
- During such a discourse, one mainly cultivate wisdom. That, in turn, results in discarding greed and hate.

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Importance of State of Mind

9. How much merits a given person receives depends on the state of mind of that person. It also depends on the intellectual level of that person. But it is not possible to quantify the intellectual level using modern standards of "book knowledge." It is not directly related to one's formal education. It is easier to give some examples.

- Ven. Ānanda was highly literate, a former prince, and had a fantastic memory power. He had the whole *sutta piṭaka* in his memory. And he was with the Buddha for many years but attained the *Arahanthood* only after the *Parinibbāna* (passing away) of the Buddha.
- Sunīta was of low-caste and was carrying buckets of feces when the Buddha met him. The Buddha with his supernormal powers saw that Sunīta was capable of comprehending Dhamma and asked Sunīta to become a *bhikkhu*. Ven. Sunīta became an *Arahant* within seven days.

10. A given person who may be receptive to "receiving Dhamma" when his mind is in a calm state. But the same person may not comprehend anything when his mind is excited, or distracted. That is the same as saying that the five hindrances are active; see, "Key to Calming the Mind – Five Hindrances." Therefore, it is IMPORTANT to have a correct mindset when learning Dhamma, whether by listening or reading.

- Therefore, try to read these posts at quiet times, when the mind is receptive, and NOT during the brief breaks at work when the mind is occupied or agitated.
- In Asian countries, that is a significant reason for going to the temple. At the temple, people make offering of flowers to the Buddha or the *Bodhi* tree. Such activities get the mind into a calm, peaceful state suitable for listening to a Dhamma discourse afterwards; see, "Buddhist Chanting" and "Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gathi."

Both *Anantara* and *Samanantara* Must be Optimized

11. Therefore, both *anantara* and *samanantara* must are optimized to make all these activities efficient.

- Of course if one is not learning the true Dhamma, *anantara* is not right, and one is wasting one's time.
- On the other hand, even with an excellent Dhamma delivery, the receiver's mind needs to be receptive to get full benefits. In other words, *samanantara* must be good too.

12. The following example may help in clarifying this concept: Having "good *kamma bīja*" is like having "good seeds." Suppose person X has potent seeds but does not have water and nutrients for those seeds to germinate and grow. Now, if person Y can provide X with water and nutrients, X can plant those seeds and get them to germinate and grow.

- Like that, some beings that have "good *kamma* seeds," but do not have the necessary conditions for them to bring the corresponding good *kamma vipāka*. When one is doing *pattidāna*, that is like donating water and nutrients in that simile (example).

13. A seed is the *anantara* or the cause *(kamma bīja*), and the receiving party must have that. However, unless that field is moist, has nutrients, and has exposure to sunlight, the seed cannot grow, i.e., the *samanantara* (or suitable conditions) must be there too.

- Therefore, the receiver can accept those conditions from the giver, and get those existing good *kamma bīja* to bring their good *vipāka*.
- It is only when both *anantara* and *samanantara* are optimized and matched that full benefits result. i.e., optimum transfer takes place. For those whose are familiar with the "resonance effect" in physics, it is quite similar to that. Only when the energy of photon matches an energy gap of an atom that the absorption of that photon by the atom is optimum.

Different Types of *Anumodanā*

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14. There is a type of "*anumodanā*" that happens in day-to-day life too. Suppose X starts a project to feed the hungry. Many poor people benefit from it. When Y sees that Y may become joyful seeing the hungry getting fed, and may thank X for doing it. This joy of heart, even if Y did not contribute, counts as "merits"; it becomes a good *kamma vipāka* for Y. That does not take any merits away from X.

- It is not possible for something to come out of nothing. So, where do those kinds of benefits come from? It comes from the mental energy of Y, who became joyful upon seeing the kind act. This is part of the mental energy (*javana*) that a human possesses; see, "Power of the Human Mind."
- That is true of immoral acts too. Suppose X is beating up Y. Person Z may be glad to see that and may encourage X to beat up Y. Now, suppose Y dies as a result of the beating. Then not only X, but Z also gets bad *kamma vipāka* for that immoral act.
- In our societies also, the same principle applies. If the police investigating the death of Y has evidence that Z also encouraged the killing, then Z as well as X, could be prosecuted.
- Thus our feelings (good or bad) play an important role in accumulating good and bad *kamma vipāka.*

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2.13 First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering

Most people believe that the First Noble Truth just says there is suffering. Some also think that it is possible to "remove" this existing suffering IN THIS LIFE by following extensive and elaborate meditation techniques.

1. The Buddha said, "My Dhamma has not been known in this world. It is something people have never heard of previously." So we should carefully examine to see what is really new about the suffering that he talked about.

- What is new about knowing that there is suffering around us? Everybody knows that there is suffering with old age, diseases, poverty, etc.
- And it is possible to REMOVE existing suffering by doing meditation? For example, if one has come down with a disease, can one overcome that by doing meditation? If someone is getting old and is feeling the pains and aches of old age, can that be PERMANENTLY removed by doing meditation? Even though some issues can be handled due to special reasons, in most cases we CANNOT change such EFFECTS or end results.

2. Let us discuss these two points one at a time.

3. Let us first see whether it is possible to REMOVE the existing suffering.

- For example, if someone has aches and pains due to old age, it is not possible to get rid of them other than to use medications or therapy to lessen the pain and manage it. If someone gets cancer, it is normally not possible to get rid of it by meditation. It may be handled by medication. Even the Buddha had pains and aches due to old age, and had a severe stomach ache at the end.
- In the context of that last sentence, It must be noted that there are two types of *vedanā* (feelings): those due to *kamma vipāka* and those due to *saṅkhāra* (attachment to sensual pleasures), and an *Arahant* gets rid of only the second kind until the *Parinibbāna* (death); see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."
- In fact, it may not even be possible to do meditation under any of such conditions. Even someone who has developed *jhānā*, may not be able to get into *jhānā* if the pains are too distracting.
- The purpose behind Buddhist meditation is to contemplate on the true nature of the world and find the CAUSES of such suffering, so that those causes can be stopped and FUTURE suffering can be stopped.
- It is true that one can get a relief from day-to-day stresses by doing different kinds of meditation. And it is good to do them. But such practices were there even before the Buddha. There was no need for a Buddha to reveal to the world that one could get some "calming down" by doing breath meditation or *kasina* meditation.
- In a way, such "*samatha*" meditations are comparable to taking an aspirin for a headache. One can get relief in the short term but it is temporary. But the problem that the Buddha addressed involved a much longer time scale, and will lead to a *nirāmisa sukha* that is permanent.

4. So, what was the "never heard truth about suffering" that the Buddha revealed to the world? In short it is the "suffering that is hidden in sense pleasures; the suffering that WILL ARISE in future lives."

- Let us take an example to get a simple version of this "new idea."
- When a fish bites the bait, it does not see the suffering hidden in that action. Looking from the ground we can see the whole picture and we know what is going to happen to the fish if it bites the bait. But the fish is unable to see that whole picture, and thus does not see the hidden suffering. It only sees a delicious bit of food.
- In the same way, if we do not know about the wider world of 31 realms (with the suffering-laden four lowest realms), and that we have gone through unimaginable suffering in those realms in the past, we only focus on what is easily accessible to our six senses.

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- In order to really comprehend suffering through repeated rebirths, one needs to comprehend that most suffering is encountered in the 4 lowest realms (*apāyā*); see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- Thus, stopping suffering requires one to first stop the causes for rebirths in the *apāyā* by attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage of Nibbāna; see, "Nibbāna in the Big Picture."

5. **Seeing this hidden suffering is indeed difficult.** It is not possible to convey the whole message in one essay, but I will try to get across the main idea. One really needs to spend some time thinking through these issues. When the Buddha attained the Buddhahood, it said that he was worried whether he could convey this deep ideas to most people.

- Everything happens due to one or (usually) many causes. The famous Third Law of motion in physics says that every action has a reaction; and the First Law says that an object will not change its status unless a force acts on it. It is easy to see these "cause and effect" principles at work in mechanical objects. If something needs to be moved, it needs to be pushed or pulled. If a stone is thrown up, it must come down if there is gravity pulling it down.
- We seek pleasures that are highly visible. But if we gain such pleasures with immoral acts, the consequences of such immoral acts are not apparent. We can see a stone thrown up coming down, but we cannot see any bad consequences to the drug dealer who seems to be enjoying life.

6. The main problem in clearly seeing the "cause and effect of mind actions" is that the results of those actions have a time delay and that time delay itself is not predictable. In contrast, it is easy to predict what is going to happen with material things (moving an object, a vehicle, a rocket, etc). The success of physical sciences is due to this reason. Once the underlying laws are found (laws of gravity, laws of motion, electromagnetism, nuclear forces, quantum mechanics, etc), one has complete control.

- But the mind is very different. To begin with, no two minds work the same way. Under a given set of conditions, each mind will chose to act differently. With physical objects, that is not so; under a given set of conditions, what will happen can be predicted accurately.
- Effects of some actions (*kamma*) may not materialize in this life and sometimes it may come to fruition only in many lives down the road (but with accumulated interest).
- Even in this life, mind phenomena are complex: This is why economics is not a "real science." It involves how people act sometimes "irrationally" for perceived gains. No economic theory can precisely predict how a given stock market will perform.

7. When mechanical systems have time lags, those are predictable. We can set off a device to work in a certain way AT A CERTAIN TIME, and we know that it will happen at that time if all mechanical components work properly. Not so with the mind. When we act in a certain way, the RESULTS of those actions may not be manifested for many lives. This is a key point to contemplate on.

- But cause and effect is a nature's basic principle. **When something is done, it will lead to one or more effects.** In mind-related causes, the effects may take time, sometime a long time over many lives, to trigger the "corresponding effect."
- Thus it should be clear that "action and reaction" associated with mind effects REQUIRE the rebirth process. It is not readily apparent and is an essential part of the "previously unheard Dhamma" that the Buddha revealed to the world.
- **This "cause and effect" that involves the mind is the principle of *kamma* and *kamma vipāka* in Buddha Dhamma.**
- But unlike in Hinduism, *Kamma* is not deterministic, i.e., not all *kamma vipāka* have to come to fruition; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." All unspent *kamma vipāka* become null and void when an *Arahant* passes away.

8. The life we have as a human is a RESULT of a past good deed. The life of a dog or an ant is the result of a past deed by that sentient being.

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- And what happens to us in this life is a COMBINATION of what we have done in the past (*kamma vipāka*) AND what we do in this life.
- What happens to an animal is MOSTLY due to *kamma vipāka* from the past.
- The difference between a human and an animal is that the animal does not have much control over what is going to happen to it. But human birth is a special one: We have a higher level mind that CAN change the future to some extent, and with possible enormous consequences.

9. What can we change and what cannot be changed?

- We are born with a certain *kamma vipāka* built in. Our body features, major illnesses (such as cancer) are mostly, not completely, built-in. We can avoid many *kamma vipāka* by acting with mindfulness, i.e., by planning well, taking precautions, etc.
- But we CANNOT change the fact that we are going to get old and eventually die, no matter what we do. Our life a RESULT.
- What we CAN change are the CAUSES for future lives.
- Even though meditation cannot relieve us of most of the pre-determined suffering, proper meditation CAN provide temporary relief, as well as PERMANENTLY removing future suffering.

10. The second Noble Truth is describes those CAUSES that we need to work on. The root causes are greed, hate, and ignorance, but they need to be removed mainly via understanding the Three Characteristics (see #12 below) and also via removing our bad *sansāric* habits; see a series of posts starting with, "Habits, Goals, Character (Gathi)" to "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas."

11. The Third Noble Truth is about what can be achieved by systematically removing those causes. *Nirāmisa sukha* increases from the point of embarking on the Path, and has four levels of PERMANENT increases starting at the *Sotāpanna* stage and culminating at the Arahant stage; there are several posts starting with, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

12. And then Fourth Noble Truth is the way to attain *nirāmisa sukha* and then various stages of *Nibbāna*. *Nirāmisa sukha* starts when one lives a moral life (see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and follow-up posts). The root causes of immoral behavior are greed, hate, and ignorance. Ignorance can be reduced to the extent of attaining the Sotāpanna stage just via comprehending the Three Characteristics of "this world of 31 realms," i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations," and the follow-up posts. It is that powerful.

- Once one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one can find the rest of the way by oneself.

13. There are many different ways to describe and analyze what I summarized above. Different people can grasp Dhamma by looking at it from different angles. That is what I try to cover with sections like "Dhamma and Science", "Dhamma and Philosophy", and for those who like to dig deeper into Dhamma, the section on "Abhidhamma" which means "Higher or Deeper Dhamma."

- My goal is to provide a "wide view" that accommodates most people. Even though I cannot even begin to cover even a significant fraction of Buddha Dhamma, one does not need to understand "everything" even to attain the *Arahanthood*. The Buddha has said that one could attain all four stages of *Nibbāna* just via comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* at deeper and deeper levels. This is because with deeper understanding, one's mind automatically directs one in the right direction.
- Another reason that I try to cover many topics is to illustrate the point that Buddha Dhamma is a complete description of nature.

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2.14 Vinaya – The Nature Likes to be in Equillibrium

Our lives and existence are based on constantly getting into debt and then paying off debts. This latter is done by Nature whether we like it or not. When we steal, kill, lie, or do any of the *dasa akusala*, we get into debt, and the nature keeps track of that via *kammic* energy.

- We are reborn to pay debts. This is another way of looking at the cycle of rebirths. Nature will automatically make sure that the largest debts are paid off first; this is how the next existence (*bhava*) is determined.
- During a given lifetime, debts are paid off when suitable conditions appear; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."
- Nature is the final arbitrator. A criminal may be able to get away with a crime by hiring a good lawyer, but will have to pay for the crimes in the nature's court. Similarly, when we do something good, we will get the rewards regardless of whether we wish for anything in return or not. Most people do not realize this because of the time delay between the act (*kamma*) and its result (*kamma vipāka*).

1. When we do either a moral or an immoral act, that is done with an intention and has some energy associated with it. This is called *kammic* energy. That energy resides in the universe until spent or otherwise reduced by some means (this is related to quantum entanglement; see, "Quantum Entanglement – We are All Connected"). It is really the principle of energy conservation in physics.

- We can become indebted to a living being or to the "world as a whole."
- There were no *vinaya* rules in Buddha *sāsana* for about 20 years after the Buddha attained Enlightenment. When Buddha Dhamma started flourishing, unscrupulous people started becoming monks to live a comfortable life depending on the kindness of the devotees. The Buddha admonished them about the consequences of becoming indebted and started setting up the *vinaya* ("vi" + "naya", where "*naya*" in Pāli or Sinhala means debt) rules to rein in those people.

2. When there is an energy imbalance, nature tries to bring it to balance. For a given individual (in the conventional sense), i.e., a life stream (absolute sense), the biggest imbalances are settled first.

- Thus at death when *paṭisandhi* takes place, the biggest *kamma* seed with highest imbalance come into play, and releases that energy by initiating the next birth in the corresponding "*bhava*"; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein." Thus the next "*bhava*" is determined by the biggest *kammic* seed at the end of the current "*bhava*" (this is really a simple interpretation of a complex process).
- During a lifetime (*pavutti vipāka*), in addition to the energy content, the prevailing conditions also come into play for delivering *kamma vipāka* or the release of *kamma* seeds. This is why we can prevent many bad *kamma vipāka* from come to fruition by acting with *yoniso manasikara* or by "being mindful"; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- In both cases (*paṭisandhi* and *pavutti vipāka*), "matching conditions" plays a big role; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." For example, a seed does not germinate if it is in a dry place; it needs to be in the ground with water and sunlight in order to germinate.

3. Getting back to the issue of coming to equilibrium, a stone is in equilibrium when it stays on the ground. If we pick it up and throw it up it goes up because we gave it some energy. But now it is not in equilibrium, and it will fall down to find its equilibrium position on the ground. The only difference with *kammic* energy is that the kammic energy could be released much later; **it has to find suitable conditions to release that energy;** see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka," and "Paticca Samuppāda – Overview"; Thus the release of *kammic* energy is more akin to the process of germination of a seed; there is a time lag until suitable conditions appear.

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- A seed, when placed in the ground, germinates and becomes a tree by releasing the energy that is trapped in the seed. When the energy is all spent, the tree will die. Unless the tree itself made more seeds during its lifetime, that tree is the only "result" of that original seed.

4. Through numerous lives in the past we have accumulated innumerable number of both good and bad *kammic* energy packets, or *kamma bīja*, or *kamma* seeds and we keep producing them in this lifetime too; some are big and some are small (actually, those done beyond 91 *mahā kappas* have lost their energy; like everything else in this world, *kammic* energy is not permanent either). The small *kammic* seeds bring in results (*vipāka*) during any lifetime, and the really big ones (*kamma patha*) are the ones that determine "*bhava*" for a new life at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.

- Does that mean we have to remove all *kamma* seeds to stop rebirth, i.e., to attain Nibbāna? No. A new "*bhava*" is grasped at the "*upādāna paccayā bhavo*" step in the *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle; see "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda." If one has removed ignorance (*avijjā*) and understood the true nature of the world, then there is no "*taṇhā*" and thus there is no *upādāna* at the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step, and thus no "*bhava*," and no "*jāti*" or rebirth.
- However, in order to remove ignorance (*avijjā*), we have to purify our minds. For that we need to understand the true nature of "this world", i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. For that we need to get rid of the five hindrances (*panca nivarana*) that are covering our minds and not letting the mind comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. That is where the removal of bad *kamma* seeds and accumulation of good *kamma* seeds (i.e., doing good deeds and avoiding bad deeds) become important; of course "deeds" here include actions, speech, and thoughts.

5. The point is that every time we do a moral or an immoral act we generate a *kamma* seed that embeds the "*javana* power" of the thought that led to the act; see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power." The *kammic* power associated with a moral act can be considered surplus in one's "account" that can be used to enjoy things in life; an immoral act leads to a debt, i.e., it appears on the negative side of the ledger. If one does an immoral act against another living being, then one be in debt to that being until it is paid off; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

6. The nature tries to keep things in balance: the good *kamma* bring good results and bad *kamma* brings bad results when the nature implements this balancing act. In both cases, we can take advantage of this by arranging conditions for good *kamma* seeds to germinate and not letting bad *kamma* seeds to germinate; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." The development of good habits and getting rid of bad habits go along with this process; see, "Habits and Goals," and "Sansaric Habits and Āsavas." Please review these links carefully. All these tie up together.

7. Thus we are bound to this *saṃsāra* or the cycle of rebirths because we do things to make an "imbalance" either via moral or immoral deeds: good deeds lead to good rebirths and bad one to bad rebirths. They both extend the *sansāric* journey. However, it is essential to engage in moral deeds in order to avoid birth in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*), where the suffering is great AND also there is no opportunity to moral deeds. Thus one MUST do moral deeds until one attains *Nibbāna*.

- Moral deeds WILL have their consequences (they add up in the "plus side of the ledger"), whether or not one wishes for anything in return, i.e., the nature will pay back. However, if one does a moral deed AND wishes for something other than *Nibbāna*, then that is done with greed, and thus one is simultaneously doing an immoral act.
- Only an *Arahant* does not do any moral or immoral deeds that have *kammic* consequences that are potent enough to bring rebirth. All an *Arahant* does is low-level *saṅkhāra* or "*kriya*" (like walking and talking), and is "in equilibrium" with nature.

8. When one goes "off the equilibrium", greed and hate intensify and one is likely do immoral acts to become indebted. On the other hand, when one is in some kind of a *samādhi*, the mind is close to equilibrium, and thus greed and hate are under control. If one attains *rūpāvacara* and then *arūpāvacara jhānā* then the mind gets even more closer to equilibrium. *Samādhi* attains perfection when one becomes an *Arahant*.

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- This is why one needs to stay away from doing immoral acts, if one wants to get results in meditation. A purified mind can easily get to *samādhi*; see, "The Basics in Meditation."
- One becomes indebted via greed, hate, or ignorance (here ignorance means not knowing the true nature of the world or *anicca, dukkha, anatta*); thus there is *lobha vinaya, dosa vinaya,* and *moha vinaya*.

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III Key Dhamma Concepts

Within thousand years of the Buddha's *Parinibbāna* (passing away), certain key concepts became distorted. For many years, I had nagging questions on the compatibility of certain concepts that are widely published in "Buddhist literature", including Theravāda literature. For example, explanations of *anicca, anatta, sunyata*, did not make sense to me. Furthermore, I got lost in a myriad of explanations for terms like *saṅkhāra*; there are three different meanings for that word in standard Theravāda texts.

When I started listening to the *desanās* by Waharaka Thero in Sri Lanka, it became immediately apparent to me that "this was the true Dhamma"; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero." Furthermore, concepts like *saṃsāra, sammā, saṅkhāra* became crystal clear while I was just listening. I hope I will be able to convey this information as clearly below.

This main section has the following sub-sections:

- **Subsection:** San (Explanation of many key Pāli words)
  - What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)
  - Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka
  - Saṅkhāra – Life is a Bundle of Saṅkhāra
  - Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra
  - Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra
- **Subsection:** Nibbāna
  - How to Taste Nibbāna
  - Nirāmisa Sukha
  - Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?
  - The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna
  - What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)
  - Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?
  - Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts
  - Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World
- **Subsection:** Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta
  - Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations
  - The Way to Nibbāna – Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero
  - Anicca – True Meaning
    - Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like
    - Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction
    - Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things
    - Anicca – The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")
    - How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā

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- How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – II
- If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?

▪ Anattā – A Systematic Analysis
- Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma
- Anatta – No Refuge in This World
- Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link
- Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?
- Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – No "Unchanging Self"

▪ Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings
▪ Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttā
▪ Tilakkhaṇa – English Discourses
▪ Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa
- Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa
- Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views
- Associations (Sevana) – A Root Cause of Wrong Views

▪ Why are Tilakkhaṇa not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?
▪ Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment
▪ Types of Bodies in 31 Realms – Connection to Jhāna
▪ Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma
▪

○ **Subsection:** Gati, Bhava, and Jāti
▪ Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)
▪ Gati and Bhava – Many Varieties
▪ Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control
▪ Memory, Brain, Mind, Nāma Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka
▪ Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein
▪ Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna
▪ Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma

○ **Subsection:** Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Taṇhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)
▪ Kāma Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā
▪ Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance
▪ Lobha, Raga and Kamaccanda, Kamaraga

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- Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā
- Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)
- Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya
- What is Avijjā (Ignorance)?
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Indriya and Āyatana – Big Difference
- Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paṭicca Samuppāda
- Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra
- Kāmaccandha and Icca – Being Blinded by Cravings

○ **Subsection:** The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)

- Five Aggregates – Introduction
- Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha
- Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa
- Memory Records – Critical Part of Five Aggregates
- Pañca Upādānakkhandhā – Introduction
- Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa
  - Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa – Introduction
  - Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections
  - "Me" and "Mine" – The Root Cause of Suffering
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Deeper Analyses:

- Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates – A Misinterpreted Concept
- Pañcaupādānakkhandha – It is All Mental

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3.1 San

- What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)
- Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka
- Saṅkhāra – Life is a Bundle of Saṅkhāra
- Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra
- Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra

3.1.1 What is "Saŋ"? Meaning of Saŋsāra (or Saṃsāra)

Revised May 17, 2018; revised December 18, 2018; February 16, 2020

1. A key Pāli word, the meaning of which has been hidden for thousands of years, is "*saŋ*" (pronounced like son). "*Saŋ*" is basically the term for "good and bad things we acquire" through our moral/immoral deeds.

- By understanding this root word, one can easily see the meanings of many important Pāli words, without looking for roots in Sanskrit.

2. There is a reason for calling what we "acquire or add" as "*saŋ*." In Pāli and Sinhala, the word for numbers is "*saṅkhyā*," and *saṅkhyā* = "*saŋ*" + "*khyā*," meaning add and subtract. Addition and subtraction involve *saṅkhyā*. [***saṅkhyā*** : [f.] enumeration; calculation; a number; definition.]

- From this, "*saŋ*" gives the idea of "acquiring or adding."
- In the same way, "*khyā*" implies "removal or subtraction."

3. Therefore "*saŋ*" is used to indicates things we do to lengthen our *saṃsāric* (or *saŋsāric*) journey. See below for examples.

- These "*saŋ*" are nothing else but *dasa akusala* (that lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*) and also *puñña kamma* (that lead to rebirths in the "good realms"); see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."
- One may wonder why "saŋ" includes moral deeds or *puñña kamma*. That is because they also lead to rebirths ("add" to *saṃsāric* journey).
- However, one MUST do *puñña kamma* to avoid rebirth in the *apāyā*.

4. In the same way "*Khyā*" or "*Khaya*" indicate the shortening of the *saṃsāric* journey.

- **Removal of defilements (*rāga, dosa, moha*) lead to *Nibbāna*. Thus *Nibbāna* is "*rāgakkhaya*," "*dosakkhaya*," and "*mohakkhaya*."**
- Those three words have roots in "*khaya*" or "subtraction or removal." For example, *rāgakkhaya* comes from "*rāga*" + "*khaya*," which combined to pronounce as *rāgakkhaya.*
- Thus it is quite clear that *rāgakkhaya* means "removing *rāga.*" Same for "*dosakkhaya*," and "*mohakkhaya*." Removal of *rāga, dosa,* and *moha* lead to *Nibbāna.*

5. Just by grasping these key ideas, it is possible to understand the roots of many common words, such as *saṅkhāra, saṃsāra, saññā, sammā*, etc. Let us analyze some of these words.

- We "add to" our rebirth process when we do "*saŋ*." The Pali word for "doing" is "*khāra*" (Sinhala word is "*kāra*" or කාර). That is the origin of the word "*saṅkhāra*" ("*saŋ*" + "*khāra*"); the Sinhala word is *saṅkhāra* or සංකාර).

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6. From *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, all sufferings start with, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." Thus, when one gets rid of *avijjā* completely, all *saṅkhāra* are stopped and one attains *Nibbāna*. That is accomplished in the *Arahant* stage.

- From the WebLink: suttacentral: *Manasikāra Sutta* (AN 11.8): "'*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ, yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti.*"
- **Translated:** "It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all *saṅkhāra*, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; *Nibbāna*." So, it is quite clear that by stopping all *saṅkhāra* one attains *Nibbāna.*

7. However, a distinction needs to be made between *saṅkhāra* and *abhisaṅkhāra*. The prefix "*abhi*" means "stronger" or "coarse."

- *Saṅkhāra* involves EVERYTHING that we do to live in "this world" of 31 realms; these include breathing, walking, eating, pretty much everything. Even an *Arahant* has to be engaged in *saṅkhāra* until *Parinibbāna* or death.
- *Saṅkhāra* become *abhisaṅkhāra* by engaging in the "wheeling process"; see, "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?." **The *saṃsāric* process or the rebirth process is fueled by *abhisaṅkhāra*.**

8. The bad things we acquire – with *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hate), *moha* (delusion) – contribute to rebirth in the lower four realms; these are ***apuññābhisaṅkhāra*** (or ***apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*)**. Here "*apuñña*" means "immoral."

- The good things we acquire via *alobha, adosa, amoha* help gain rebirth in humān realm and above; these are ***puññābhisaṅkhāra*** (or ***puñña abhisaṅkhāra*)**. Here "*puñña*" means "moral."
- Thus, both kinds contribute to lengthening the rebirth process, but we DO need to do *puññābhisaṅkhāra* for two reasons: (i) it prevents us from doing bad things, (ii) done with right intention, it will help purify our minds, i.e., *puñña kamma* can become *kusala kamma*; see #18 below.

9. Another important term "***sammā***" which comes from "***saŋ***" + "***mā***," which means "to become free of ***saŋ***." Here "*mā*," means "becomes free of." For example:

- "***Mā*** *hoti jati, jati*," means "may I be free of repeated birth."
- "***mā*** *me bāla samāgamo*" means "may I be free of association with those who are ignorant of Dhammā."

10. The keyword *sandiṭṭhiko* comes from *saŋ* + *diṭṭhi* (meaning vision), i.e. ability to see "*saŋ*" or defilement.

- One becomes *sandiṭṭhiko* (one who is able to see "*saŋ*" clearly) at the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage. Most texts define *sandiṭṭhiko* with inconsistent words like self-evident, immediately apparent, visible here and now, etc.

11. Another very important word is *saññā* which come from *saŋ* + *ñā* (meaning knowing) = knowing or understanding "*saŋ*." This actually happens when one attains *Nibbāna*. Until then one has a distorted perception (*saññā*) is clouded or distorted. See, "Saññā – What It Really Means."

- When we see people, for example, we identify them according to our familiarity with them or based on our perceptions of them. We do not "see" the true nature of anything until *Nibbāna* is attained. Thus it is said that until we attain *Nibbāna*, we have distorted (*vipallāsa*, Sinhala is *vipareetha*) *saññā*.
- Don't worry about some of these deeper meanings, if you are not familiar with them. At least one is able to see a connection to the root word "*saŋ*."

12. *Saṃvara* (or *saŋvara*) = *saŋ* + *vara*, where *vara* means "remove." Therefore, *saṃvara* means removing "*saŋ*" via moral behavior, also called "*sīla*."

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- "*Yaṃ samādānaṃ taṃ vataṃ. Saṃvaraṭṭhena sīlaṃ*" means just trying to live by set precepts would not work. Moral behavior comes automatically upon one becoming a *Saṇdiṭṭhiko* (a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* or a *Sotāpanna*.)
- *Saṃvara sīla* will be automatically enforced 24 hours a day, not just on specific days. That is because it comes naturally, with understanding.
- On the other hand, "*Yam samādanaṃ taṃ vataṃ*", means observing the five precepts or eight precepts on specific days is just a ritual, or "*vata*." Such rituals are good starting points but will be "upgraded to" *Saṃvara sīla* when one gains wisdom (*paññā*).

13. Another keyword is *saṃsāra* or *saŋsāra* which means "rebirth process."

- That, of course, comes from *saŋ* + *sāra,* where "*sāra*" means fruitful. We do "*saŋ*" willingly because we perceive them to be good ("*sāra*"). Then we get trapped in the rebirth process.
- Note that sometimes it is natural to pronounce with the "m" sound; that is the reason for writing is as "*saṃsāra*." See more examples in #15 below.
- We have the wrong perception that "*saŋ*" are good and fruitful. Thus one continues in the long rebirth process by doing *saṅkhāra* (and especially *abhisaṅkhāra*) with the wrong perception that those are fruitful.

14. A nice example to illustrate the significance of "*saŋ*", is to examine the verse that Ven. Assaji delivered to Upatissa (the lay name of Ven. Sariputta, who was a chief disciple of the Buddha):

"*Ye dhammā hetupabbavā, Tesaṃ* (*te saṃ*) *hetuṃ Tathāgato āha, Tesañca* (*te saṃ ca*) *yo nirodho, Evaṃ vādī mahāsamaṇo*"

Te = those, *hetu* = cause, *pabbava* = *pa* + *bhava* or "repeated birth" (see, "Pabhassāra Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga," *nirodha* = *nir*+*udā* = stop from arising.

- The translation is now crystal clear:

"All *dhammā* that give rise to the rebirth process arise due to causes arising from the "*saŋ*"s: *rāga, dosa, moha*. The Buddha has shown how to eliminate those "*saŋ*"s and thus stop such *dhammā* from arising"

- "*Dhammā*" here does not mean Buddha Dhammā, but *dhammā* in general; see, "What are Dhammā? – A Deeper Analysis."

15. Knowing the correct meaning of such terms leads to a clear understanding of many terms:

- *Sangāyanā* = *saŋ* + *gāyanā* (meaning recite)= recite and categorize "*saŋ*" (and ways to remove them) in organizing Dhammā for passing down to future generations. The first *Sangāyanā* took place just three months after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha.
- *Saṃyutta Nikāya* of the *Tipiṭaka* contains suttā that explain "*saŋ*": "*saŋ*" + "*yutta*", with "*yutta*" meaning "connected with" (it rhymes as "saṃyutta"). Note that most English translations refer to *Saṃyutta Nikāya* as "Connected Discourses, but do not say connected to what.
- *Sanvega (or "samvega")* = *saŋ* + *vega* (meaning speed) = forceful, strong impulses due to "*saŋ*."
- *Sanyoga* (or "*samyoga*") = *saŋ* + *yoga* (meaning bond) = bound together via "*saŋ*."
- *Sansindheema* = *saŋ* + *sindheema* (meaning evaporate, remove) = removing *saŋ*, for example, via the seven steps described in the *Sabbāsava Sutta*. This leads to *nirāmisa sukha* or *Nibbānic bliss*.
- *Sansun* = *saŋ* + *sun* (meaning destroy) = with the removal of "*saŋ*" ("sun" rhymes like soup) one's mind becomes calm and serene.
- *Sancetanā* = *saŋ* + *cetanā* = defiled intentions.
- *Samphassa* = *saŋ* + *phassa* = defiled sense contact.

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Over 70 Pāli words with the "*saŋ*" root are given at "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots."

16. We will encounter many such instances, where just by knowing what "*saŋ*" is, one could immediately grasp the meaning of a certain verse. Most of these terms are easily understood in the Sinhala language.

- Contrary to popular belief, it is NOT Sanskrit that is closely related to the *māgadhi* language that the Buddha spoke, it is Sinhala (or Sinhalese) that is closely related to *māgadhi* (*māgadhi*= "*maga*" + "*adhi*" = Noble path).

17. The *Tipiṭaka* is in Pāli with Sinhala script (Pāli does not have its own alphabet). Pāli is a version of *māgadhi* suitable for writing down oral discourses in summary form suitable for transmission; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma." More posts on that at, "Historical Background."

- Many Pāli words have complex meanings and need to be explained in detail. That is the reason for many commentaries. However, most early commentaries no longer exist and those recent ones have many errors; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- A good example is the key Pāli word "*anicca*." That word got confused with "*anitya*," which is a Sanskrit word. That Sanskrit word does mean "impermanence," but the Pāli word "*anicca*" has a very different meaning.
- The actual meaning of *anicca* becomes clear when one realizes that the Pāli word "*icca*" (pronounced "ichcha") means "this is what I like." Thus *anicca* has the opposite meaning ("*na*" + "*icca*") or "cannot keep it the way I like"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- Pāli words are written not with "Standard English" but with "*Tipitaka* English." See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."

18. One's tendency (i.e., *gati*) to do *dasa akusala* gets one bound to this world of 31 realms. Until one removes such "bad *gati*," one will have the following associated characteristics: *āsava, anusaya, saṃyojana*, etc; see , "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."

- **As long as one has any type of *gati, āsava, anusaya, saṃyojana,* one has the ability to pile up more "*saŋ*" or to do *dasa akusala.***
- Once one removes the strongest of the *dasa akusala* (and especially the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*), one will be able to grasp the *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Then one's *puñña kamma* will become *kusala kamma*, leading to the four stages of *Nibbāna*. This is a subtle point, but is explained in simple terms in the post, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."
- Some *saṅkhāra* arise from with *alobha*, *adosa*, or *amoha* as a root cause; see, "Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda." The other types of *saṅkhāra* arise from *avijjā* (ignorance), and have *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hatred), or *moha* (delusion) as a root cause; see, "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."

3.1.2 Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka

Revised May 12, 2016; February 23, 2019

There is much confusion about these words. These are key Dhamma concepts, and one needs to sort them out in order to really understand other key concepts like rebirth and *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Please read the post, "What is "San"? – Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)" before reading this post.

Saṅkhāra (what we accumulate)

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1. "*Punnābhi saṅkhāra, apuññābhi saṅkhāra, ānenjābhi saṅkhāra ayan vuccathi avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." This is how the short verse of "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" in *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* is explained in detail.

- Thus only *abhisaṅkhāra* ("*abhi*" means higher or stronger), those *saṅkhāra* done with *avijjā*, lead to the rebirth process.
- Note that *puññābhi saṅkhāra* is *puñña+abhisaṅkhāra*, and similarly the other two are also *abhisaṅkhāra*. Also, "*apuñña*" means immoral," *puñña*" means moral, and "*anenja*" means "higher *jhānic*." All three modes lead to rebirth in one of the 31 realms (lowest 4 realms with *apuññābhi saṅkhāra*, realms 5 through 27 with *puññābhi saṅkhāra*, and realms 28 through 31 with *annejabhi saṅkhāra*, respectively).
- Thus any kind of ***abhisaṅkhāra*** is done with ignorance (*avijjā* or not knowing the real characteristics of this world of 31 realms: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*).
- However, we will see below that we do need to accumulate *puññābhi saṅkhāra* in a strategical way, mainly to avoid rebirth in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms) until we attain *Nibbāna*.

2. As we saw above, "*san*" is what one acquires when one does anything with *sañcetanā ("san" + "cetanā")*. *Saṅkhāra (san+kāra)* is simply actions that lead to acquiring "*san*." **However, it is only "*abhisaṅkhāra*" or *saṅkhāra* that arise through *avijjā* that can lead to rebirth.** There is a difference between *saṅkhāra* and *abhisaṅkhāra*: [***kāra***, （m. ）, deed； service； act of homage]

- When deeds are done to live in this world, one has to do *saṅkhāra*. They become *abhisaṅkhāra* when those are done with greed, hate, and/or ignorance. *Saṅkhāra* become *abhisaṅkhāra* when one starts generating further thoughts ("wheeling process") about the sense experiences (pictures, sounds, tastes, etc) ; see #9 on "Nibbāna – Is It Difficult to Understand?."
- Thus an *Arahant* does *saṅkhāra* to live; even breathing is *kāya saṅkhāra*. But an *Arahant* has stopped the "wheeling process" or form an attachment to what is seen, heard, etc. It is that "wheeling process", which is detailed in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* section that leads to *abhisaṅkhāra*.
- When those *saṅkhāra* become strong, they are called "*abhisaṅkhāra*" or "strong *saṅkhāra*" that can lead to rebirths.

3. *Abhisaṅkhāra* are three kinds as mentioned above:

- There are actions that lead to bad consequences during life and also to bad rebirths in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*). These are "*apuññābhi saṅkhāra*" or immoral deeds: *apuññā abhi saṅkhāra*..
- Actions that lead to good consequences in life and also to good rebirths are called "*puññābhi saṅkhāra*" or meritorious deeds; these lead to birth in good realms (human, *deva*, and the *rūpa lokas*), thus avoiding rebirth in bad realms where one could get trapped for many eons. Thus it is important to accumulate *puññābhi saṅkhāra: puññā abhi saṅkhāra*.
- When one cultivates "*lokiya jhānā*" or mundane higher meditative states (*arūpa jhāna* leading to rebirth in the highest four *arūpa loka* realms), via breath meditation for example, one is able to be reborn in the four higher Brahma worlds. These also prolong *saṃsāra*, and are called "*ānenjābhi saṅkhāra*": *ānenja abhi saṅkhāra*.
- It is interesting to note that "*āneṇja*" means "no more rebirths" and thus "permanent": the ancient *yogis* (including Alara Kalama and Uddakarama Putta) thought these realms have infinite lifetimes and equated the births there to the "ultimate release." Of course, the Buddha found out that those also have finite lifetimes, even though extremely long, lasting eons (billions of years).
- Here those *yogis* can temporarily suppress all desires for *kāma loka* or *rūpa loka* existences. However, since they had not comprehended the *anicca* nature, they still have "hidden *avijjā*" or "*avijjā anusaya*."

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4. Therefore, it is easy to remember *abhisaṅkhāra* as those actions that lead to prolonging *saṃsāra* (or *saṃsāra*), the cycle of rebirths. There is a "latent energy" that is produced by each such action (*abhisaṅkhāra*) that will give fruits at a later time.

- Such "actions" can be done via the mind, speech, or the body; these lead to *mano saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra, and kāya saṅkhāra* respectively. The "defiled actions" are *abhisaṅkhāra*.

5. Does this mean one should not do meritorious deeds (with *puññābhisaṅkhāra*) because those also prolong *saṃsāra*? No. The Buddha emphasized that one should not shy away from doing meritorious deeds.

- There is a way to do meritorious deeds without prolonging *saṃsāra*, and that is detailed in the **"Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda," an important part of the Buddha's *Paṭicca samuppāda* doctrine that has been hidden for thousands of years.** But one needs to stay away from wishing for "things in return" for such meritorious deeds as much as possible, because such thoughts are based on **greed**.
- In the Abhidhamma language, one should generate "*ñāṇa sampayutta, somamnassa sahagata citta*" (thoughts generated with wisdom and joy), which is the highest moral (*sobhana*) citta. Here wisdom means comprehension of the true nature; it starts with getting rid of 10 *micchā diṭṭhi* and then further grows as one understands *anicca, dukkha, anatta* to higher levels. Wisdom culminates at the *Arahant* stage.
- Any good deed will have its good consequences whether one wishes or not. By wishing for "material things" or "*jhānic* pleasures" one turns a meritorious action to either a less potent "*ñāṇa vippayutta*" (devoid of wisdom) moral *citta* or even an *apuññābhi saṅkhāra*. We will discuss that below.

Kamma (Actions to Prolong *Saṃsāra*)

Kammic energy is generated when one turns *saṅkhāra* to *abhisaṅkhāra* by the "wheeling process"; see above. For example, when one sees an object, that is just *saṅkhāra* due to a *kamma vipāka*. However, if one then starts thinking about how good it is, or think about how to acquire it, then it becomes *abhisaṅkhāra*; **here one now has INTENTIONS about that object, one is hoping to get something.**

- That is why the Buddha said, "*cetana ham Bhikkhave kamman vadami*," i.e., "I say that intention is *kamma*."
- So it is important to remember that *kamma* is intention, and even though it can be done by the mind, speech, or the body, all those have their root in the mind. We cannot say anything or do anything without a thought in the mind to do so (see the Abhidhamma section for details).
- For example, the intention to go for a walk is a *kamma* that does not have any power to generate a good or bad *vipāka* in the future. That *kamma* will only get that task done.

Thus the key to *Nibbāna* is to stop valuing and thinking about *kāma āsvada* [*kāma assāda*] (sense pleasures; *āsvada* in Sinhala). This cannot happen until one sees the fruitlessness of sense pleasures in the long run (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*); see, the section "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana" under *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. [***assāda***: [m.] "mind-made pleasures"; taste; enjoyment; satisfaction.]

Kamma Bīja (*Kamma* Seeds) or *Kamma Bhava*

When a kamma (*abhisaṅkhāra*) is committed, the *kammic* potential of that *kamma* is deposited in a *kamma bīja* (*kamma* seed); *kamma* seed is NOT a physical entity, it is an "energy" or "potential" to bring about an effect in the future. It can also be called a "*kamma bhava*."

- A *kamma* seed can be compared to a normal seed, say for example, a seed of an apple tree. The potential to bring about a fully grown apple tree is in the apple seed. However, if the seed is kept in a dry

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place with no contact with soil, it does not get to germinate. It will germinate if placed under soil and fed with water and nutrients. Then it can grow to an apple tree which can yield thousand more seeds.

- **Similarly, a *kamma* seed has the POTENTIAL to germinate or come to fruition if suitable conditions appear; but a *kamma* seed is an energy lying below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.** It can then yield results with an impact that is many times the impact of the original deed (this holds true for both good and bad); the results are the *kamma vipāka*; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- **It is also possible to remove many of one's bad *kamma* seeds.** When we acquire a "bad *kamma* seed" we get indebted to another being. Just like one can be debt-free by paying off existing loans, one can "pay back" old debts that have been accumulated in the cycle of rebirths by "transferring merits" when one does good deeds, and also by doing the *Ariya metta bhāvanā;* see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana)- How Does that Happen?" and "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."

Nothing in this world is permanent (but that impermanence is not *anicca*); *kammic* energy in a *kamma* seed also eventually loses its power, and the "staying power" depends on the strength of the particular *kamma*. For example, those seed corresponding to "*anantariya akusala kamma*" such as killing one's parents or an *Arahant*, will bring fruits without delay (i.e., in the very next birth) before they lose their power.

Kamma Vipāka (Results of a *Kamma* Seed or *Kamma Bhava*)

So it is important to distinguish between *kamma* and *kamma vipāka*: the first is the action, second is the consequence. When someone laments "this is my *kamma*" when he/she faces a bad situation, what is really meant is that this happens "because of what I had done in the past." It is a *kamma vipāka*.

When one does something good or bad that *kammic* energy is deposited as a *kamma bīja* (seed), which is also called a *kamma bhava*. Then that *kammic* energy can give rise to *kamma vipāka* in the future when suitable conditions materialize. There are two ways to avoid *kamma vipāka*:

- Just like a seed will not germinate until the right conditions appear (soil, water, sunlight), *kamma vipāka* cannot materialize until suitable conditions appear. Thus by acting mindfully (not getting into "bad situations") one can avoid them; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."
- Most importantly, we can remove many *kamma* seeds by doing *metta bhāvanā*. When we acquire a bad *kamma* seed we become indebted to another being; we can get rid of that *kamma* seed by paying off that debt. The best way to do that is to ask for forgiveness and transfer merits of one's good deeds to all beings (since we have become indebted to uncountable number of beings); see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

Kamma vipāka (from the germination of seeds) lead to two main consequences:

- They can lead to consequences during a lifetime (either the present or a future life). These are called **"*pavutti kamma bhava*."**
- Some strong *kamma vipāka* give rise to new existence (in the rebirth process). These are called **"*uppatthi kamma bhava*."**

In either case, *kamma vipāka* are NOT deterministic. Both types can be reduced in strength or even be made ineffective. This can be done via several ways:

- When one becomes an *Arahant*, since there is no more rebirth, all *kamma* seeds that do not get to come to fruition before the death of an *Arahant* become ineffective in producing a rebirth: Because an *Arahant* has removed *avijjā*, the "*akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycle" becomes ineffective and thus "*bhava paccayā jāti*" does not get to initiate a new birth.
- However, even an *Arahant* is subjected to any *kamma vipāka* that get a chance to emerge during the current life, especially the strong ones. Even the Buddha suffered from physical pains during the last years of his life. Even if one transfers merits to other beings (as *Arahants* do), **if the other being cannot**

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accept those merits, then those debts do not get paid off; see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How Does it Happen?." Thus even the Buddha had a few "unpaid debts" left.

- We all have done innumerable *kamma* in this long *saṃsāra*. Thus many *kamma* seeds are waiting to "bear fruit" under right conditions. This is a key point one really needs to digest. Just like a seed can lay dormant for long times, and start germinating only under the right conditions (soil, water), a *kamma vipāka* bears fruit only when the conditions become right.
- **Thus most *kamma vipāka* can be suppressed and avoided (not letting them germinate) by acting with mindfulness (*yoniso manasikara*).** This is where a calm mind helps. An agitated mind is not able to make rational decisions. See, "Key to Calming the Mind." As mentioned there, working on the Five Hindrances (*panca nivarana*), that covers a mind, is important.

How to do Meritorious Deeds without Accumulating *Abhisaṅkhāra*

Most people, even born Buddhists, do not get this right. They think *Nibbāna* can be attained by just doing meritorious deeds. Here are some key points to consider:

1. One definitely needs to avoid *apuññābhi saṅkhāra* (unmeritorious deeds) that will lead to bad life events and/or bad rebirths, i.e., the four lower realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of the Dhamma." They are "*akusala*" by definition, but ones of the worst kind; these are called "*pāpa*" in Pāli and Sinhala and "*paw*" (rhymes like "cow") in Sinhala. This is what one needs to avoid in leading a moral life; see, "Moral Living and Fundamentals."

2. *Punnābhi saṅkhāra* (meritorious deeds) may be accompanied by *apuññābhi saṅkhāra* if one's intention is not good. If one does a good deed AND wishes for something in return, that wishing is done with greed. Any good deed WILL produced good results whether one wishes or not. They actually lead to good life events and good rebirths (at or above human realm). **Thus *puññābhi saṅkhāra* can help in pursuing *Nibbāna*, and should be done without greedy intentions. A *Sotāpanna* automatically does meritorious deeds with such understanding; we will discuss this in the "Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."** Thus the *Aryan* way is to do a good deed and share the merits of that deed with all beings, instead of wishing for something in return.

- Thus one needs to be careful here because one may be acquiring *apuññābhi saṅkhāra* at the same time. This is a bit complex and is best illustrated with an example. Suppose one donates a meal to a hungry person. That act is inherently one that will produce a good outcome. However, if the person "makes a wish" such as "may I get delicious foods in the future because of this good deed", that is a greedy thought, a greedy intention (*cetana*). Thus while this does not negate the good deed, it also could produce ANOTHER *kamma vipāka* leading to bad life events.
- This pitfall can be avoided by doing the good deed with a pure intention, that is not associated with greed, hate, or ignorance. One gives a meal to hungry person out of compassion; to quench the hunger. That is all. Here one does not lose any possible benefits of the act.
- When one starts comprehending *anicca* (that one cannot maintain anything to one's satisfaction over the long run), one AUTOMATICALLY stops wishing for "good things."
- Furthermore, one can reap more benefits by additionally doing a mental act to quench the potential of previous bad *kamma* seeds. This is called "giving of merits" or "*pattidana*" which is mislabelled as "*puñña anumodana*" frequently; see, "Punna Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā." One could wish that the merits of this good deed be shared with all other beings. We have built-up debts with all the beings in this long *saṃsāra*, that needs to be paid off (see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation"). Thus, sharing the merits actually becomes a "*visankhara*" or "unwinding the power of previous *saṅkhāra*." This is thus one way to lessen the impact of previous bad kamma *vipāka*.
- **The Buddha said that one always need to do good, meritorious, deeds.** Giving is especially encouraged. One could turn these deeds to *visankhara* by sharing the merits. **By the way, sharing**

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merits does not remove any possible good outcomes to oneself. Those were already acquired in the original act itself. The key here is not to wish for "profits in return", because such thoughts are associated with greed (of course this cannot be stopped by sheer will power until one comprehends *anicca*).

3. The third kind of *abhisaṅkhāra*, "*ānenjābhi saṅkhāra*" are associated with higher (*arupavacara*) *jhānic* states attained via *samatha bhāvanā*, such as breathing meditation or *kasina* meditation. They are pursued in order to achieve higher meditative states, and thus are pursued with a greedy thought (pleasure).

- These meditation techniques do not help with the cleansing of the *āsavas*; see, "Sansaric Habits, Character (Gathi) and Cravings (Āsava)," and "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas."

4. *Jhānic* states are achieved automatically when pursuing *Nibbāna* (not *anāriya jhānā* but *Ariya jhānā*). The goal here was to achieve *Nibbāna*, and thus no *saṅkhāra* are accumulated in this process. This brings up another question: Is seeking *Nibbāna* another type of craving (*āsava*)?

- *Nibbāna* is attained via removing craving for **everything in this world**: "*ragakkhayo Nibbanan, Dosakkhayo Nibbanan, Mohakkhayo Nibbanan*."
- "Craving" for *Nibbāna* is called *chanda* (one of the The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipāda). This "liking for *Nibbāna*" is the key factor that fuels the other three: *viriya* (effort), *citta* (thoughts), and *vīmaṃsā* (investigations).
- Thus in seeking *Nibbāna*, one is not craving for anything **in this world**. One is thinking and working diligently to comprehend the true nature of the world (*vīmaṃsā*), and with that wisdom gained, the mind automatically gives up craving for anything.

Kāya, Vacī, and *Mano Saṅkhāra*

1. *Saṅkhāra* can lead to body movements, speech, and thoughts; they are respectively called *Kāya, Vacī, and Mano Saṅkhāra.* If those are not done with greed, hate, or ignorance, they are merely *saṅkhāra*. But if they are done with greed, hate, or ignorance, they become *abhisaṅkhāra*.

- The recent post, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means" for a detailed description.

2. Briefly, *mano saṅkhāra* are automatically generated based on our *gathi*. All our thoughts that make body parts move (except for speech) are *kāya saṅkhāra*. *Vacī saṅkhāra* are generated when we move our mouth, lips, tongue, etc to speak.

- When we are thinking about doing something we "play it out" in the mind (for example reciting something silently in the mind). That is mostly *vacī saṅkhāra* and are also called *vitakka* and *vicara*; when we are thinking and contemplating Dhamma concepts, they are called *savitakka* and *savicara,* with the prefix *"sa"* denoting "good."
- Thus "talking to oneself" is done with *vacī saṅkhāra;* see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."
- *Mano saṅkhāra* are just feelings (*vedanā*) and perceptions (*saññā*) that arise automatically due to a sense input that comes via a *kamma vipāka*.

3. Thus it is clear that most enjoyments that we experience come through *vacī saṅkhāra*. We can be sitting at one place quietly and generating enormous amounts of *vacī saṅkhāra*, thoroughly enjoying the experience. Most people do this when they go to bed at night while waiting to fall asleep.

- It is a good idea to try to keep the mind away from defiled thoughts while falling asleep; this can be done getting to habit of thinking about a Dhamma concept, or to listen to chanting of *sutta* (*pirith*), keeping the volume low (like playing background music); see, "Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text)." It will be easier to fall asleep and one will have a restful sleep too.

For more details, see, "Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra."

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3.1.3 Saṅkhāra – Life is a Bundle of Saṅkhāra

Revised November 26, 2017

In the previous introductory post, "What is "San"?", we introduced the term "*saṅkhāra*", and in the next post *saṅkhāra* was discussed in somewhat technical terms. Since it is such an important term, in this post I will discuss it in a bit more detail.

1. Buddha Dhamma is based on the fact that all "*saṅkhāra*" are done in vain: "*sabbe saṅkhāra anicca*."

- As we saw in the previous post, *saṅkhāra* ("*san*" + "*kara*" or actions; සන් + කර in Sinhala) are anything (thought, speech, bodily actions) done while living in "this world" of 31 realms. This includes breathing, walking, or thinking about the chores for the day.
- All *saṅkhāra* arise in the mind. We cannot utter a word or lift a finger without generating *saṅkhāra* in the mind. It happens very fast, so it feels like we just speak or do things; see, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means" and "Difference Between Dhammā and Saṅkhāra."

2. So, all *saṅkhāra* involve thinking (some could be manifested as speech or bodily actions), but some actions like breathing happens without CONSCIOUS thinking. Those are just *saṅkhāra* that do not have *kammic* consequences.

- However, *saṅkhāra* become *abhisaṅkhāra* when they involve conscious thinking with *lobha, dosa, moha* (or *alobha, adosa, amoha*) coming to play roles. Those *abhisaṅkhāra* have bad (or good) *kammic* consequences.
- Thus even an *Arahant* keeps doing *saṅkhāra* until death. But an *Arahant* does not do *abhisaṅkhāra*, a "stronger version" of *saṅkhāra* that will lead to accumulating mental energy (*kamma*) for future repercussions (*kamma vipāka*) until that *kammic* energy is exhausted.
- In order for a *saṅkhāra* to become an *abhisaṅkhāra*, one of the six root causes (greed, hate, ignorance, generosity, kindness, wisdom) need to be involved.

3. If the "bad roots" of greed, hate, and ignorance are involved, then those thoughts, speech, actions will create *kamma bīja* (or energy seeds) that either lead to bad outcomes during a life or to rebirth in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*). These are *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* ("*apuñña*" + "*abhisaṅkhāra*" where "*apuñña*" means non-meritorious).

- On the other hand, *abhisaṅkhāra* done with the "good roots" of generosity, kindness, wisdom either lead to good outcomes during a life or to rebirth in the realms at or above the human realm. These are *puññābhisaṅkhāra* ("*puñña*" + "*abhisaṅkhāra*" where "*puñña*" means meritorious).
- If no roots are involved, they are just *saṅkhāra*, and their *kamma* seeds are duds; there is no energy in them. Basically one can say, *saṅkhāra* (that are not *abhisaṅkhāra*) do not generate *kamma* seeds.

4. Let us take some examples. When we see someone is walking with a knife in hand, we cannot come to a conclusion about what kind of *saṅkhāra* is that person is generating.

- He may be just taking the knife from one place to another, in which case, it is just *saṅkhāra*.
- If he is planning to stab someone, then he is generating *apuññābhisaṅkhāra*.
- If he is planning to rescue an animal who got entangled in a trap, then he is generating *puññābhisaṅkhāra*.
- In any type of speech or bodily action, what really matters is the INTENTION behind the speech or action.

5. In another example, we may see two people have built and donated two hospitals for the poor. Even though both seem to be "good actions", we cannot say both had *puññābhisaṅkhāra*. One could have had an ulterior motive of getting elected in an upcoming election, rather than thoughts of loving kindness for poor

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people. In that case, he would be generating mostly *apuññābhisaṅkhāra*, even though there may be some *puññābhisaṅkhāra* involved too.

- This is why sorting out *kamma* is impossible for anyone but a Buddha. Some of our actions could involve both kinds of *abhisaṅkhāra*. For example, if we see a bird digging up a worm and chase the bird away, we would have done both kinds of *abhisaṅkhāra*: Saving the life of the worm is a *puññābhisaṅkhāra*, but we also did an *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* because we denied the bird of its meal. Both types of *abhisaṅkhāra* can bear fruits (*vipāka*) in the future.

6. There is this famous "trolley problem" in ethics, where one could save five people from death by sacrificing the life of a single person; see, WebLink: WIKI: Trolley problem

This "thought experiment" has been debated for many years. We can make the following observations based on Buddha Dhamma:

- If one decides to take action (i.e., save five by sacrificing one), then one will acquire "good *kamma*" for saving the five lives, and "bad *kamma*" for killing the other person. Both types can bear fruits in the future.
- But it goes even deeper. What if the person that we sacrificed was an *Arahant* or at least a *Sotāpanna*, and the other five were normal people or even criminals? Then we would have acquired much more bad *kamma* than good *kamma*.

7. When someone is talking or doing some bodily action, we can at least try to guess what kind of *saṅkhāra* are involved. But if a person is just sitting down quietly, he/she could be generating any kind of *saṅkhāra* ranging from just thinking about whether or not to go out for a walk (just *saṅkhāra*) to planning a murder (worst kind of *apuññābhisaṅkhāra*).

- We generate more *abhisaṅkhāra* via thinking than via speech or actions.
- When we have disagreement with other people, we normally do not hit the person or even refrain from saying anything. But depending on the purity of our minds, we may be generating a little to unimaginable amounts of *apuññābhisaṅkhāra.* This is a key factors that most people tend to disregard.
- If someone's outward actions/speech seem to be "disciplined", we automatically assume that he/she is a good person; and the person may be trying to fool himself/herself by displaying that outward appearance. But if the mind is impure, there could be a lot of hateful/greedy thoughts in that mind. Whether or not any verbal or bodily actions are committed, those thoughts still accumulate *kamma* seeds.

8. Therefore, it is utterly useless to judge other people. Each person has true awareness AND control only over one's own thoughts, speech, actions, which are ultimately based on the intentions.

- **But we know exactly what our own intentions are.** And that is what really matters. We may be able to fool a court of law by hiring a good lawyer, but we will have to reap the results of what we sow in the future at some point.

9. This is the basis of *ānāpāna* meditation, to be aware of the types of *saṅkhāra* involved in a given action; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?." If someone asks us to join in fishing trip, we need to think what kind of *kamma* will be associated with killing fish for our pleasure; this is the basic form of "*kāyānupassanā*." Contemplate on any bodily action one is about to do and abstain from doing it if it involves *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* (in this case taking the lives of several fish for our pleasure).

- Bodily actions are easier to prevent, because they take time and we have time to contemplate.
- Speech is a bit more tricky, because speech comes out faster than carrying out bodily action. Still one can stop oneself even after uttering a few sentences.
- Thoughts are the hardest, and that is why "*cittānupassanā*" comes after one has practiced "*kāyānupassanā*."

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10. If one wants to start doing *ānāpāna* meditation, one should first control one's bodily actions, and the more one does it, the easier it becomes. And then it also becomes easier to control one speech. When both actions and speech are brought under control, one's thoughts will be easier to control too.

- Furthermore, willfully engaging in *puññābhisaṅkhāra* also helps to keep *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* at bay. By concentrating on meritorious deeds, one's mind is automatically turned away from thinking about unmeritorious deeds.
- This is why real Buddhist meditation is much more than just formal sitting meditation. The key is to purify the mind, and avoid defiling the mind at anytime. **One could be doing the breath meditation for a lifetime, but may not get anywhere in purifying the mind.**
- This is explained in detail and how to start practice in the "Living Dhamma" section. One does not even need to believe in rebirth in the beginning.

11. *Nibbāna* is attained not by abstaining from both *puññābhisaṅkhāra* and *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* as some suggest. On the way to *Nibbāna*, one needs to do *puññābhisaṅkhāra* AND also engage in learning Dhamma so that one could comprehend the true nature of all types of *saṅkhāra*, i.e., that all *saṅkhāra* are *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. This leads to the purification of the mind; just by doing *puññābhisaṅkhāra* is not enough to purify the mind.

- Ultimately, just by doing *puññābhisaṅkhāra* is not enough to purify the mind. However, one MUST start there before being able to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; see, "Living Dhamma."

Next, "Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra (Sankata)", …….

3.1.4 Difference Between Dhammā and Saṅkhāra

Revised March 22, 2017; April 17, 2017; November 5, 2017; July 19, 2018; August 9, 2019; January 11, 2020

Introduction

We will discuss the difference between *saṅkhāra*, *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), and *dhammā*. Some of the descriptions given here are not compatible with meanings given in many current *Theravāda* texts. However, they are fully compatible with the *Tipiṭaka*. Please send me a comment (lal@puredhamma.net) if you find evidence to the contrary.

- First, it is essential to remember that the word "*dhamma*" can mean somewhat different things in different contexts. In "Buddha Dhamma", it means the "Buddha's teachings."
- *Dhammā* (with a long "a" at the end) is mostly used to indicate energy created by the mind; it is also called a *kamma bīja*.
- But "*sabbe dhammā*" in *"sabbe dhammā anattā"* includes everything, all phenomena belonging to this world of 31 realms. ***Nibbāna* is not in this world, as discussed below.**
- I always give links to other posts. It is not necessary to read them, but if one needs more information or clarification, one should read them. That will make the concept to "really sink in."

Famous *Dhammapada* verses

1. There is confusion about the terms *saṅkhāra* and *dhammā* in the *Dhammapada* verses 277, 278, and 279; the first lines in those three verses are:

- **"*Sabbe saṅkhāra aniccā*"** or "all *saṅkhāra* are *anicca* (things cannot be maintained to one's satisfaction in the long run)." A better way to say it is that it is futile to make plans for such things **in the long term.** Of course, we must make plans for the necessary items to live this life.

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- **"*Sabbe saṅkhāra dukkhā*"** or "all *saṅkhāra* eventually lead to *dukkha* (suffering)."
- **"*Sabbe dhammā anattā*"** or "all *dhammā* are without substance (not fruitful) at the end."

Saṅkhārā Are Our Thoughts

2. ***Saṅkhāra*** are involved in thinking, speaking, and acting based on our intentions, hopes, and dreams. It is essential to realize that *saṅkhāra* are really our current thoughts.

- "*Saṅkhāra*" include all three types (*kāya saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra, mano saṅkhāra*) that lead to any action, speech, or just thought (in that order). They all arise in *citta* (our thoughts).
- We say "Hello" to someone that is done with *vacī saṅkhāra*. If we walk from the living room to the kitchen to get a drink, that is done with *kāya saṅkhāra*. But those do not initiate *kamma vipāka* and are *kammically* neutral. But if we verbally abuse someone, that is done with strong *vacī saṅkhāra* (*abhisaṅkhāra*), and that will have *kamma vipāka*.
- More on *saṅkhāra* at, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

3. Those *saṅkhāra* (or *abhisaṅkhāra*) that we generate may lead to the arising of an inert object or a living form. It leads to the arising of a ***saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)**.

- If one comes up with the idea of building a house, then the following steps may happen. He will carefully think about it (*mano saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra*), and may talk about it with others (*vacī saṅkhāra*). If he decides to do it, then he may take actions (*kāya saṅkhāra*) to make it happen. In this case, our *saṅkhāra* gave rise to a house, and that house is a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala).

4. When we do something with the body (i.e., body movement), that is controlled by *kāya saṅkhāra* that arise in our minds.

- We are not robots (most lower animals are like robots). We can control our thoughts, speech, and actions. Sometimes we may do things automatically. But if we want to, we can change our speech or actions. Just try it out.
- When we speak or talk to ourselves, that involves *vacī saṅkhāra*; those also arise in our minds; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."
- *Mano saṅkhāra* are thoughts that arise **automatically** (due to *kamma vipāka* and also our "gati").

5. Building a house in #3 above may not involve moral/immoral intentions. One may not generate strong *saṅkhāra* (called *abhisaṅkhāra*) that can create *kamma bīja* (*dhammā*), that can bring *kamma vipāka* in the future. Building a house is just a *kammically*-neutral action.

- However, planning to kill a human, for example, involves *mano saṅkhāra* and *vacī saṅkhāra* (in the planning stage) and then doing it with *kāya saṅkhāra.*
- In this case, all those *saṅkhāra* are *abhisaṅkhāra*, that can bring future bad *kamma vipāka*, in the form of rebirth in the *apāyā*, which includes the animal realm.

Abhisaṅkhāra Are Strong *Saṅkhāra*

6. *Abhisaṅkhāra* (potent or strong *saṅkhāra*) give rise to *kamma bīja*, which are also part of *dhammā.* **These are energies** that were created by *javana citta*; see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power." They can bring *kamma vipāka.*

- However, there are *dhammā* do not have energies (for example, *nāma gotta*, which are just past memory records are also *dhammā*).
- At the moment of death, such a strong *kamma bīja* or a *dhammā* comes to the mind via "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*." That new *viññāṇa* is the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* for the new life; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!."

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- Therefore, now a new life is formed as a result of that *abhisaṅkhāra*. This new life-form is also called a ***saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)** because it arose due to that *abhisaṅkhāra*.

7. That *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) came to existence because of that *abhisaṅkhāra* during that immoral act. It came to life at a later time via *kamma vipāka*.

- Moral *abhisaṅkhāra* or *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* lead to good *kamma bīja*/*dhammā* that will lead to good rebirths (in human, *deva*, and Brahma realms).
- Immoral *abhisaṅkhāra* or *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* lead to bad *kamma bīja*/*dhammā* that will lead to unfortunate rebirths (in the *apāyā*).
- **That is the link between mind and matter.** An *abhisaṅkhāra* that arose in the mind led to the *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) is a *rūpa* (made of matter).
- That house in #3 was built using existing *rūpa*. But it is also possible to "create" new matter if one has *abhiññā* powers. Both are called *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala).

All *Rūpa* Are *Saṅkhata* (*Sankata* in Sinhala)

8. Any *rūpa* (including visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches) that we experience in this world is a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), and they all undergo unpredictable change and eventually are destroyed.

- **The point is that we make our own future via our actions, speech, and thoughts; these are *(abhi)saṅkhāra*.**
- However, any of these new *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) will not last forever. Even if born in *deva* or Brahma realms, that *kammic* energy will run out one day. Then one will be directed to the next birth depending on the most potent *kamma bīja*/*dhammā* present at that time.
- The only difference is that one will be subjected to much suffering in the *apāyā*, while one will get to enjoy a "good life" in a higher realm. We all have been going through this "unending journey through most of the 31 realms," which does not have a traceable beginning.

No *Rūpa* (*Saṅkhata*) Can Be Maintained in the Way We Like

9. Another critical point is that the net result of all these "journeys through various realms" is suffering. **That is because we tend to do more immoral things in "seeking pleasure" and are born mostly in the *apāyā*.**

- Any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) that we make for ourselves (whether it is a house or a new life in the *deva* realm) that cannot be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run. The home will need repairs, and may even get burned down or flooded. A new life in the *deva* realm will end one day, and one will be back to square one.
- That is why it is said that "*Sabbe saṅkhāra aniccā*." It is there because any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (that arise due to *abhisaṅkhāra*) has a finite lifetime, and moreover, is subjected to unexpected changes (*vipariṇāma*) during that existence.

That *Anicca* Nature Leads to Suffering

10. When we don't get to maintain things to our satisfaction we suffer. Even if one makes a billion dollars and has a lovely family, one will have to leave all that behind when one dies. But even before that there could many other instances where one suffers (deaths of friends/family, diseases, loss of property, etc). That is the *vipariṇāma* nature that arise due to *anicca* nature.

- And the root cause of that suffering is *saṅkhāra* (more correctly *abhisaṅkhāra*). That is why it is said, "*Sabbe saṅkhāra dukkhā*."

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- **Again, *saṅkhārā* are basically our CURRENT thoughts; as soon as those thoughts go to the past, they become *nāma gotta* or memories.**

11. The only thing that is not destroyed is *nāma gotta*, which are just **records** of "all events" (*saṅkhāra* and *abhisaṅkhāra*) of any given life-stream; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream."

- All these different terms could be confusing at first. They will all make sense eventually because they are all pieces of a big puzzle.

Nibbāna Not Included in *dhammā*

12. Ven. Walpola Rahula *Thero*, in his famous and otherwise excellent book, "What the Buddha Taught" did not get it right when he interpreted those verses. He included *Nibbāna* in *dhammā* (p. 57 of 1974 edition). **He took the difference between *dhammā* and *saṅkhāra* to be *Nibbāna*.**

- But as you can see, *saṅkhāra* and *dhammā* are two different entities. *Saṅkhāra* is what we generate in our minds.
- Strong *saṅkhāra* or *abhisaṅkhāra* lead to the creation of *kammic* energy, and that is a *dhammā* or a *kamma bīja*.
- However, there are many *dhammā* other than *kamma bīja*, *and the* only *abhisaṅkhāra* lead to *kamma bīja.* But both *saṅkhāra* or *abhisaṅkhāra* lead to memory records or *nāma gotta.* Also, *dhammā* includes concepts and even Buddha Dhamma.

13. Furthermore, *Nibbāna* does not belong to this world. **Therefore, to say *Nibbāna* is *anatta* is a terrible mistake.** There are four ultimate realities (*paramattha*): Thoughts (*citta*), mental factors (*cetasika*), matter (*rūpa*), and *Nibbāna*.

- Everything "in this world" can be described in terms of the first three. *Nibbāna* does not belong to "this world."
- Furthermore, anatta is also mistranslated as just "no-self." The problems with the traditional interpretation of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* are discussed in "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."
- Furthermore, *anicca, dukkha, anatta* are characteristics of "this world of 31 realms"; *Nibbāna* is not included.

Nāma Gotta are Permanent

14. When we do *abhisaṅkhāra* (strong types of *saṅkhāra)*, that lead to the formation of good or bad *kamma bīja*, or *dhammā*. That strong *kamma bīja* can lead to the arising of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (living beings and even inert things).

- And ***nāma gotta*** (pronounced "nāma goththā") are just records of what happened.

15. Unlike *saṅkhāra, kamma bīja,* and *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), *nāma gotta* are PERMANENT (they are only records). As stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Najīrati Sutta (SN 1.76)": "*Rūpaṃ jīrati maccānaṃ, nāmagottaṃ na jīrati*," or "material things decay and get destroyed, but *nāmagotta* do not decay."

- That is why someone with *abhiññā* powers can go back at any point in time to recall past events; also see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- Whenever we do something (a *saṅkhāra*) an "record" ("*nāma gotta*") of it is made. Thus for a given sentient being, a record of all activities from the beginning-less time survives and is one's *nāma gotta*. All previous lives and all activities of past lives are in that "record stream," like a movie reel (not physical, of course).

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- Someone who has developed *abhiññā* through *anāriya jhānā* can trace back the *nāma gotta* for several past lives. But with well-developed *abhiññā* powers, a much deeper history can be probed. A Buddha can trace back as far back as he pleases with astonishing speed. (Yet he could not see "a beginning" to any sentient being's *nāma gotta*). That is why it is said that there is no traceable beginning to the rebirth process.)

16. It is easier to explain this "*nāma gotta*" with an example. Let us take two popular US presidents, John Kennedy and Ronald Reagan. Their "physical bodies" are no longer with us, i.e., their "*rūpa*" or physical bodies (**which were *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)**) decayed long ago. But their *nāma gotta* are with us to a certain extent. How much of their memories or "*nāma gotta*" remains with a given person depends on how closely that person associated with them. The moment we say, "John Kennedy" or "Ronald Reagan," their picture comes to our mind. Not only that, those who met them may remember that vividly and probably can recall that event just like watching a movie.

- Similarly, we can recall many of the "events" of our lives or parts of our "*nāma gotta*"; some young children can remember some events in their "*nāma gotta*" in their previous lives.
- What can be done with *abhiññā* powers is very similar. The *abhiññā* capabilities enormously stretch the memory or the ability to "look back" at past events in one's *nāma gotta*.

Anatta Nature

17. We are subjected to suffering only because we make *saṅkhāra* (or plans) and since they do not work out in the LONG RUN. Therefore, those *saṅkhāra* lead to *dukkha* at the end and thus to helpless in the long run (*anatta*).

- But *nāma gotta* or other types of *dhammā* does not lead to suffering. Therefore, *dhammā* do not have the characteristics of *anicca* and *dukkha*.
- But there is nothing substantial to be had with *dhammā* too; **they are also *anatta*.**

18. The Buddha's last words were, "*Vaya dhammā saṅkhāra, appamādena sampādeta*." Everything in this world (including *saṅkhāra*) is *dhammā*. Only *saṅkhāra*, i.e., those that lead to one's demise (i.e., lead to adverse outcomes); therefore, sort out such "*san*" without delay" ("*san*" "*pādeta*", which rhymes as "*sampādeta*").

18. The Buddha's last words were, "*vaya dhammā saṅkhāra, appamādena sampādeta*." Basically everything in this world (including *saṅkhāra*) are *dhammā*. Only "*saṅkhāra* are *vaya dhammā*", i.e., those that lead to one's demise (i.e., lead to bad outcomes). Therefore, the Buddha instructed us to "sort out such '*san'* without delay" ("*san*" "*pādeta*", which rhymes as "*sampādeta*").

- "*Vaya*" means destruction; here, it means leading to the destruction of one's future: *saṅkhāra* are *vaya dhammā*..
- *Saṅkhāra* are those these three types (*mano, vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*) that lead to "*san*" for extending *saŋsāra*; see, "What is "San"? – Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."
- Thus the Buddha was admonishing the *bhikkhus* that all *saṅkhāra* are "*vaya dhammā*" (those leading to adverse outcomes), and therefore to comprehend what *saṅkhāra* are.

19. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Najirati Sutta (SN 1.76)," the nature of *nāma gotta* is clearly stated:

- "*Rūpaṃ jīrati maccānaṃ, nāmagottaṃ na jīrati*," or, "material things are subject to decay or *jirati* (pronounced "*jeerathi*") and death or destruction (*maccanam*; pronounced 'machchānam"), but *nāma gotta* do not decay.
- The "*rūpa*" of those two US presidents we mentioned earlier have decayed and gone. But their *nāma gotta* remain with us. We can access our *nāma gotta* with memory. Someone with *abhiññā* powers can

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look at a complete *nāma gotta* not only spanning a current life but also going back to many lives. All of our *nāma gotta*, back to beginning-less time, are there whether accessed or not.

20. Dhammā — in the general sense – are **causes that we create ourselves for the future** and will bring NET suffering. Thus, the are without any substance. *Nāma gotta* and *paññāti* or concepts are also without any substance. They are all *anatta*. There is no point in "hanging on to them."

- Even Buddha Dhamma, which enables us to attain *Nibbāna* should ultimately be abandoned (at *Arahanthood*). The Buddha compared Buddha Dhamma to a raft that one uses to cross river. Once one crosses the river, there is no point in carrying the raft on one's back. So, even Buddha Dhamma is of value only until one reaches *Nibbāna*.
- Only *Nibbāna*, which is attained by "giving up EVERYTHING in this material world" is *atta* or "of value"; see, "Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?" and "Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link."

More information on the connection between *dhammā, kamma bīja*, and *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* is at, "Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections."

3.1.5 Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra

May 13, 2019; revised May 14, 2019

This replaces an old post in this section entitled, "Saṅkhāra and Kammā, Viññāṇa and Kamma Bīja." I have re-written it with a new title.

Origin of the Words *Saṅkhāra* and *Sansāra*

1. All *kamma* are done with *saṅkhāra*. However, only *abhisaṅkhāra* lead to strong *kamma* that can fuel the rebirth process.

- It is important to realize that *saṅkhāra* involves EVERYTHING that we do, to live in "this world" of 31 realms. These include breathing, walking, eating, pretty much everything we do; see, "Complexity of the Mind – Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra."
- Anything anyone does, need to start as a thought in one's mind. For example, to lift a leg, one's mind needs to decide on that first, even though it appears automatic. Anything one does, starts with a thought of "*san*," i.e., something to do with "this world"; see "San" and "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots." All these belong to ***saṅkhāra* ("*san*" + "*khāra*" or action)**.
- Even an *Arahant* has to be engaged in *saṅkhāra* until *Parinibbāna* or death of the physical body.

2. ***Saṅkhāra*** become ***abhisaṅkhāra*** **when acting with greed, hate, and ignorance**; see, "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?."

- **The *sansāric* process or the rebirth process is fueled by *abhisaṅkhāra*.** The prefix "*abhi*" means "strong."
- An *Arahant* does not generate *abhisaṅkhāra*, i.e., thoughts with greed, hate, and ignorance.
- It must be noted that an *Arahant* would not generate *puññābhisaṅkhāra* (*puñña abhisaṅkhāra*) but can do *puñña kriya*; see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."
- *Kriya* basically means "actions" or "deeds" without the involvement of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- One's *puññābhisaṅkhāra* turn to *puñña kriya* when one fully comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*).

3. **Therefore, the *sansāric* process — or the rebirth process — is fueled by *abhisaṅkhāra*.**

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- The word ***saŋsāra* comes from "*san*" + "*sāra*" where "*sāra*" means "beneficial";** see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."
- One will have the perception that "this world is beneficial or fruitful" as long as one cannot grasp the fact that most births in the this world are filled with suffering.
- Even though some realms (like human, *deva*, and *brahma*) may have long stretches of "pleasures", those are negligible compared to long stretches of suffering in the *apāyā* (the four lower realms including the animal realm).
- *Sansāric* process is fueled by *(abhi)saṅkhāra*. This is why an *Arahant* will not be reborn in the 31 realms of this world. He/she would not generate *abhisaṅkhāra.*

Connection Between *Saṅkhāra* and *Kammā*

4. *Kammā* is any action by us via body, speech, and thoughts (*kāya, vacī,* and *mano kammā*). **Those three types of *kammā* are initiated by our thoughts, i.e., *kāya, vacī,* and *mano saṅkhāra.***

- We can see that *kammā* and *saṅkhāra* are closely related.
- The Buddha said, "*cetanāhaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*", i.e., "Bhikkhus, I say *kammā* is intention." [WebLink: suttacentral: AN 6.63. Nibbedhikasutta] That intention is in *saṅkhāra*, embedded in the types of *cetasika* (mental factors) as we will see below.
- "Intention" depends on the types of *cetasika* in a thought (*citta*). For example, in a thought with "greedy intention", will have the *lobha cetasika*, but it may also have *issa* (jealousy) *cetasika*.

5. Let us take some examples to illustrate this relationship. If you swing your arm, that is a *kāya kammā*, i.e., that action involved moving a body part. That corresponded to *kāya saṅkhāra* generated in the mind.

- Now, if you swung your arm to get hold of a cup, that is a *kammically* neutral action (*kammā*) or a just a *saṅkhāra.* You did not do either a moral or immoral act. The intention was to grab a cup, and that did not involve any *sobhana* or *asobhana cetasika*. **That is called a *kiriya* (*kriyā* in Sanskrit).** [***kiriya*** : [nt.] action; deed; performance.]
- On the other hand, if you swung your arm to hit someone, then it was done with anger. So, the *dosa cetasika* (an *asobhana cetasika*) was in your thoughts. So, it was an *apuññābhi saṅkhāra*. It can also be called a *akusala/apuñña kammā* or an immoral deed.
- If you put your arms together to pay respects to the Buddha at a temple, that was done with *saddhā cetasika* (a *sobhana cetasika*) and thus it was a *puññābhisaṅkhāra*. It can be also called a *kusala/puñña kammā* or a moral deed.

6. Now we can see that all *kamma* involve the mind; they are initiated by *saṅkhāra*.

- *Mano saṅkhāra* are thoughts that comes automatically to the mind when a sense object is experienced.
- Then if that object is of interest, we start generating conscious thoughts (speaking to ourselves)without talking and then we may speak out; both these are *vacī saṅkhāra*.
- If we then start moving body parts to respond, then those are done with *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- Also see, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means" and "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

7. Thus it is important to note that *kāya saṅkhāra* are also thoughts. They are responsible for body movements, i.e., *kāya kammā*. They are also responsible for making "bodily gestures" or "*kāya viññatti.*"

- In other words, all *saṅkhāra* are generated by the mental body (*gandhabba*). It gives commands to the brain to move body parts or to move lips and tongue to speak; see, "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba" and other posts on *gandhabba*.

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- Furthermore, *kāya kammā, vacī kammā*, and *mano kammā* are all done by the respective types of *saṅkhāra: kāya, vacī, and mano saṅkhāra.*
- More information on these terms can be found at, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

Saṅkhāra and *Kammā* Can be Good or Bad

8. Therefore, *saṅkhāra* can be understood in a deeper sense by realizing that types of *saṅkhāra* generated are defined by the types of *cetasika* (mental factors) in one's thoughts.

- Some *citta* (thoughts) do not have either good (*sobhana*) *cetasika* or bad (*asobhana*) *cetasika.* Such *citta* are said to have *kammically* neutral *saṅkhāra*. These *kammically* neutral *saṅkhāra* involve only the types of *cetasika* like *vedanā, saññā, viriya* that do not belong to either *sobhana* or *asobhana* categories.
- *Kammically* relevant *saṅkhāra* (or *abhisaṅkhāra*) involve either *sobhana cetasika* (for *kusala kammā*) or *asobhana cetasika* (for *akusala kammā*).
- Therefore, it is easy to see that *abhisaṅkhāra* that involve *sobhana cetasika* are *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* or *puññābhisaṅkhāra.* Those that involve *asobhana cetasika* are *apuññābhisaṅkhāra*; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."

9. Knowing a bit of *Abhidhamma* can be helpful in clarifying certain key *dhamma* concepts. It is not hard to learn. Since *Abhidhamma* was finalized after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha (see, "Abhidhamma – Introduction"), these details are not in the *Suttā.*

- Now we can get a new perspective for *cetasika*, in terms of "*san*." As we know, "*san*" is what keep us in the rebirth process or *saŋsāra*; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."
- We can see that those *asobhana cetasika* are what give rise to "*san*" in *apuññābhi saṅkhāra*, that lead to rebirth in the bad realms.
- On the other hand, *sobhana cetasika* are what give rise to "*san*" in *puññābhi saṅkhāra*, that lead to rebirth in the good realms.

Do We Need to Avoid Good *Saṅkhāra* (*Puñña Abhisaṅkhāra*)?

10. However, this does not mean we should stay away from *puññābhi saṅkhāra.* In fact, we MUST engage in *puññābhi saṅkhāra*, in order to avoid rebirth in the bad realms and also to cultivate morality and also to prepare the necessary environment (especially to be healthy and to avoid poverty).

- The Buddha has emphasized the need to engage in meritorious deeds (*puññābhi saṅkhāra*) in many *Suttā*; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Sumana Sutta (AN 5.31)."
- *Nibbāna* is attained via realizing the fruitlessness in rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms, and for that one needs to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and for that one needs to attain the correct mindset by engaging in *puñña kammā* (*puññābhi saṅkhāra*).
- Once one FULLY comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (i.e., when one becomes an *Arahant*), one's *puññābhi saṅkhāra* will turn into *puñña kriyā.* This is a subtle point.

Puññābhisaṅkhāra Are Also Done With *Avijjā*

11. In WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, the term "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" in ***akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* (that leads to suffering)** is explained as follows: "*Tattha katame avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā? Puññābhisaṅkhāro, apuññābhisaṅkhāro, āneñjābhisaṅkhāro, kāyasaṅkhāro, vacīsaṅkhāro, cittasaṅkhāro*."

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Translated: "What is *avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*? *Puññābhisaṅkhāra, apuññābhisaṅkhāra, āneñjābhisaṅkhāra, kāyasaṅkhāra, vacīsaṅkhāra, cittasaṅkhāra*." (here, *cittasaṅkhāra* is the same as *manosaṅkhāra*).

- It needs to be noted that these are all ***abhisaṅkhāra,*** even though the verse is simplified as "*avijjā paccayā* ***saṅkhārā***."
- There are two categories of *saṅkhāra* mentioned there: one category refers to types of *kamma* accrued. The other refers to whether they are done by the body, speech, or the mind.
- Therefore, *saṅkhāra* has a much deeper meaning than just "mental formations", even though that is better than the translation for *viññāṇa* as consciousness.

Instead of *Puññābhisaṅkhāra* an Arahant will do *Puñña Kiriyā*

12. A question may arise how *puññābhisaṅkhāra* (or meritorious thoughts) arise with *avijjā.*

- A simple answer is that until one FULLY comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (i.e., that anywhere in this world of 31 realms is not devoid of suffering), one does even meritorious deeds with expectation of "good outcomes/ good rebirths" in this world.

13. Once one FULLY comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (i.e., when one becomes an *Arahant*), **one's *puññābhi saṅkhāra* will turn into *puñña kiriyā* without *kammic* consequences**. Thus one will do meritorious deeds **without any expectations (this is what is meant by "*viññāṇa nirodha*" too).**

- Then those meritorious actions will not lead to rebirth even in the "good realms." An *Arahant* does not wish to be reborn in any realm, because he/she has seen the "*anicca* nature" of all 31 realms. This is a subtle point.
- This last part may not be clear to everyone. This is the "previously unheard *Dhamma*" that is hard to grasp ("*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*" that the Buddha mentioned in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*).

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3.2 Nibbāna

- How to Taste Nibbāna
- Nirāmisa Sukha
- Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?
- The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna
- What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)
- Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?
- Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts
- Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World

3.2.1 How to Taste Nibbāna

Revised November 24, 2018; April 26, 2020

1. Elsewhere on the site, I have described *Nibbāna* in a deeper sense. But we can look at the early stages of *Nibbāna* in a simple way.

- In Sinhala language (spoken in Sri Lanka), *Nibbāna* is also called "*nivana*" or "*niveema*" (නිවීම). This means "cooling down." As one move towards *Nibbāna*, one feels cooling down, a sense of well-being.

2. Do you remember the last time when you got really mad? How did that feel? You get hot. Whole-body becomes hot and agitated. Blood pressure goes up ant the face becomes dark because the blood becomes dark. By the way, this is clear evidence that the mind can affect the body.

- This "burning up" is called "*tāpa*" in Pāli (තාප in Sinhala), and is due to greed, hate, and ignorance. "*Ātāpī*" means the opposite, "cooling down via getting rid of those defilements." This is what is meant by "*ātāpi sampajāno*" in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*; see, "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."
- When someone can get to the "*ātāpi sampajāno*" state, one feels calm and "cooled down"; see, "Kāyānupassanā – The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)."

3. Do you remember how you felt when you made someone happy, either via a good deed or word? You cooled down; felt good. Didn't you feel the opposite of when you got mad?

- When one acts with greed, "heating up" still happens, may be to a lesser extent than when one is angry. As a kid, when I was stealing something, I felt heated and uncomfortable.
- The same is true when one acts with ignorance too. One is not certain whether that is the right thing to do; the mind goes back and forth: is this right or wrong? should I do it or not? This is called "*vicikicchā*" in Pāli. Because one does not really know, one is not certain, one becomes anxious, and the body gets heated up.

4. Thus, when one gives up acting with hate, greed, or ignorance, one becomes less agitated, at ease, with a sense of peacefulness. This is an early sense of what *Nibbāna* is.

- As one can see the benefits of cooling down, one will avoid actions done with hate, greed, and ignorance. And one will be looking forward to doing actions of goodwill, generosity, and with mindfulness.
- Avoiding greed, hate, and ignorance is the same as avoiding *dasa akusala*.

5. Also, note the state of thoughts (*citta*) in the two opposing situations. When one acts with the defilements, thoughts run wildly; they come fast and they are energetic. The "*javana*" (impulsive power) of a thought is high when when acting with a defilement.

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- On the other hand, thoughts run more smoothly and the *javana* (impulsive power) of a given thought is calm when acting benevolently, with kindness, with generosity, and with mindfulness; they are powerful too, but only in making one calm. Thus one can experience a taste of *Nibbāna* or "cooling down" even at the very early stages of the Path.

6. Now, one could get to TEMPORARY cooling down by not letting thoughts run wildly. The easiest to do is to keep the mind on a single focus. This can be done by focusing the mind on a religious symbol or just on the breath. Thus this "temporary relief" is felt by people of any religion when they contemplate on a religious symbol with faith, or by doing "breath meditation" or mundane "*Ānāpānasati*" meditation.

- However, the only way to achieve permanent sense relief is to REMOVE greed, hate, and ignorance gradually by cleansing one's mind. This is done by "taking in" (*āna*) of good thoughts, speech, and actions, and "getting rid of" (*apāna*) defiled thoughts, speech, and actions. **This is the Buddha's *ānāpāna* meditation that can lead to PERMANENT happiness.**
- When one does this correct "*ānāpāna*" consistently, one's bad habits ("*gathi*") will be gradually removed and good habits ("*gathi*") will be cultivated.
- When one has removed the defilements to a significant extent, then this relief becomes permanent and will not reduce from that state even in future births. **This first stage of *Nibbāna* is called the *Sotāpanna* stage.** A *Sotāpanna* is guaranteed not to be reborn in the *apāyā* or the four lowest realms; he/she has removed all "*gathi*" suitable for beings in the *apāyā*. See, "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control."

7. **However, it is impossible to remove greed and hate just by sheer will power**, i.e., forcefully. For example, one cannot get rid of greed even by giving away one's wealth; if that is done without understanding, then it could lead to remorse and hate.

- Rather, getting rid of greed and hate comes AUTOMATICALLY as one understands the worldview of the Buddha: that we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction in the LONG RUN. This worldview is embedded in the Three Characteristics of "this world" or *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*
- Not knowing the Three Characteristics is the ignorance or *avijjā*.
- Even before comprehending the Three Characteristics, one needs to reduce total ignorance (*moha*) to the *avijjā* level by getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

8. This is why *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or "correct world view" comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path. When one comprehends the true nature of "this world", one's mind will AUTOMATICALLY start rejecting thoughts, words, and actions through greed and hate.

- Then *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (correct vision) will automatically lead to *Sammā Saṅkappa* (fruitful thoughts), *Sammā Vaca* (fruitful speech), *Sammā Kammanta* (fruitful actions), *Sammā Ajiva* (livelihood), *Sammā Vayama* (efforts in those), *Sammā Sati* (moral mindset) and then will culminate in *Sammā Samādhi* (peaceful state of mind). This *Sammā Samādhi* is permanent for a *Sotāpanna*.
- Thus it is clear that such a *samādhi* cannot be attained with breath meditation or any other way of "focusing attention" on one thought object.
- Purification of the mind is the key, and that comes first through reading, listening, and comprehending the true and pure Dhamma.

9. As one follows the Noble Eightfold Path of the Buddha, one can EXPERIENCE a sense of well-being called *nirāmisa sukha* which is different from the sense pleasures; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

- If you did experience a sense of well-being just by reading this post, that is a good start. That sense of well being will only grow as the understanding gets deeper. I have gone through this process myself and that is what I am trying to convey to others.

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10. **September 22, 2016**: I have started a new section: "Living Dhamma," where an experience-based process of practicing Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) is discussed with English discourses (*desanā*). *Nibbāna* can be experienced at various levels, one needs to experience the earlier stages of *nirāmisa sukha* first.

Next, "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it?", ..

A deeper analysis of *Nibbāna* at "Nibbāna."

3.2.2 Nirāmisa Sukha

Revised September 15, 2017; July 1, 2018; June 15, 2020

1. Another critically important aspect of Buddha's teachings that have been lost, is the importance of the *nirāmisa sukha*. There is happiness in giving up sense pleasures, giving up hate, and giving up ignorance (by learning Dhamma), and that is called *nirāmisa sukha*. This is a part of Dhamma that many people do not realize.

2. Contrary to another misguided perception we have today, the Buddha never said that there is no *āmisa sukha* (sense pleasure) to be had. The only reason why people cling to this world is BECAUSE of the sense pleasures that are available.

- What the Buddha said is that such sense pleasures are transient, not lasting. Even if one inherits a fortune and lives in luxury the whole life, the suffering is inevitable in the next life or next lives. The real suffering (*dukkha*) is in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*).
- *Nirāmisa sukha* is present where there is no suffering.
- It can be compared to the relief one gets if one had been suffering from a chronic headache all through one's life if it went away at some point.
- In a way, we are all living with a baseline "chronic headache" that we don't even realize. We have gotten used to it, and don't even realize that there is a "better state." Only when one starts feeling the "reduced stress" of *nirāmisa sukha*, one realizes that. That is the real inspiration for trying to attain the higher stages of *Nibbāna*.

3. The *nirāmisa sukha* has a different quality compared to *āmisa sukha* or the pleasures from the senses that we all enjoy. It is also different from the *jhānic* pleasures in quality. *Jhānic* pleasure is better than the sense pleasures (as the meditators know), and *nirāmisa sukha* is of even better quality.

- Both *āmisa sukha* and *jhānic* pleasures are transient, not lasting.
- The *nirāmisa sukha* starts increasing as soon as one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path and becomes permanent at the *Arahant* stage. Furthermore, this whole progression up to the *Arahant* stage can be attained in this very life.

4. It is important to realize that *nirāmisa sukha* cannot be attained by "just giving up things" or by leaving everything behind and going to seclusion. This is another misconception that many people have.

- The Buddha never asked anyone to give up their lifestyle. There were wealthy people and even kings who attained the *Sotāpanna* stage and up to the *Anāgāmī* stage while living a "householder life."
- There is no point in giving up everything; even when one gives to charity, one needs to make sure one has enough left for oneself and one's family. Fulfilling one's responsibilities is as important as being charitable.

5. The "giving up worldly things" needs to come through a true understanding of the real nature of "this world." Many people did give up worldly things and became *bhikkhus*, but only after they saw the fruitlessness of craving for worldly things.

6. It is the nature of the mind that it has to see the benefit or pleasure of something before embracing it.

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- One may force the mind to "give up" some sense pleasures, but that cannot be sustained. Most people who try to do that out of ignorance (misunderstanding of Dhamma) actually end up becoming dissatisfied and giving up the effort.
- The mind has to "see" that there is a better option compared to the *āmisa sukha* or sense pleasures. When one starts on the Path and start living a moral life one will gradually see the *nirāmisa sukha* emerge.

7. The Buddha gave a simile to explain this effect. In the old days, when people took to the oceans to look for new lands, they took caged birds with them. When they were lost or wanted to find whether they were close to land, they released a bird. The bird would fly around and come back to ship if no land is found.

- The same is true for the mind. It will not latch on to something new (*nirāmisa sukha*) unless it is better than the one it already has (*āmisa sukha*).
- As the reader Siebe points out (June 30, 2018), the points in #6, #7 are discussed in the "WebLink: Cūladukkhakkhandha Sutta (MN 14)." A reasonable translation at: "WebLink: 14. Lesser Discourse on the Stems of Anguish."

8. Yet, in the beginning, it takes some time for the *nirāmisa sukha* to be noticeable. We have lived with clouded minds for so long, that it takes a little while to "clean things up."

- It is like developing a new technology these days. Initially it is difficult to get started; one has to make a concerted effort just to "stay in." But once the benefits of the technology are realized by the public, it starts to take off: WebLink: WIKI: Technology life cycle
- But unlike a new technology, once the *nirāmisa sukha* starts increasing it never comes down ever (after the *Sotāpanna* stage is reached).
- It makes "quantum jumps" (instantaneous big changes) at the *Sotāpanna* stage and the other three subsequent stages, and becomes complete and permanent at the *Arahant* stage. However, even an *Arahant* will experience the results of previous *kamma vipāka* and will have PHYSICAL ailments that will still cause suffering until the life comes to an end.

9. The difference between *āmisa* and *nirāmisa sukha* is explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nirāmisa Sutta (Saṃyutta Nikāya 36.31)."

- The "WebLink: suttacentral: English translation" and the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sinhala translation" — as well as translations in several other languages — are also available at the Sutta Central site. That is the case for most *suttā*, so it is a useful resource.
- **However, one needs to keep in mind that many key Pāli words are translated incorrectly there. That includes translating *anicca* as impermanence and *anatta* as "no-self."**

10. The *Nibbānic* bliss is different and is the absence of both *āmisa* and *nirāmisa sukha.*

- *Nibbānic* bliss is the total absence of ANY type of suffering. Ven. Sāriputta explained that in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Nibbānasukha Sutta* (AN 9.34).
- The status of an Arahant is not comprehensible to anyone just starting on the Path. It is better not to investigate that at the beginning, because that could lead to confusion.

Next, "What are Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna", …….

3.2.3 Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?

Revised December 6, 2016 (#9); Re-revised December 20, 2016; November 22, 2018; January 3, 2019

Our distresses and sufferings are due to our defiled minds. As one purifies one's mind, one starts experiencing *Nibbāna*.

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- I advise reading through any post one time without clicking on the links first. Once you get the main concept, then the links can be used to clarify the other related key concepts.
- *Nibbāna* may not be easy to attain, but it is easy to figure out what it is. You don't need complex concepts like emptiness (*sunyātā*) and *Bodhi citta* to describe or to understand *Nibbāna*.

1. The Buddha said we suffer because of the defilements we have in our minds: greed, hate, ignorance, and other mental qualities that arise from them. *Nibbāna* has many synonyms, and "*Nivana*" ("cooling down") is one that conveys the above idea better; *Nivana* , which is also called "*niveema*" (නිවීම) in Sinhala, conveys the same idea as *nirāmisa sukha*.

- As one moves away from hate, greed, and ignorance, one can feel oneself "cooling down" INSIDE. Nibbāna ("*Nib*"+"*bāna*", where "*bāna*" means bonds) and thus *Nibbāna* means to break free of bonds that make one bound to the 31 realms.
- I like the word *Nivana* or *niveema* because it conveys the benefits of the Path as one experiences gradual "cooling down" until it becomes complete at *Nibbāna*; see,"Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?," "How to Taste Nibbāna," and "Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha."

2. In order to "cool down", we first need to know what is "burning" ("*thāpa*" in Pāli); our minds are constantly burning due to greed, hate, and ignorance, and we don't even realize this; see the "Living Dhamma" section and specifically the post, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

- This "burning" is really worse in the lowest four realms or the "*apāyā*." Thus one really needs to understand the first Noble Truth about suffering, in order to realize the value of *Nibbāna*. There are several posts at various levels on the real, deeper meaning of what the Buddha meant by "suffering in this world of 31 realms."
- Our sufferings are masked by the apparent sensory pleasures, which do not last. A *Sotāpanna* understands suffering better than a normal person, and as one gets to higher stages of *Nibbāna* one will be able to see the meaning of the First Noble Truth even more clearly.

3. The key point is that one CAN start feeling "*nivana*" RIGHT NOW. *Nivana* is experienced by giving up the ten defilements (see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"). One does not have to get rid of all of them at once, and that is not advised either. One should get rid of the BIGGEST ones that can be easily gotten rid of.

- Killing, stealing, lying (and gossiping, slandering, verbally abusing), engaging in sexual misconduct, and being intoxicated (not just with alcohol or drugs, but also with wealth, power, etc.) are the first to be considered.
- Just abandon the relatively easy ones first for a few weeks and experience the "*nivana*," the ease of mind, the "inner peace", that comes from that. That is the biggest incentive to continue on the Path.

4. One also needs to understand the relative weights associated with dealing with animals and humans, and also there are different levels among humans. For example, it is very difficult to be born human; thus even saying a hurtful thing to a human (especially to an *Ariya* or a Noble One), could have thousand-fold *kammic* weight compared to killing an animal; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

- Another key concept is that one does NOT need to worry about the past *kamma*. The role of *kamma* has been exaggerated; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." *Nibbāna* is not attained via removal of *kamma*, but the removal of *āsavā* or cravings; see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā."
- The main thing is not to repeat the same mistakes. The more one stays away from the ten defilements, it automatically BECOMES easier. It is like pushing a stalled car: initially hard, but it becomes easier when it starts moving.

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5. ***Nibbāna* is NOT removing everything from the mind, just removing the defilements**: Nibbāna is *rāgakkhaya* (greed elimination), Nibbāna is *dosakkhaya* (hate elimination), Nibbāna is *mohakkhaya* (delusion elimination); those three are more synonyms for *Nibbāna*.

- **Thus one sees *Nibbāna* with a thought (*citta*) that is devoid of *rāga* (greed), *dosa* (hate), *moha* (delusion).** This PURE MIND does not want to be burdened with a "material existence" anywhere in the 31 realms; see, "What are Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna."
- By the way, *citta* is pronounced chiththa; see, "Pāli Glossary – (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary – (L-Z)."

6. The suffering is a direct result of having a "material aspect" associated with the mind: that material body is subject to decay and death. **The mind gets associated with a body that it gets "attached" to with greed, hate, and ignorance.** If you look at the 31 realms of "this world" (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"):

- It is clear that suffering is there in the lowest five realms — including the human realm — where all three (greed, hate, ignorance) can be present; the bodies of beings in these realms are, in general, dense and are subject to decay and diseases. Of course, there is unimaginable suffering in the lowest four realms.
- However, the human realm (#5) is unique, because one COULD attain *Nibbāna* as a human, even though they are also subject to bodily pains, decay, and diseases.
- In the *Deva lokā* (realms 6-11), hate is not there and suffering is less. And the bodies of *devā* are less dense and not subject to physical ailments (until the death of course).
- In the *Brahma lokā* (realms 12-31), both hate and greed are absent, and suffering is even less. They have very fine (less-dense) bodies and no physical ailments.

7. However, since ignorance is there in all 31 realms, complete, absolute state of happiness is absent anywhere in the 31 realms. Even if one is born in a *deva* or *Brahma* world, one will eventually end up in the lowest four realms (unless one has attained the *Sotāpanna* or a higher stage of *Nibbāna*).

- The suffering is of course unimaginably intense in the lower realms.
- This is the key message of the Buddha: **He said that suffering never ends as long as one keeps coming back to "this world of 31 realms" when one dies (i.e., unless one attains *Nibbāna*)**;
- Suffering totally ends with the death of an *Arahant*; no more births in this world of 31 realms.
- However, one could get depressed by thinking that *Arahanthood* is "annihilation"; but that is not true. One just needs to follow the Path step-by-step; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?" and "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

8. Therefore, one could visualize a gradual decrease of suffering as one gets rid of hate, greed, and ignorance in that order.

- And one CAN experience this happiness called *nirāmisa sukha* in this human life itself, all the way up to *Nibbāna*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha." That is the uniqueness of a human birth.

9. When the mind "starts thinking" about a given thought object (*arammana*), say a visual object, it starts as "just seeing"; this is the *citta* stage. But within a fraction of a second, the mind starts adding defilements (based on greed, hate, ignorance), if that object is "of interest."

- It develops further thoughts defiled by greed, hate, ignorance (possibly a combination) by going around and around that thought object and ends up in the "defiled thought" (*viññāṇa*) stage even before one realizes it; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- This is also described in *paṭicca samuppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati + ichcha" + "Sama + uppada"," and the links below that. *Viññāna* is a *citta* that is **defiled** by *rāga* (greed), *dosa* (hatred), *moha* (ignorance).

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- *Paṭicca samuppāda,* which is Buddha Dhamma, is discussed in detail in the series, "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English."

10. When *rāga, dosa*, and *moha* are removed from the mind, *cittā* (plural of *citta*) become *pabhassara* (bright); there is no more defilements there clouding the *cittā*. **At this stage, it is said that the pure *citta* "sees *Nibbāna*."**

- After one attains *Nibbāna* with one *citta,* the *cittā* fall back to the "normal state" and the person lives like a normal human (but without doing anything with greed, hate, and ignorance) until the *kammic* energy of the *kamma* seed that started the present life is exhausted.
- At death (called *Parinibbāna*), the mind of an Arahant does not grab (*upādāna*) another *kamma* seed (even if there may be many *kamma* seeds), and thus there is no further rebirth. The mind becomes free of a "body" that can be subjected to decay and death. That is *Nibbāna* or "complete *Nivana*" or "complete cooling down."

11. We are bound to this rebirth process basically due to two causes: *avijjā* and *taṇhā*. The first version of *taṇhā* is *lobha*, the strong greed, which could easily turn to *dosa* (strong hate) when someone else gets in the way. Thus those two causes of *avijjā* and *taṇhā* effectively become three: *lobha, dosa, moha*.

- Even though *dosa* arises due to *lobha*, *dosa* brings about the worst *vipāka*: rebirth in the *niraya* (hell), where the suffering is optimum. Thus *dosa* actually has origins in the 4 greed-based "*somanassa sahagata, diṭṭhi sampayutta citta*."
- When *diṭṭhi* is removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage, all four of these greed-based *citta* stop arising. Thus at that stage, *lobha* and *dosa* become *rāga* and *paṭigha*, which are removed successively at the *Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī* stages. *Avijjā* keeps reducing at each stage of *Nibbāna*, and is removed at the *Arahant* stage.

12. When the mind is devoid of *rāga, dosa*, and *moha*, the mind (and thus *cittā*) become devoid (*sunya*) of them; that is the purified state of a *citta*, ***anidassana viññāṇa* (consciousness devoid of defilements) or *paññā* (wisdom).**

- The forefathers of *Mahayana* Buddhism could not grasp the concept of *Nibbāna*, so they came up with misleading descriptions including that of *Sunyata*: see, "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?."
- Even among the current *Theravāda* Buddhists, there are many debates about what is meant by *Nibbāna*. That is sad to see.

13. When *rāga, dosa, moha* are removed, a *citta* stops going around and around a given thought object (*arammana*). **This "wheeling" is what fuels the sansāric journey.** Thus stopping this process is called "taking off the wheels of the sansāric vehicle."

- The Pāli (and Sinhala) word for a vehicle is "*riya*," and stopping of the "*riya*" is called "*Ariya*"; one who has taken the wheels off the vehicle for the *sansāric* journey is called an "*Ariya*." Thus contrary to popular usage, "*Arya*" is not the word for a Noble Person, it is *Ariya*.
- **Therefore, it is clear that "*Ariya*" has nothing to do with a race, "*Arya*."**
- Furthermore, "*viriya*" ("*vi*" + "*riya*") means staying away from the "wheeling process" (and the effort to do so). Therefore, *viriya* really means actively engaging in *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpānasati*; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

14. Anyone who has at least attained the first stage of *Nibbāna*, i.e., *Sotāpanna*, can be called an *Ariya*, or a Noble Person. This is because the "*āsavā*" or deep-seated cravings that a *Sotāpanna* has removed stay permanently removed even in any future lives.

- All the *āsavas* are removed at *Nibbāna*; thus "*Āsavakkhaya*" (elimination of *āsavā*) is another synonym for *Nibbāna*. People who had been in the lowest social ladder or lowest caste at the time of the Buddha were able to become *Ariyā* or Noble Persons.

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15. When one sees *Nibbāna*, one's mind does not crave for anything "in this world" of 31 realms. There is nothing for the last *citta* (*cuti citta*, pronounced "chuthi chiththa") of this life (at death) to grab (nothing to *upādāna*) and to start a new birth in "this world", and the mind becomes totally free.

- **The mind becomes PERMANENTLY pure and be detached permanently from any type of physical body, dense or fine.**

16. Thus an Arahant will not be reborn in "this material world" of 31 realms (see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"), i.e., one attains *Parinibbāna*. He/she is simply "gone" from "this world" of 31 realms. The suffering stops permanently.

- Thus it is quite clear WHAT *Nibbāna* is: it is the stopping of the rebirth process in the material world. What is hard to understand is WHY stopping the rebirth process can relieve one of all suffering.
- No matter how much hardship one has endured, one likes to live. This is true for a human or a lowly worm. For any living being, the most precious thing is its life. **When one starts understanding the "big picture of the Buddha", one will slowly start seeing the dangers of staying in this endless rebirth process.**

Other analyses of *Nibbāna* can be found at, "Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts" and "Difference Between Giving up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless", ……

Continue to "What is San?"…..

3.2.4 The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna

Revised February 4, 2016; revised October 25, 2017

1. The 31 realms discussed in "31 Realms Associated with the Earth" are divided into three main categories based on the sense faculties and the level of suffering:

- The lowest eleven realms belong to the "*kāma loka*", where all five physical sense faculties are present; "*kāma*" is the indulging in the five sense faculties.
- Beings in the next sixteen realms have only two physical senses: vision and hearing. They have less-dense bodies, and this subset of realms is called the *rūpa loka*. In *rūpa loka*, there is mainly *jhānic* pleasures corresponding to the first four mundane *jhānā* that are achievable by humans. There is relatively less suffering in the *rūpa lokā*.
- The highest four realms correspond to the higher *arūpa jhānic* states (*jhānic* levels five through eight) that are also attainable in the human realm. Thus there is mainly *jhānic* bliss in these realms and relatively less suffering. These realms are commonly known as *arūpa loka*, because the beings have very fine bodies with no physical senses and only the mind.

2. The lifetimes of the beings in the *rūpa loka* are very long, and those in the *arūpa loka* are even longer. The lifetime in the highest *arūpa lokā* are so long (84,000 eons or *mahā kappā*), that it is beyond comprehension to us.

- This is why the ancient yogis mistakenly thought that such realms correspond to *Nibbāna*. The Buddha himself (or rather Sidharata Gotama), who attained the eighth *jhāna* within months after leaving the palace to become an ascetic. But he realized that it would lead to rebirth in a Brahma realm that still has a finite lifetime.
- Even though very long time in the number of years, that lifetime is insignificant in the *saṃsāric* time scale (see, "Samsāric Time Scale Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory,") which is infinite (see, "Infinity – How Big Is It?.")

3. One in the human realm can experience the *jhānic* pleasure of both *rūpa* and *arūpa lokā* by attaining such *jhānic* states via *samatha* meditation.

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- Furthermore, it is possible to gain access to both *rūpa lokā* and *arūpa lokā* in the next birth by developing the corresponding *jhānā* and by being in a *jhānic* state at death. As I understand, this is the goal of most Hindu practices.

4. *What the Buddha pointed out was that even the highest jhānic state is impermanent, and once that kammic energy is exhausted, it is possible to be born in any of the 31 realms.* **In fact, unless the being had not attained at least the *Sotāpanna* stage, it is guaranteed that at some point in the future rebirth in one of the lowest realms is inevitable.**

- He said that many of the beings still in the rebirth process (*saṃsāra*), i.e., we all, are likely to have been born in the higher *arūpa lokā*, as well as the lowest realm (*niraya*) in the past. The *saṃsāra* is that long.

5. From this discussion, it is clear that the actual suffering is mostly in the *kāma lokā*. But the problem is that beings spend the most time in *kāma lokā* in their beginning-less journey in the *saṃsāra*.

- The Buddha gave a simile to describe this situation. We leave home only to go on short, or may be even extended, trips; but we always come back home. **The Buddha said that the four lowest realms (the *apāyā*) are the home base for most living beings.**

Suffering in the *Kāma loka*

1. Suffering in the *kāma lokā* ranges from unfathomable suffering in the lowest realm, the *niraya* (hell), to relatively little suffering and highest sense pleasures in the *deva lokā* (the highest six realms in the *kāma loka*).

- Just below the *deva lokas*, there is the human realm with both suffering and sense pleasures at about equal levels.
- Below the human realm, there is *peta loka* (hungry ghosts), *asuras*, animal realm, and the *nirayas*, and the level of suffering generally increases in that order.

2. The lowest four levels in the *kāma loka* are collectively called the *apāyā* (the undesirable realms). **More than 99% of the beings are trapped in these four realms.** The problem is that once born in any of those four realms, it is virtually impossible to get out.

- This is because these realms are such that one is forced to commit *apuññabhi saṅkhāra* or evil actions (see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka") by the very nature of that existence. For example, in the animal realm, most animals have to kill others for survival. In the *niraya*, virtually every thought is of hate, because of the incessant suffering.
- **Still, when we analyze *Abhidhamma*, we will be able to see that the *javana* of the *cittā* are much less potent for animals,** and thus the *kammic* power of those actions are relatively small compared to *kammic* power of such actions by humans. This is an important point that I wish to discuss in the future.

3. Just as it is likely that we have been born in the higher *rūpa lokā* in the past, it is even more certain that we ALL have been in the *apāyā*. Luckily we do not remember those past lives.

- But in certain realms (particular the *peta realm*) beings do remember their past lives and that increases the level of suffering.

Why We Need to Strive Now

1. From the above discussion, it is clear that most suffering is in the four lowest realms, below the human realm which is the fifth realm. Essentially, there is relatively less suffering above the human realm, starting with the *deva loka* which is the highest realm in the *kāma loka.*

2. Even though the suffering is highest in the lower four realms, the beings there are helpless to do anything about the suffering. Their limited minds are not capable of grasping the causes that lead to suffering.

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- **Many people wrongly believe that one needs to feel suffering in order to understand it and to get an incentive to seek *Nibbāna*. But when one really suffers (say, when one gets too old) it is NOT possible to clearly contemplate the deep concepts of Dhamma.**
- The Noble truth on suffering needs to be seen with wisdom (*paññā*), not via feelings (*vedanā*), i.e., by understanding the complete world view AND the Three Characteristics of this "wider world": *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

3. Beings in the realms above the human realm, the 26 realms starting with the *deva* realms, do not even feel much suffering. **This is the other extreme; there is no incentive for them to be concerned about suffering.** The only real suffering there is that when their lifetimes get near to the end, they do realize that and become distraught.

4. Thus it is only at the human realm that one is at least exposed to the suffering, even if one may not be subjected to much suffering. Furthermore, the human mind is the best suited for grasping the true nature of "this world of 31 realms", i.e., the Three Characteristics (see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta"). **This is why the Buddha said that a human should not miss this opportunity to attain *Nibbāna*.**

The Four Stages of Attaining *Nibbāna*

1. The first stage of *Nibbāna* is attained by "seeing" (**not just reading about, but actually grasping**) the true nature of the existence: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

- Thus one needs to first learn from someone (like from this website), the nature of existence with the 31 realms, the aimless wandering of a being through endless rebirths *(saṃsāra*), the reasons for the rebirths, etc.
- Thus the key areas to understand are the Three Characteristics, the Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path. No one but a Buddha is capable of finding these and this is why it is important to have exposure to the PURE DHAMMA.

2. At the first stage (*Sotāpanna* or Stream Enterer), one partially comprehends the validity of the Buddha's world view. This is called attaining *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (elimination of defilements through clear vision) to a significant extent.

- He/she understands the "true nature" of existence: significance and the true meaning of the Three Characteristics of Existence (see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta").

3. The realization that it is not worthwhile or fruitful to stay in any of the 31 realms, in the long run, makes one to conduct oneself in a moral fashion. One's mind makes the decision that it is not worthwhile or beneficial to do those actions that destine oneself to birth in the lower four realms.

- This realization leads to a *Sotāpanna phala citta* (one thought -moment of realizing the *Sotāpanna* stage). When that is achieved, one will never again be reborn in the lower four realms ("free of suffering in the *apāyā* forever.") That is explained in, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta."

4. At this stage, one has realized the First Noble Truth of suffering (*dukkha*), and one earnestly starts on the Noble Eightfold Path. At this stage he still has greed and hate left in him to some extent, but at the next stage (*Sakadāgāmī*), he loses more of the strength of such greedy or hateful thoughts.

- A *Sakadāgāmī* is not fully released from the *kāma loka* since he/she will be born in the *deva loka* (but not in the human realm).
- In the *deva loka* (and in the *brahma* realms above that where a *Sakadāgāmī* can be born subsequently), the bodies are not subjected to diseases. Thus a *Sakadāgāmī* is said to be "healthy forever."

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5. When the third stage of *Anāgāmī* (Non-Returner) is attained, one loses any desire to be born in the *kāma loka*. One is not capable of generating any greedy or hateful thoughts belonging to the *kāma loka*.

- Thus, he/she will be born only one time more in a higher *Brahma* world reserved for the *Anāgāmīs*.

6. All through these three stages, *avijjā* or ignorance gradually diminish. But it is completely removed only at the *Arahant* stage.

- Once the *Arahant* stage is reached, the mind becomes totally pure (*anidassana viññāṇa* or *paññā* is attained), and is incapable of desiring anything "in this world of 31 realms." Thus there is no more rebirth, and one attains the perfect happiness at the peak of *nirāmisa sukha*.

Also, see "Nibbāna - Is it Difficult to Understand" and "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of āsavas."

Why Living a Moral Life Would Not Prevent a Birth in the Four Lower Realms

1. We desperately cling to "things in this world" because we have the perception that lasting happiness can be achieved. We crave the sensory pleasures. As mentioned before, there is nothing or no one holding us in this world of 31 realms. We cling to existence in these realms like an octopus grabbing its prey with all eight legs.

2. Even some Buddhists would, in the back of their minds, like to stay in this world a bit more. They do not realize the level of happiness associated with the *Nibbānic* bliss; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

- A popular blessing given by some Buddhist monks even today goes like the following. "May you be reborn in prosperous (*deva* or human) realms AND THEN attain *Nibbāna*." Even they do not understand the permanent happiness associated with *Nibbāna* or the possibility of much suffering possibly in the next birth.

3. The danger in such thinking is due to the following reason. We all have done both good and bad deeds in the lives before and have acquired uncountable *kamma* seeds both good and bad. See, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

- **At death it is possible for any one of those seeds to bear fruit.** If it is a good *kamma* seed, one will get a good birth, but if it is a bad *kamma* seed one will get a bad birth.

4. Our future births are not necessarily determined by how we live this life, because we have done uncountable number of both good and bad *kamma* in previous lives.

- This is why the Buddha said that even if one lives a perfectly moral life he cannot say that one will get a good rebirth UNLESS one has attained at least the *Sotāpanna* stage. A *Sotāpanna* has made ineffective all those bad *kamma* seeds that could give birth in the lower four realms.
- The Buddha also said that even if one lives immorally that also does not necessarily lead to a bad life in the next birth unless a *anantariya kamma* committed. (*Ānantariya kamma* is an extremely bad *kamma* like killing one's parents.)
- However, those bad acts will bear fruit at some point in the future. It is just that there are many good seed as well as bad seeds with any life-stream. See, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- Thus the goal of this life should be to attain at least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.

A different analysis on *Nibbāna* can be found at, "Difference Between Giving up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless", ……

Next, "Nirāmisa Sukha (Happiness Arising from Dissociating from the 31 realms)", …….

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3.2.5 What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)

Revised May 25, 2018; February 19, 2020

1. In Buddha Dhamma, everything in "this world" of 31 realms can be put into two categories: *mana* or *mano* (mind) and *rūpa* (material form).

- The mind is *citta* (thoughts) and the mental properties in the thoughts, *cetasika*.
- Everything else is *rūpa* (material forms).

2. Now let us look at *rūpa*: Many people think *rūpa* is just the body or "material things." A better translation for *rūpa* is "matter and energy." As stated in #1 above, everything else in the 31 realms that is not *citta* or *cetasika* is *rūpa*.

- There are five types of *rūpa* that we experience with our five senses: With the eye (*cakkhu*), we experience *vaṇṇa rūpa* (whatever that is visible.) We experience sounds (*sadda*) with ear (*sota*) and smells (*gandha*) with the nose (*ghāṇa*). Taste (*rasa*) is experience with the tongue (*jivhā*) and the touch (*phoṭṭhabba*) with the body (*kāya*.)

3. We can see that smells are due to tiny material particles that enter the nose. The taste is also due to food and drinks that touch the tongue; touch is also contact between "material things."

- But what about visible objects? We need light to see any objects; without light, we cannot see. Thus "seeing" involves matter and energy. Same for sound. Thus *vaṇṇa rūpa* (or *varna rūpa*) are really "matter and energy", which in the end is just energy. Since the turn of the 20th century, **science has confirmed that matter is just energy:** they are related by Einstein's famous formula of $E = mc^2$.
- It is important to realize that what is meant by "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ*." That means the light impinging on the eye *indriya* to give us the sensation of vision. Thus, in *vaṇṇa* (also called *varna* or *rūpa rūpa), sadda, gandha, rasa, and phoṭṭhabba* (the five senses), *rūpa* are really types of energy or particles.
- Modern science now agrees that there is no distinction between matter and energy. However, matter/energy is created by the mind (as "*dhammā*.") See, "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.. ."
- Matter above the *bhūta* stage will eventually be destroyed in the "*loka vināsa*" in a supernova type explosion. See, "WebLink: Sansāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory."

4. Thus the *rūpa* can vary in "density" from almost pure energy to the solid objects that we can see with our eyes.

- They go through three stages: At the "*gatī*" stage, they overlap with energy; in the "*bhūta*" stage, they are more solidified but the human eye still cannot see (this is why some beings that the humans cannot see are called "*bhūta*" in Pāli or Sinhala); it is only in the "*dhātu*" stage that the human eye can see; see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."
- At Parinibbāna (death) of an Arahant, the mind is not attached to a *rūpa* in any of the three forms: *dhātu*, *bhūta*, or *gati*.

5. When one is born anywhere in the 31 realms, it is the *viññāṇa* (impure consciousness) that keeps the mind bound to a material body. As the purity level of the mind goes higher one moves up from the lower realms with dense bodies to higher realms with less dense bodies.

- In the lower realms (at or below the human realm, which is the fifth realm), the mind is normally attached to a dense body that the human eye can see. This is **dense *dhātu* form.**
- In the *deva lokā* (realms 6-11), the bodies are finer (subtle.) Their minds are devoid of hate and thus are purer. In the realms 6-11, the bodies are made of *rūpa* still in the **"*dhātu*" form, but less dense.**

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- The minds are devoid of both hate and greed, and are thus more purer, in the *rūpa loka* and a*rūpa loka*. In the *rūpa loka* (realms 12-27), the bodies of the beings are much more less dense than the *devas* and are in the **"*bhūta*" form**.
- In *arūpa lokā* (realms 28-31) there are no *rūpa* even in the sense of *bhūta*. But the **four *mahā bhūta* are still associated with those being's "*gati*"** (see, *Kevaddha Sutta* in *Dīgha Nikāya*.) In those realms, *rūpa* can be thought of as indistinguishable from energy.
- When the mind becomes purified, *viññāṇa* becomes "*anidassana viññāṇa*", which is the *viññāṇa* of an Arahant (also called *paññā*). **Here there is no association of the mind with even fine rūpa associated with "*gati*.".** The mind is completely detaches from *rūpa*. The mind becomes pure and free. When one attains Aranthood, one still lives with the "solid body" of a human being until death. At *Parinibbāna*, the mind becomes completely free of *rūpa*. See, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga."

6. At a deeper level, the *anicca* nature, i.e., our inability to maintain anything to our satisfaction, is based on the fact that any *rūpa* is subjected to not only decay (impermanence) but also to unexpected change (*viparinama* nature).

- This fact is embodied in the Second Law of Thermodynamics; see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca."

7. **Thus to attain *Nibbāna* is to attain the perfectly purified mind, which refuses to be burden with a physical body that leads to decay and rebirth repeatedly (and thus to *dukkha*).**

8. In the 31 realms, one is born with a dense body (*kāma loka*), fine-material body (*rūpa loka*), or only a trace of "matter" in the form of "*gati*" (*arūpa loka*). When the mind becomes free of a "body" anywhere in the 31 realms, that is *Nibbāna*. This is another way to understand *Nibbāna*.

9. In Buddha Dhamma, any given thing or concept can be looked at from many different angles. They are all consistent. It is a complete "world view." Some people think, why do we have to worry about 31 realms, etc., but the world is very complex. Scientists are just beginning to appreciate this complexity.

- The amazing fact is that the Buddha discerned all this with his mind. Furthermore, he was able to present it all in a coherent manner.

10. Please re-read and contemplate on the above. In the long run, it will be very helpful. If you do not really understand it now, do not worry. You will be able to understand more when you get familiar with other concepts discussed in other posts. Everything at this site is inter-connected. It may take some time to "fill-in-the-blanks."

More details at, "Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa."

3.2.6 Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?

Revised October 24, 2018; re-written August 5, 2019

Difference Between *Dukha* and *Dukkha*

1. Buddha Dhamma describes nature's laws. **Many people think that *dukkha Sacca*** (the First Noble Truth, pronounced "dukkha sachcha") **says everything is suffering.** That is not true; there is a lot of apparent happiness, which makes people unaware of the hidden suffering until it is too late.

- The key is to develop *paññā* or wisdom to see the **hidden suffering**. And one does not necessarily need to feel pain to understand the *dukkha sacca*, even though it may motivate one to investigate.

2. There is a difference between **suffering** (the feeling or *vedanā*) and the ability to understand the causes for it (*paññā* or wisdom) thereby to **remove future suffering**.

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- Pāli word for suffering is ***dukha***. On the other hand, ***dukkha*** is *dukha* + *kha* or the "removal of *dukha*." [***khaya*** or ***kha*** means removal]
- ***Dukha* (suffering) is the opposite of *sukha* (pleasure).** That is in several *suttā*. For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bhāra Sutta (SN 22.22)":

"*Bhārā have pañcakkhandhā,*
bhārahāro ca puggalo;
Bhārādānaṃ ***dukhaṃ*** *loke,*
bhāranikkhepanaṃ ***sukhaṃ***."

Translated: "The five aggregates are burdens,
The burden-carrier is the person;
Carrying the burden is **suffering** in the world,
Laying the burden down is **blissful**."

- Of course, the word ***dukkha*** appears in most *suttā*, because that is what Buddha Dhamma is all about, i.e., **removal of suffering**.

3. We do not realize that the five aggregates are burdens. We like our bodies and mind-pleasing objects in the world (*rūpakkhandha*). We crave for what we experience with the mind (aggregates of *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*).

- It is evident that there are bouts of happiness everywhere. If everything FELT LIKE suffering, everyone will be seeking *Nibbāna*. It is hard for people even to see the real suffering out there.

4. Apparent pleasures mask pain and suffering we experience. In the HUMAN REALM, suffering and happiness both exist; one can experience both.

- In the realms higher than the human plane, suffering is relatively much less, and that is why it is hard for *devās* to even think about *Nibbāna*. However, even those *devās* and *Brahmā* end up eventually in the lowest four realms. Of course, each birth in any realm ends with death, and that is unavoidable as long as one is in the rebirth process.
- Beings in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*) are the ones who experience a lot of *dukha*. Of course, they have no idea about the *Dukkha Sacca*. The key point is that each living being spends a lot of time in the *apāyā,* compared to other realms in the rebirth process, see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- That is why the rebirth process is filled with suffering. The good news is, that suffering can be stopped.

What is the Noble Truth of *Dukkha*?

5. Let us see how the Buddha described the First Noble Truth on suffering in the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta*:

"*Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ—jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhaṃ, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampiccha na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ—saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā.*" **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

- Let us go through this "definition" of *dukkha* step-by-step.

6. In the first part, it says, "*jātipi* ***dukkhā****, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhaṃ...*"

Translated: "birth is **suffering (that can be overcome).** Getting old is suffering (that can be overcome). Sickness is suffering (that can be overcome). Death is suffering (that can be overcome)..."

- Other than "birth," the others (getting old, sickness, and death) are clearly associated with suffering.
- However, the other three types of inevitable sufferings are attached to every birth.

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- Furthermore, the other three types of sufferings cannot be eliminated without stopping birth, i.e., the rebirth process.
- Even though this is easy to see logically, it requires much more contemplation to understand.

7. The Buddha further clarified *dukkha* in the next verse, where he explicitly said: "*appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho.*" That means, "it brings sorrow to associate with persons/things one does not like. It also brings sorrow when one has to dissociate from people/things that one likes."

- We all know the truth of this first hand. It is unpleasant to associate with people one does not like, and also to have a job that one does not like, etc.
- Of course, the reverse of those is true too: "it brings sorrow when a loved one has to depart, and it also to lose a job or an object that one likes."

Dukkha Arises Due to *Anicca* Nature

8. Then comes, "*yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*" which is shortened for "*yam pi* ***icchaṃ*** *na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ.*"

Here we see, "*iccha*" (same as "*icca*") that we encountered in both *anicca, dukkha, anatta* and also in *Paticca Samuppāda* ("*pati+icca*" "*sama+uppāda*"). And "*labhati*" means "get", and "*na labhati*" means "not get." Note that "*iccha*" (in Sinhala ඉච්ඡ) emphasizes the "liking" in "*icca*" (in Sinhala ඉච්ච).

- **Translated: "If one does not get what one wants or likes, that leads to suffering."**
- We also note that *anicca* comes from "*na*" + "*icca*" or "not getting what one desires." Of course, *anicca* is the first of the three characteristics of Nature (*Tilakkhaṇa*).
- Therefore, this is a statement of the *anicca* nature, i.e., it is a natural law that one WILL NOT get what one desires in the long run. That is why it is not possible to eliminate suffering in the long term within the rebirth process.
- Suffering ends only with the ending of the rebirth process.

9. That same concept is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanicca sutta (SN 22.15) as, "*yadaniccam tam dukkham, yam dukkham tadanattā.*" That is the abbreviated version of "*yad aniccam tam dukkham, yam dukkham tad anattā.*" **Translated: "if something is *anicca*, *dukkha* arises, and one becomes helpless (*anatta*)."**

- Of course, the verse, "*yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*" corresponds to just the first part of that verse: "*yad aniccam tam dukkham.*"

10. The Buddha never said there is only suffering in this world. It is these bouts of "apparent happiness" that keeps the real suffering hidden. We always try to look at the bright side, and our societies also try to "cover-up" most of the pain and suffering that is out there.

- Both suffering and happiness are out there. **The key is to see the pain and suffering masked in apparent joy.**
- When a fish bites the bait, it sees only a bit of delicious food and does not see the hook, the string, and the man holding the fishing pole. It is not capable of understanding that "whole picture," with the suffering hidden (the hook). In the same way, humans cannot see the pain and suffering hidden in apparent sense pleasures until a Buddha comes to the world and reveals it.
- On television, we see mostly glamorous people. Look at what happens to such beautiful people when they get old: WebLink: RANKER: Celebrities Who Have Aged the Worst.
- We need to realize that we all will go through such inevitable changes as we get old. No matter how hard we try, it is not possible to maintain ANYTHING to our satisfaction in the LONG-TERM.

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- Furthermore, there is both suffering and happiness in the broader world of 31 realms. There is much more happiness in the planes above the human plane (but that happiness is temporary). And there is unimaginable suffering in the lower four, especially in the lowest one, the hell (*niraya*).

The Necessity of the Rebirth Process in Comprehending *Anicca*

11. The verses discussed in #8 through #10 above describe *anicca* nature. In the long run "we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction, and that leads to suffering"; This is "*ya da niccam tam dukkaham*" that was discussed in, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

- Later in the *sutta,* it says, "……*dukkhō anariyō* ***anatta samhitō***." One becomes *anatta* or helpless because of that. That is, "*tam dukkham tad anatta*" part of the verse in #9.
- In the *Anatta Lakkhana Sutta* (the second *sutta* delivered after the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta*), these concepts were further detailed; see, "Anatta – No Refuge in This World."
- *Anicca, dukkha, anatta* are thus the foundational "vision" that can be achieved only by a Buddha. It is "*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu...*" as emphasized at the beginning of the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta.*

12. That is why it is imperative to understand the "big picture" of "this world" with 31 realms, the process of rebirth, laws of *kamma*, and most importantly, *Paticca samuppāda*. Then we realize that most beings, due to their ignorance, are trapped in the lower four realms.

- There are only 7 billion or so people on Earth, but each of us carries in/on our bodies millions of living beings. See, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!"
- A household may have 4-6 people, but how many living beings are there in that house and in the yard? Millions, possibly billions. In a single scoop of dirt, there are thousands of tiny creatures.

13. The concept of *dukkha* (*dukha* that can be stopped) is seen only in the context of the rebirth process. It is all about removing suffering associated with FUTURE births.

- One's current life has already started (which is a result of past *kamma*) and WILL go through until the *kammic* energy for the physical body runs out. We can only MANAGE any suffering associated with sicknesses, injuries, etc. Those are associated with the life that has already started.
- However, those future sufferings can be stopped by stopping the rebirth process. That is the *Dukkha Sacca.*

Five Aggregates – What We Like to Maintain to Our Satisfaction

14. Finally, the last line of the verse summarizes it all: "*saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkha*." **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

Translated: "The suffering that can be stopped arises because of the craving for the five aggregates."

- What we crave for in this world can be divided into five groups: *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. We want to maintain our bodies and other inert or live bodies to our satisfaction. We want to keep our *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* (our thoughts) to our satisfaction.
- In other words, what we crave (*icca*) — and thus have *upādāna* for — are the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*). The "portion" of *pañcakkhandha* that we desire is called *pañcupādānakkhandha* (*pañca* + *upādāna* + *khandha*).

15. Therefore, ***dukha*** (suffering or the ***vedanā* felt**) arises BECAUSE we crave for things in this world and do "*san*" to acquire such things.

- Again, we crave *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*, ONLY because we believe those will bring us happiness. But the reality is that those cravings will inevitably bring suffering as the net result.

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We can stop suffering by stopping those cravings via understanding the real nature of this world, i.e., anicca nature leads to *dukkha*.

- This truth (***dukkha sacca***) is realized by cultivating wisdom (***paññā***), i.e., by comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Please re-read this until you get the idea. That is the "*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu…*" or the message only a Buddha can discover.

16. Just like the fish does not see the danger in the "tasty worm", we do not see the suffering hidden in the apparent pleasures. **There is suffering hidden in ALL sense pleasures**, but that can be realized only via stages. At the *Sotāpanna stage,* one willingly gives up only the intense greed and strong hate; ALL cravings are removed only at the *Arahant* stage.

- The realization of the actual characteristics of nature leads to giving up craving (*upādāna* due to *taṇhā*), which in turn leads to the release from the 31 realms, i.e., *Nibbāna*.
- Then *pañcupādānakkhandha* becomes just *pañcakkhandha* (i.e., no attachments even if the "world exists as before").

17. It is essential to realize that this craving cannot be removed by force. The mind needs to see the benefits of that through the cultivation of wisdom via comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta; see, "*Anicca – True Meaning" and "Anattā – A Systematic Analysis."

- Another critical concept to understand is the benefits one gets by the removal of craving for worldly things; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

3.2.7 Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts

1. I know of several "Buddhist" groups who try to "stop" thoughts, believing that is what happens at the *Arahant* stage of *Nibbāna*, i.e., they believe that the Buddha spent 45 years of his life trying to teach people how to stop thoughts, which is an even worse interpretation of *Nibbāna* than the Mahāyānists.

- When we are in deep sleep or are unconscious, we do not "think thoughts." Does that mean we attain *Arahanthood* during such times?
- What the Buddha advised was to stop immoral thoughts, and to ENCOURAGE moral thoughts; that is how one purifies the mind. This is what one does in the correct *ānāpāna* meditation too; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."
- The reality is that an *Arahant*'s thoughts are crystal clear (and pure), because they are devoid of defilements. Their memory is actually enhanced.
- Stopping all thoughts can lead to loss of perception and memory.

2. Many misconceptions about *Nibbāna* arise because the true meanings of some key Pāli words that the Buddha used are misunderstood. We have discussed how Mahayana forefathers twisted the concept of *sunyata* (emptiness) because they could not understand the concept of *Nibbāna*; see, "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?."

3. There are several key words in Buddha Dhamma that need to be comprehended without even the slightest change. Most of these misconceptions arise because such key Pāli words are misinterpreted and also mis-translated. Buddha's teachings were delivered in *Maghadhi* language and made to a form suitable for verbal transmission in the Pāli language ("Pāli" means "lined up"). Many times problems arise when people try to use Sanskrit translations as originals and try to interpret those Sanskrit words.

4. Three such words are *anicca, dukkha, anatta*: see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations." Three more such words are *nirodha, khaya*, and *vaya*. In this case the three words have apparently similar, but very different meanings. Let us look at the origins of these words:

- ***Nirodha*** comes from "*nir*"+"*udaya*", where "*nir*" means stop and "*udaya*" means "arise." Thus *nirodha* means stop something from arising. In Buddha Dhamma anything happens due to one or more

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causes. Thus if one does not want something to happen, one should remove the causes for it, and thus stop it from arising.

- **"*San*" causes anything in this world to arise** via "*saṅkhāra*"; see, "What is "San"? – Meaning of Saṃsāra." However, anything that arises is subjected to the natural law of decay; **this "*khaya*."**
- "*San*" and "*khaya*" go together: As explained in "What is "San"? – Meaning of Saṃsāra", "*sankhya*" in Pāli or Sinhala means numbers, and "*san*" means adding (or multiplying) thus contributing to "building or arising" and "*khaya*" means subtracting (or dividing) and thus leading to "decay or destruction."
- Things that undergo this "arising" and "destruction" are called **"*saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)."** Everything in this world is a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala).

5. Anything that arises in this world (a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)) starts decaying ("*khaya*") from the moment it starts arising. For example, when a baby is born, all the cells in the baby's body would have died in a couple of months, but more cells are born than those died; until that baby becomes a young person of around twenty years of age, more cells arise in a given time than decayed. Thus the baby "grows" into a young person, and then things are sort of in balance until about forty years of age, and then the "*khaya*" process starts dominating and person slowly starts to get weaker. Eventually, that person dies or destroyed; **this is "*vaya*."**

- Once starts arising, a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) cannot be stopped; it needs to undergo its natural process of growing, come to an apparent stationary state (but not stationary even momentarily), and eventually is destroyed. If someone commits suicide, this life may end, but that unspent energy starts a new life right away. Thus all one can do is to stop something from arising. **This stopping of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) via removing its causes is called "*nirodha*."**

6. A "*saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)" is anything in this world that arises due to "*san*" and decayed inevitably (*khaya)*, and is eventually destroyed (*vaya*). Any living being is a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) and arises due to "*san*." We acquire "*san*" via "*saṅkhāra*" because we do not comprehend the true nature of the world (*avijjā* or ignorance) and thus cling to things in this world with "*taṇhā*"; see, "Taṇhā - How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- We can begin to see with clarity when we get rid of *taṇhā* and *avijjā* via removing *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hatred), and *moha* (delusion) from our minds gradually; this is also a "*khaya*" process for such defilements ("*āsava*"), where we gradually remove these three defilements (*āsava*) from our minds; see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā." When a mind is pure (i.e., all *āsava* are removed), it does not do any saṅkhāra and thus no "*saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)" can arise. At that stage, one has attained "*nirodha*" of any future "arising", i.e., one has attained *Nibbāna*.

7. Now let us take some famous verses from the *Tipiṭaka* and see how the meanings come out naturally, without effort:

- The third Noble truth is "*dukkha nirodha sacca*" (here "*sacca*" is pronounced "sachcha"; *sacca* is truth), i.e., that suffering can be stopped from arising. Most people misinterpret "*dukkha nirodha sacca*" as "existing suffering can be stopped." Our current life is a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) that was caused by PREVIOUS causes; this life and any associated suffering CANNOT be stopped, and need to undergo its natural cause until death. That is why an *Arahant* (or even a Buddha) feels suffering due to past *kamma* (old causes).
- However, an *Arahant* has stopped FUTURE suffering from arising. This is indicated by **another meaning of nirodha: "*ni*" + "*roda*", where "*roda*" means wheels; this *nirodha* also means "taking the wheels off of the *sansāric* (rebirth) process."** There is no rebirth with a physical body that could result in old age, sickness, and death. Thus Nibbāna is removal of the causes that could lead to future suffering.

8. This is why the Nibbāna is of two kinds: "*saupadisesa Nibbāna*" and "*anupadisesa Nibbāna*."

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- When a person attains *Nibbāna*, it is called *saupadisesa Nibbāna* because that person is still "in this world of 31 realms"; he/she still has a body that needs to undergo its natural destruction; but one can still experience the *Nibbānic* bliss by getting into *nirodha samāpatti* for up to 7 days at a time.
- When that person dies, there is no rebirth and *Nibbāna* is "complete"; this is called *anupadisesa Nibbāna*. Suffering ends permanently.

9. Finally, not absolutely everything in this world of 31 realms is *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) or *saṅkhāra*. Absolutely everything is denoted by "dhamma", which includes *sankata* (*saṅkhāra*) AND nama gotta. Here *nama gotta* are the "records" of all events of all beings in the mental plane that are truly permanent; see, "Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra (saṅkhata (sankata in Sinhala))."

- This is why the Buddha's last words were, "*vaya Dhamma saṅkhāra, appamādena sampādetha*," or "All perishable Dhamma are *saṅkhāra* (or *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)); thus strive diligently and identify "*san*" ("*san*" + "*pā*" "*detha*")."
- From beginningless time, we all built a new *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) each time the old *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) got destroyed. We do this uncountable times DURING each lifetime and also at death: we have been *brahmā*, *devas*, and humans countless times, but we have spent much more time in the four lowest realms. Thus in his last words the Buddha advised us to stop this senseless rebirth process which is filled with so much suffering, and to attain the permanent happiness of nirāmisa sukha in *Nibbāna*.
- By the way, *Nibbāna* is the only "entity" that does not ARISE due to causes; it is "*asankata*" ("*a*" + "*saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)" or "not *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)" or "not conditioned") because it does not have causes. It is reached via ELIMINATING THE CAUSES for everything that arise due to causes, i.e., *nirodha* of *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) automatically leads to *Nibbāna*.

3.2.8 Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World

September 2, 2016; Revised November 24, 2016 (#9); Revised April 17, 2017; March 22, 2020

Introduction

1. Misconceptions about *Nibbāna* arise because the true meaning of it had been hidden for many hundreds of years. In the previous posts in this series, I have described what *Nibbāna* is. See, "Nibbāna."

- The question many people have is, "what happens to an *Arahant* upon death?." One simply is not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms of this world. It is called *Parinibbāna* ("*pari*" + *Nibbāna*"; meaning "full *Nibbāna*").
- Until *Parinibbāna,* an Arahant lives like a normal person and is subjected to *kamma vipāka*. However, "stressful thoughts that arise due to greed, anger, and ignorance" do not arise in a living *Arahant*. Until the death of the physical body, an Arahant has *saupadisesa Nibbāna, i.e., Nibbāna* is not complete.

2. It is not possible to "describe" *Nibbāna* (or more precisely what happens after *Parinibbāna*) in terms of the terminology rooted in "this world." Not a single word that we use can be used to describe what *Nibbāna* is like.

- We simply do not have any "data" or "concepts" or "terminology" that pertain to *Nibbāna* because those would be totally foreign to us living in "this world."
- One crude analogy would be trying to explain to a fish what life is like outside the water. A fish would not understand the need to breathe air instead of water.
- Another would be like trying to explain to a person who has time-traveled from thousand years ago, how radio or television works. He would not have sufficient "data" to be able to comprehend how radio or TV works.

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Suttā on *Nibbāna*

3. But *Nibbāna* "exists" because one can attain it. But it does not exist in this world of 31 realms.

- There are four *suttā* in the *Udāna* section of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that explain *Nibbāna* (Udāna 8.1 through 8.4).
- Once you open a *sutta* at the Sutta Central website, click on the left-most drop-down to choose one of several languages. This is a good resource; consider making a donation if you find it useful. **Note: I am not associated with Sutta Central.**
- Of source, the translations are incorrect frequently for key Pāli words, as is the case for many websites/book. But at least one can see the correct Pāli version.

Paṭhama Nibbāna Paṭisaṃyutta Sutta – Nibbāna Exits

4. Let us look at the first one, "*WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhama Nibbāna Paṭisaṃyutta sutta*." It says, *"Atthi, bhikkhave, tadāyatanaṃ,* ***yattha neva pathavī, na āpo, na tejo, na vāyo, na ākāsānañcāyatanaṃ, na viññāṇañcāyatanaṃ, na ākiñcaññāyatanaṃ, na nevasaññānāsaññāyatanaṃ, nāyaṃ loko, na paraloko, na ubho candimasūriyā.*** *Tatrāpāhaṃ, bhikkhave, neva āgatiṃ vadāmi, na gatiṃ, na ṭhitiṃ, na cutiṃ, na upapattiṃ; appatiṭṭhaṃ, appavattaṃ, anārammaṇamevetaṃ. Esevanto dukkhassā"ti."*.

- Let us consider the first part: "*atthi, bhikkhave, tadāyatanaṃ*." Here "*atthi*" means "exists", and "*tadāyatana*" is another word for *Nibbāna*. *Tadāyatana* comes from "*tath*" + "*āyatana*," where "*tath*" (pronounced "thath") means "perfect" and "*āyatana*" means "faculties." Phonetically, the combined word is "*tadāyatana*" (pronounced "thadayathana").
- It is a good idea to be familiar with how to spell Pāli words with the "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention. It is DIFFERENT from "Standard English." See, "Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1 and "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2
- Thus the translation of *"Atthi, bhikkhave, tadāyatanaṃ"* is, "*Bhikkhus*, *Nibbāna* exists (where everything is perfect)".

5. The second part in the blue says what can be said about *Nibbāna.* First, "*appatiṭṭhaṃ, appavattaṃ, anārammaṇamevetaṃ"* means, "It is without support (causes), unmoving, without any *ārammaṇa* (thought object.)" The last part in the blue, "*Esevanto dukkhassā"ti"* means, "it is the end of suffering."

- Therefore, those sentences in the blue state ALL that one can say about *Nibbāna.*
- The rest of that verse (in the red) says what is ABSENT in *Nibbāna.*

Paṭhama Nibbāna Paṭisaṃyutta Sutta – What is Absent in *Nibbāna*

6. The first part marked in deep red is, **"there is no *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo* (*mahā bhūta*) there; there is no *ākāsānañcāyatana,* no *viññāṇañcāyatana,* no *ākiñcaññāyatana,* no *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana*; furthermore, there is no "this world (that we experience), there is no *para loka* (where *gandhabbā* live, see,** "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (*para loka*)"**); and the Moon or the Sun would not arise there"** (*candimasūriyā* is Moon and the Sun).

The second part marked in red says, "*Bhikkhus*, I say there is surely no coming and going between *ayam loko* and *para loko*, no living in either of those, no passing away (*cuti*), no birth."

- The absence of *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo* means NOTHING made of matter that we see around us (people, animals, trees, other planets or stars) is there in *Nibbāna.*

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- So, all that we experience (including *jhāna*) will not be there, after *Parinibbāna*, as discussed in #2 above.
- And, of course, there is no *gandhabba* going back and forth between "*ayaṃ loko*" and "*para loko*."
- Our terminology regarding ANYTHING AT ALL simply does not apply there.

Without *Nibbāna* There Would Not Be an End to Suffering

7. The *Tatiya Nibbāna Paṭisaṃyutta Sutta* (Udāna 8.3) has the following key verse: "*Atthi, bhikkhave, ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ. **No ce taṃ, bhikkhave, abhavissa ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ, na yidha jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyetha.** Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, atthi ajātaṃ abhūtaṃ akataṃ asaṅkhataṃ, tasmā jātassa bhūtassa katassa saṅkhatassa nissaraṇaṃ paññāyatī"ti*

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, "not born", "not formed", "not made", "not conditioned" exists. **For *Bhikkhus*, if there had not been that which is "not born", "not formed", "not made", "not conditioned", an escape here from the born, become, made, and conditioned cannot be discerned.** But *Bhikkhus,* since there is a "not born", "not formed", "not made", "not conditioned", an escape from the born, become, made, and conditioned is evident."

- The "not born", "not formed", "not made", "not conditioned" is *Nibbāna.* It is reached by **eliminating** all that is formed, made, and conditioned.
- In other words, "this world" comes to existence (for a given person) because of the *bhava* and *jāti* built via defiled thoughts (*saṅkhāra*) generated due to *avijjā* (in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process.) With the cessation of *avijjā*, that mechanism or process stops and no more rebirths will be possible. That results in *Nibbāna.*
- There are two more companion *suttā* that describe *Nibbāna*: "Dutiyanibbānapaṭisaṃyutta Sutta (Ud 8.2)" and "Catutthanibbānapaṭisaṃyutta Sutta (Ud 8.4)." The translations available there are good enough to get further insights.

The Fire Analogy

8. One time, the inquisitor Vacchagotta (there is a whole series of *suttā* in the *Vacchagottavagga* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* about his probing questions put forth to the Buddha), asked the Buddha what happens to an *Arahant* upon death: "Where would he/she go?."

- The Buddha showed him a burning fire, and asked him, "when this fire is extinguished, can you say where it went?." Vacchagotta understood. When the fire is extinguished, it simply is not there anymore. That is all one can say. In the same way, when an *Arahant* dies, he/she is not reborn and thus cannot be "found" anywhere in the 31 realms.
- On the other hand, someone with *abhiññā* powers (with the *cutūpapāda ñāṇa*) can see where a normal person is reborn upon death. That life-stream exists somewhere in the 31 realms.

Rāgakkhayo Dosakkhayo Mohakkhayo— Idaṃ Vuccati Nibbānan

9. The Buddha could only explain to us the way to attain *Nibbāna*, by relinquishing our desire for worldly things based on the unsatisfactory nature (or the *anicca* nature) of this world.

- The Buddha said, "*rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo— idaṃ vuccati nibbānan*" *ti*," i.e., one attains *Nibbāna* via getting rid of *rāga, dosa, moha* in one's mind. Thus cleansing our minds is the only way to *Nibbāna*. See, for example, WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānapañhā Sutta (SN 38.1) and WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmaṇḍaka Sutta (SN 39.1.)

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- However, it is not possible to even start on "*rāgakkhaya*" until one gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage. "*Rāgakkhaya*" attained partially at the *Anāgāmī* stage (via removal of *kāma rāga*) and fully at the *Arahant* stage (via removal of *rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga*). A *Sotāpanna* reduces *dosa* to *paṭigha* level (removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage), and *moha* to *avijjā* level (removed at the *Arahant* stage).
- In the new section, "Living Dhamma," we discuss these points and start from a basic level, even without referring to deeper concepts like rebirth.

Nibbāna Reached In Stages

10. The point is that *Nibbāna* is to be comprehended in stages.

- The very first stage of *Nibbāna* or "*Niveema*" or "cooling down" that can be experienced even before getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage. In fact, it is not possible to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage by skipping this step.
- To attain the *Sotāpanna* stage one MUST comprehend the *anicca* nature of this world to some extent. In order for the mind to grasp that concept, it must be free of the "coarse defilements" or "*pañca nīvaraṇa*" or "five hindrances" that cover one's mind.
- For that one MUST live a moral life, start contemplating Buddha Dhamma, and experience the "cooling down" that results.

11. Many people try to attain or comprehend *Nibbāna* by reading about deep concepts about what it is. There are so many books out there on explaining what *Nibbāna* is, by people who may not have experienced even the basic "cooling down" or "*nirāmisa sukha*."

- They try to explain concepts like *suñyata* or "emptiness" and *bodhicitta*; see, "What is Suñyata or Suññata (Emptiness)?." That is a complete waste of time because as we saw above, it is not possible to describe *Nibbāna* with words that we know.
- Rather, one starts experiencing *Nibbāna* in stages. One can start experiencing the RELIEF or COOLING DOWN that results when one starts living a moral life and start discarding *dasa akusala* in STAGES.
- Furthermore, it is important to understand that one does not start on the Path by first comprehending the *anicca* nature; the *anicca* nature will gradually become clear.
- The Buddha clearly stated the importance of following a gradual Path in the "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)." Also, see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."
- Even a person who does not believe in rebirth can start from this level: "Living Dhamma."

Nibbāna Is Not a Dhamma – It Is a *Paramattha* Dhamma

12. In the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma – Introduction," we saw that everything that EXISTS, can be put into four ultimate constituents (*paramattha dhamma*):

(i) Thoughts (*citta*)

(ii) Thought qualities or mental factors (*cetasika*)

(iii) Matter (*rūpa*)

(iv) *Nibbāna*

- Any ***dhamma*** in this world is normally be a COMBINATION of ALL THREE of the **first three *paramattha dhamma***. Note that ***Dhammā*** "bear" things in this world.
- The fourth ***paramattha dhamma*** in the list above, *Nibbāna,* does not exist within the 31 realms. But *Nibbāna* exists, i.e., it can be attained. An *Arahant* merges with *Nibbāna* at the death of his/her physical body.

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- ***Nibbāna* is NOT *dhamma*. It does not "bear" anything in this world.**

Nibbāna Can Be Experienced in *Nirodha Samāpatti*

13. Let us discuss some relevant characteristics of an *Arahant*, i.e., one who has attained *Nibbāna*. He/she cannot experience *Nibbānic* bliss (experience of *Nibbāna*) unless getting into *Nirodha Samāpatti* for a maximum of 7 days at a time.

- When an *Arahant* is in *Nirodha Samāpatti,* there are no *citta* or thoughts flowing through his/her mind. There is no breathing and is not very different from a dead body (other than the fact that the body of the *Arahant* will have normal body temperature.). The point is, that *Arahant* will not be able to explain to us "the experience of *Nibbāna*." In our terminology, all he/she can say is that he/she did not experience any "worldly thoughts."
- At other times, an *Arahant* will be experiencing "this world" just like another human: he/she will recognize people/things, sounds, smells, etc. The only exception is that thoughts burdened with *rāga, dosa, moha* cannot arise: *Asobhana* (non-beautiful) *cetasika* will not be associated with those thoughts; see, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika."
- But he/she will be engaged in *puñña kriya* (meritorious deeds like delivering discourses), just like the Buddha did; they are just "actions", and are not *puññābhisaṅkhāra* or *puñña abhisaṅkhāra*.

Nibbāna and *Parinibbāna*

14. Here is another interesting point. Some *Arahants* may have *kammic* energy for the "human *bhava*" left when he/she dies; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein." But still, there will not be another rebirth for any *Arahant* **in this world of 31 realms**.

- The reason is that the "status of the *Arahanthood*" could not be borne (or sustained) by any other "finer body" than a dense human body. For example, if he/she were to be reborn human, then a human *gandhabba* need to come out of the dead human body; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)." But the fine body (*trija kaya*) of the *gandhabba* cannot "bear" the energy associated with an *Arahant*.
- In the same way, the fine bodies of a *deva* or a *brahma* also cannot sustain the mind of an Arahant. Thus if a *Deva* or a *Brahma* attains the *Arahanthood*, they will immediately attain *Parinibbāna*. In other words, there are no living *Arahants* in *Deva* or *Brahma* realms.

15. We can consider the following analogy to make clear what happens. A heater-coil is immersed in water, can "bear" the current that passes through it, while immersed in boiling water. But if we take a coil out of the water, it will burn. The heater coil cannot "bear" the current passing through it unless immersed in water.

- In the same way, the "*Arahanthood*" can be "borne" or be "sustained" only with a solid human body. Once the *gandhabba* comes out of that body –upon the death of that physical body — the "*Arahanthood*" cannot be "borne" by that very fine body. In fact, the "*Arahanthood*" cannot be "borne" by an even a layperson for more than 7 days. Once attaining the "*Arahanthood*," one must become a *Bhikkhu* within 7 days, or one will die because a layperson cannot "bear" the "*Arahanthood*."
- With *Parinibbāna* (death of an *Arahant*) "the *Nibbāna* is complete." The Sinhala word is "*pirinivana*," where "*nivana*" is *Nibbāna* and "*piri*" means "full" or "complete."
- Therefore, *Nibbāna* exists. But one who has attained "full *Nibbāna*" or *Parinibbāna* will no longer be in this world of 31 realms. One would be totally free of any and all sufferings in this world, including harsh sufferings in the *apāyā*.

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3.3 Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta

- Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations
- The Way to Nibbāna – Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero
- Anicca – True Meaning
  - Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like
  - Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction
  - Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things
  - Anicca – The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")
  - How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā
  - How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – II
  - If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?
- Anattā – A Systematic Analysis
  - Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma
  - Anatta – No Refuge in This World
  - Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link
  - Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?
  - Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – No "Unchanging Self"
- Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings
- Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttā
- Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses
- Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa
  - Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa
  - Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views
  - Associations (Sevana) – A Root Cause of Wrong Views
- Why are Tilakkhaṇa not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?
- Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment
- Types of Bodies in 31 Realms – Connection to Jhāna
- Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma

3.3.1 Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations

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Introduction

1. No other factor has contributed to help keep *Nibbāna* hidden in the past many hundreds of years than the incorrect interpretations of *anicca* as just "impermanence" and *anatta* as just "no-self." If one can find even a single instance in the *Pāli Tipiṭaka* (not translations) that describe *anicca* and *anatta* that way, please let me know at lal@puredhamma.net. Also, before quoting English translations of the *Tipiṭaka*, please read the post, "**Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars**."

- I consider this series of posts on "*anicca, dukkha, anatta*" to be the most important at the website. Reading the posts in the given order could be very beneficial.
- **A Buddha comes to this world to reveal three words and eight letters (in Pāli). "*Attakkarā thīnapadā Sambuddhena pakāsithā, na hī sīla vatan hotu uppajjati Tathāgatā*." That means "a Buddha (*Tathāgata*) is born NOT just to show how to live a moral life, but to reveal three words with eight letters to the world."** So far, I have not seen this verse in the *Tipiṭaka*; it is likely to have been in an old commentary.
- These three words with eight letters are *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*. (when written in Sinhala/Pāli: අනිච්ච දුක්ඛ අනත්ත but with last two letters in each term in the "old script" combined to become one, so the number of letters becomes eight instead of 11. I was able to find only අනත්ථfor අනත්ත, but you can see how four letters become three there).

Anicca is pronounced "anichcha," rhymes with "picture."

WebLink: Listen to pronounciation of : anicca

Dukkha pronounced similarly, duk+kha.

WebLink: Listen to pronounciation of : dukkha

Anatta is pronounced "anaththa."

WebLink: Listen to pronounciation of : anatta

See, "Pāli Glossary and Pronunciation" for more meanings of Pāli terms and sound files on pronunciations.

2. *Asubha* ("non-auspicious" or "unfruitful" nature) is another characteristic of nature. It appears together with *anicca, dukkha, anatta* in several *suttā*, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Vipallāsa Sutta (AN 4.49)."

- Furthermore, the word, *Tilakkhaṇa*, does not appear in the *Tipiṭaka* to my knowledge.
- However, *anicca, dukkha, anatta* appear as a group in many *suttā,* as we discuss below. Thus it is justifiable to clump them together as *Tilakkhaṇa*.

Why Are *Tilakkhaṇa* so Important?

3. The Buddha clarified these "three characteristics of this world" in his very first *sutta*; see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."

- These are the three primary characteristics of "this world." A Buddha comes to the world to reveal the true nature of the world.
- Any moral person instinctively knows (and most religions teach) how to live a righteous life; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."
- The Buddha stated that if one comprehends the true nature of "this world," as codified in these three words, then one would attain the Stream Entry (*Sotāpanna*) stage of *Nibbāna*; see, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?."

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4. Therefore, a good understanding of the words *anicca, dukkha, anatta* is critical. If one sticks to incorrect interpretation of these three words, no matter how much effort one exerts, there is no possibility of attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage. Even in most *Theravāda* English texts, these three words have incorrect translations as impermanence, suffering, and "no-soul" or "no-self." The correct meanings are the following.

- Nothing in this world can be maintained to one's satisfaction (*anicca*).
- When one strives to achieve that, it leads to suffering (*dukkha*). However, many people try to gain "happiness" by resorting to immoral deeds, and then end up in the *apāyā*. That is how one becomes genuinely helpless.
- Striving to achieve the impossible (i.e., seeking happiness in worldly things), only leads to suffering. Thus, one efforts are not only unfruitful, but one becomes helpless in the rebirth process (*anatta*).

Pāli Words for Impermanence Are "*Adduwan*" or "*Aniyata*"

5. The Pāli word for impermanence is NOT *anicca; it* is *addhuva* or *aniyata*. For example, "*Jīvitaṃ aniyataṃ, Maraṇaṃ niyataṃ*" means, "life is not permanent, death is." [***addhuva*** :[adj.] unstable; impermanent. ***aniyata*** :[adj.] uncertain; not settled.]

"*addhuvaṃ jīvitaṃ, dhuvaṃ maraṇaṃ*" means the same thing.

- Therefore, the critical mistake was in translating the original Pāli word *anicca* to *Sanskrit* as "*anitya,"* which does mean impermanence.
- This term, "*dhuva*" comes in the *Brahmanimantanika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 49)*, where the Baka Brahma says his existence is permanent; see #12 of "Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

Anatta Is Not "Self" or "No-Self"

6. Now let us examine the damage done by translating the original *Pāli* word *anatta* to *Sanskrit* as "*anātma."*

- At the time of the Buddha also, there were two opposing views on the idea of a "self." One camp believed in an unchanging "soul" (*ātma*) associated with a being. This camp thus corresponds to the major religions of the world today with the concept that when one dies, one's soul goes to heaven or hell.
- The opposing camp argued that there is "no-soul" (*anātma*) and that when one dies, there is nothing that survives the death. This view is the materialistic view today that our minds arise from matter, and thus, there is nothing that survives death.

7. The Buddha said it was neither. There is no "self" permanently associated with a living being: both the mind and the body are in constant flux (see the Section on "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"), and thus there is no "soul" or an "unchanging self." See, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream."

- However, one has a choice of how to respond to an external stimulus. Therefore, it is also incorrect to say that there is "no-self."
- Furthermore, there is continuity at death based on cause-and-effect (*paṭicca samuppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction").
- The new living being is a continuation of the old living being, just as an older man is a continuation of the process from the baby stage. Change is there at every MOMENT, based on cause-and-effect; the "new" is dependent on the "old."
- That is also why it is not correct to say that an *Arahant* is annihilated at death (i.e., at *Parinibbāna*). See, "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) – Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering."

They Are Related to Each Other

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8. The Buddha stated that the three characteristics of "this world" are RELATED to each other:

"yadaniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ, yaṃ dukkhaṃ tadanattā" (*"yad aniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ, yaṃ dukkhaṃ tad anattā"*), i.e.,

"if something is *anicca*, *dukkha* arises, and one becomes helpless (*anatta*)." Note that "*yaṃ*" and "*yad*" have the same meaning and are used interchangeably. In the same way, "*yadidaṃ*" comes from "*yad idaṃ*."

- (In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya (Anicca Vagga)*, many *suttā* including WebLink: suttacentral: *Ajjhattanicca Sutta* (SN 35.1), WebLink: suttacentral: *Bahiranicca Sutta* (SN 35.4), and WebLink: suttacentral: *Yadanicca sutta* (SN 22.15) have the above verse.)

9. **Now let us see what happens if we take *anicca* to be impermanent and *anatta* to be "no-soul."** Then the above verse reads, "if something is not permanent, suffering arises, and because of that one becomes "no-self."

- Many people take a human body as "it," and say that since the body is impermanent, suffering arises. But the *suttā* mentioned above describe this for all six internal senses (*Ajjhattanicca* or ***Ajjhatta*** *Anicca Sutta)* and for everything **external** that is sensed by the six sense faculties (***Bāhiranicca*** *or Bāhira Anicca Sutta*). Therefore, that verse holds for anything and everything "in this world."
- Thus if a headache does not become permanent, it is meaningless to say it has no self.
- But there are many things in the world, if become permanent, would lead to happiness: health, wealth, association with someone liked, moving away from someone disliked, etc.
- As we will show in the next post ("Anicca – True Meaning"), the correct translation holds for any case.

10. Now the opposite of the above statement must be correct, too (in mathematical logic, this is not correct generally, but in this particular case, it can be shown to be right. It is due to the assumption that "*dukkha*" depends only on "*nicca*" or "*anicca*" and no other factor); see, "Logical Proof that Impermanence is Incorrect Translation of Anicca."

Let us consider the incorrect interpretations, that say:

"if something is permanent, suffering does not arise, and because of that, it implies a "self."

- If one has a permanent headache or a sickness, how can that stop suffering? And in what sense a "self" arise?
- There are many things in this world if it become permanent, would lead to suffering: a disease, poverty, association with someone disliked, moving away from a loved one, etc.

Thus we can see that *anicca* and *anatta* do not mean impermanence and "no-self."

- However, if we take the correct translation, we can show that the reverse statement also holds as we discuss in the next post: "Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like."

Everyone Knows Anything in This World is Impermanent

11. Permanence and impermanence are inseparable PROPERTIES of living beings, objects, and events. On the other hand, *nicca/anicca* are PERCEPTIONS IN ONE'S MIND about them.

- We cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction (including "our" own body) in the long run, and that is *anicca*. And because of that, we become distraught, and that is *dukkha*. And since we are unable to prevent this sequence of events, we are truly helpless in the long run (nothing of real substance left in the end.) That is *anatta*.
- Here is a video that illustrates the concept of *anicca* clearly:

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- We need to realize that we all will go through this inevitable change as we get old. No matter how hard we try, it is not possible to maintain ANYTHING to our satisfaction. It is the nature of "this world": *anicca.*
- Now, of course, any of these celebrities (or their fans) will be saddened to see that comparison in the video above. They have not been able to maintain their bodies to their satisfaction. However, a person who is in bad terms with any of these celebrities could be happy to see those pictures, since he/she would like to see something terrible to happen to that celebrity.

12. Thus "impermanence" is inevitable; it is a property of anything in this world. **But "*anicca*" is a perception in someone's mind. That perception CAN be changed; that is how one gets rid of suffering.**

- In the above case, celebrities' bodies ARE impermanent; but that did not necessarily cause suffering to ALL. It caused pain to only those who did not like them getting old. If they had any enemies, those would be happy to see them losing their "good looks."
- Impermanence is a fact; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." But impermanence is NOT the MEANING of *anicca*.
- These pictures provide the visual impact that we do not usually get. We don't see changes in ourselves because the change is gradual.

13. A Buddha is not needed to show that impermanence is an inherent characteristic of our universe. Scientists are well aware of that, but they have not attained *Nibbāna*. *Anicca* is a profound concept with several meanings, and they are all related. Here are three ways to look at it:

- "Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like" (listed above also).
- "Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction."
- "Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things."

14. Finally, the Buddha has said, "*Sabbe Dhammā anattā*." **So, what does "all *dhammā* are "no-self" mean (if *anatta* meant "no-self")?** *Dhammā* means "to bear" and include those *kammic* energies that can bring future *vipāka* including future rebirths. We strive to make such *Dhammā* which will only bring NET suffering in the future. Nothing in this world is of any real value in the end. They all have transient existence: That is *anatta* nature.

- This is systematically explained in "Origin of Life" and specifically in the post, "Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections."
- Another keyword that had lost its true meaning is "*san*"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)."

Possible Historical Reasons for Mistranslations

15. We can see the origins of some of these incorrect translations by looking at how Buddha Dhamma was transmitted over time. For details, see "Historical Background."

- For about 500 years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* was transmitted orally, from generation to generation of *bhikkhus*, who faithfully passed down the Pāli Canon. Of course, it had been DESIGNED for easy oral transmission.
- See, "Preservation of the Dhamma" for a discussion on this aspect. The original teachings of the Buddha are still intact.

16. Then it was written down for the first time in 29 BCE in Sri Lanka with **Sinhala script**. **Pāli is a phonetic language that does not have an alphabet.**

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- The *Tipiṭaka* was never translated to any other language until the Europeans discovered "Buddhism" in the late 1600s; see, "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma."
- *Tipiṭaka* was not translated to even the Sinhala language until 2005.

17. When Rhys Davis and others started doing those English translations, they were heavily influenced by Sanskrit *Mahāyāna sutras*, as well by *Vedic* literature. Think about it: when the Europeans first started discovering all these different Pāli and Sanskrit documents, they must have been overwhelmed by the complexities.

- It took them some time to separate Buddhism from Hinduism, and in the process, some concepts got mixed up; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- For example, They ASSUMED that "*anatta*" was the same as "*anātma,*" which is a Sanskrit word, with a different meaning of "no-self." Similarly, they took "*anicca*" to mean the same as Sanskrit "*anitya,"* which does mean "impermanent."

It Will Take Time to Untangle These Issues

18. The worst was that even contemporary Sinhala scholars like Malasekara (who was a doctoral student of Rhys Davis), "learned" Buddhism from the Europeans, and thus started using wrong interpretations. Other Sinhala scholars like Kalupahana and Jayathilake also learned "Buddhism" at universities in the United Kingdom.

- Following the original translations by Rhys Davis, Eugene Burnouf, Olcott, and others, those Sinhala scholars also write books in both English and Sinhala. Of course, scholars in other Buddhist countries did the same in their languages, and the incorrect interpretations spread throughout the whole world.
- To correct this grave problem, we need to go back to the *Tipiṭaka* in Pāli and start the process there.
- Pāli *suttā* should not be translated word-to-word. Most of the *suttā* are condensed and written in style conducive for oral transmission; see, "Sutta – Introduction."
- Commentaries were written to explain critical concepts in the *Tipiṭaka*, and only three of those original commentaries have survived. We need to rely heavily on those three: *Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Peṭakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana.*
- Instead, most people rely on incorrect commentaries written in more recent years, especially Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*. For details, see "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background." However, Buddhaghosa did not change the meanings of the words *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. That is likely to have happened in more recent times, as I explained above). But he incorporated many other Hindu concepts like breath meditation and *kasina* meditation; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."

19. It is also important to note that mass printing was not available until recent years, and became common only in the 1800s; see, "WebLink: newworldencyclopedia.org: Printing press."

- Thus mass production of books became possible only with the new printing presses that came out in the 1800s. By that time, key concepts had been mistranslated.
- In the early days, *Tipiṭaka* was written on specially prepared leaves and needed to be re-written by hand every 100-200 years before they degraded. So, we must be grateful to the *bhikkhus* in Sri Lanka who did this dutifully over almost 2000 years.
- Sinhala language (both spoken and written) changed over the past 2000 years. **The need to re-write the *Tipiṭaka* every 100 or so years made sure that any changes in Sinhala script were taken into account; see #21, of "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."**

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Other Related Issues

20. I came across another problem in a recent online forum. People are debating on the meanings of words "*anatta*" (අනත්ත in Sinhala) and "*anattha*" (අනත්ථ in Sinhala). They mean the same, but with more emphasis is added in the latter word.

- So, most people write it as "*anatta.*" It does not matter how one writes it, as long as one understands the meaning as "with no refuge" or "without essence," and NOT "no-self."
- But it does mean "it is not fruitful to take anything in this world to be mine."

21. Two more main misconceptions are prevalent today. They not only block the path to *Nibbāna* but are *micchā diṭṭhi* that could be responsible for rebirth in the *apāyā*. I am not trying to scare anyone, but "making *adhamma* to be *dhamma* is a serious offense."

- Misinterpretation of breath meditation as *Ānāpānasati*: "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."
- Insisting that the *gandhabba* (*manomaya kāya*) is a Mahayana concept: "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipitaka."

22. All these misconceptions are not the fault of current *Theravādins*; they have been handed down for many hundreds of years, as explained in the "Historical Background." **However, it makes no sense to adhere to them when substantial evidence is presented against them, per the above posts, and many others on this website.**

- Of course, no one should be able to insist, "this is the only truth, and nothing else is the truth." But the truth can be verified to one's satisfaction by critically examining the evidence. I am open to discuss any valid contrary evidence. We need to sort out the truth for the benefit of all.

23. Finally, it may not be possible to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta* straight away. One must first follow the mundane path to learn basic concepts like kamma and rebirth.

- More details at "Transition to Noble Eightfold Path."
- A systematic approach at "Living Dhamma."

24. *Anicca* and *anatta* are complex Pāli words that cannot be translated into English directly. There is no English word that can convey the meaning of *anicca* (or *anatta*). The following subsections discuss those two complex Pāli words:

Anicca – True Meaning

Anattā – A Systematic Analysis

July 10, 2020: A new series of posts on "Origin of Life" systematically explain *Tilakkhaṇa* and *Paṭicca Samuppāda* and also makes the connection between them.

3.3.2 The Way to Nibbāna – Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero

July 6, 2020

This was one of the first discourses by the late Venerable Waharaka Abayarathanalankara *Thero*. Janith Boniface Fernando has made it into a youtube video with transcription in Sinhala and English languages.

නිවන් දකින හැටිමග කුමක්ද ? (What is Nibbāna?) | With English Subtitles

1. This discourse is an introduction to *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) that is critical for one to start on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- I have revised and expanded the English transcript that can be downloaded as a pdf file: Waharaka Thero Discourse – The Way to Nibbāna

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- This is an updated version of the document that I posted in the discussion forum (see #3).

2. A few comments:

- As I mentioned, this was one of the early discourses, soon after Waharaka *Thero* started explaining the correct meanings of the Pali words *anicca* and *anatta*.
- At that time, Waharaka *Thero* was also used to the incorrect interpretation of "*anicca*" and "*anatta*" as "*anitya*" and "*anātma*" in the Sinhala language (and "impermanence" and "no-self" in English.)
- Therefore, even while describing the correct interpretation, he also inadvertently referred to "*anicca*" as "*anitya*" and "*anatta*" as "*anātma*" once-in-a-while. I have corrected those, of course.
- Furthermore, I have expanded the original text and also referred to a few relevant posts at puredhamma.net.

3. Any comments/questions can be discussed at the discussion forum: WebLink: Pure Dhamma Forum: Waharaka Thero English Subs Discourse

- Janith Fernando has transcribed a few more of Waharaka Thero's discourses and both English and Sinhala transcripts (from him) are available under my entry at that forum on June 19, 2020. As he transcribes more discourses, I will add them there. I do not plan to work on other discourses (than the one posted above in #1) any time soon.
- Many merits to Janith and several readers at the discussion forum who contributed to this effort.

4. I just finished updating the section on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- It has a subsection on "Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhana."
- There is a new section on "Buddhahood Associated Controversies" Most people are not aware of the qualities of a Buddha and the capabilities of a Buddha.

3.3.3 Anicca – True Meaning

Anicca is commonly translated as "impermanence." But it is a fundamental concept in Buddha Dhamma, which has many related — but somewhat different — meanings. Some are discussed in the following posts:

- Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like
- Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction
- Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things
- Anicca – The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")
- How to Cultivate Anicca Sanna
- How to Cultivate the Anicca Sanna – II
- If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?

3.3.3.1 Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like

Re-written May 26, 2019; June 13, 2020

This post was originally had the title, "Anicca – Inability to Maintain Anything." I have re-written with a new title to emphasize the meaning in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11); for more details: "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."

Anicca in the First Noble Truth

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1. The First Noble Truth clearly states that *anicca* nature is the root cause of suffering. Let us look at how the Buddha summarized the First Noble Truth about suffering in that very first *sutta* he delivered.

Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariya saccaṃ:

***jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhāṃ**, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, **yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhāṃ**—saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā.* **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

Translated: *Bhikkhus*, What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?

"**Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering.** Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering and having to separate from those things one likes is suffering. **If one does not get what one likes, that is suffering** – in brief, the origin of suffering is the **craving** for the five aggregates of *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa* (*pañcupādānakkhandha*). *Pañcupādānakkhandha* (*upādāna* or the "tendency to keep close" of *pañcakkhandha*) includes all that we crave for in this world.

Analysis of the First Noble Truth

2. The first part in bold indicates what we consider to be forms of suffering: Birth, getting old, getting sick, and dying.

- We may not remember, but birth is a traumatic event, just like the dying moment. Coming out of the birth canal is a traumatic event for both the mother and the baby. More importantly, all births LEAD to suffering, because getting old, getting sick, and eventual death is built-in with ANY birth. **Each and every birth ends up in death. That is another, inevitable suffering associated with birth.**
- We also DO NOT LIKE to get old, to get sick, and we definitely do not like to die. If we have to experience any of them, that is suffering.
- What we WOULD LIKE is to stay young, not get old, not get sick, and not to die ever. If we can have those conditions fulfilled we will be forever happy.
- Therefore, the suffering that the Buddha taught in his first discourse was associated with the rebirth process.

3. That is what the second part of the verse in #1 (not in bold) says: Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering and having to separate from those things one likes is suffering.

- We all have experienced the sorrow when separating from those who we like. We also feel distressed when we have to associate with those who we do not like.
- If we can be born instantaneously at a young age (say, 15 to 25 years), and stay at that age without getting old or sick and never die, that is what we WOULD LIKE. But no matter how much we would like to associate with such a life, we will NEVER get it.
- Instead, we have to suffer through each life. Each birth ends up in death. Furthermore, we suffer when getting old, when getting sick/injured, and finally when dying. There is no way to dissociate from those four things that we do not like.
- But that is not the end of it. We keep doing this over and over in the rebirth cycle. Furthermore, things can get much worse in the lowest four realms, including the animal realm.

We Suffer When We Do Not Get What We Desire

4. Both those parts are combined into one succinct statement in the third part of the verse in #1 (in bold): "***Yampiccaṃ nalabhati tampi dukkhaṃ***."

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"*Yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*" is actually a shortened version of the verse (that rhymes).

The full sentence is "*Yam pi **icchaṃ** na labhati tam pi dukkhaṃ*."

- "*Yam pi **icchaṃ***" means "whatever is **liked or craved** for." "*Na labhati*" means "not getting." "*Tam pi dukkhaṃ*" means "that leads to suffering."
- **Therefore, that verse simply says: "If one does not get what one craves or likes, that leads to suffering."**
- **This is a more general statement and applies in any situation.** We can see that in our daily lives. We like to hang out with people we like and it is a stress to be with people that we do not like.
- **Furthermore, the more one craves something, the more suffering one will endure at the end.** But this requires a lot of discussions.

Anicca – The inability to Fulfill Our Desires

5. The negation of the word "*nicca*" is "*anicca*" ("*na*" + "*icca*"), just like the word Anāgāmi comes from "*na*" + "*āgāmi*." Therefore, even though we would like the Nature to be "*nicca*," in reality, it is "*anicca*," i.e., it is not possible, in the long run, to have, to be with, what we like, and that is the root cause of suffering. One may live most of one's life happily, but one would have to leave all that behind when one dies.

- A deeper point is that we all like to born in good realms, but most future births will NOT be to our liking, but are based on "Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- By the way, Pāli words "*icca*" and "*anicca*" are pronounced "ichcha" and "anichcha."
- Not getting what one desires or craves is the opposite of "*icca*" or "*na icca*" or "*anicca*." This is the same way that "*na āgami*" becomes "*Anāgāmi*" ("*na āgami*" means "not coming back"; but in the context of *Anāgāmi,* it means "not coming back to *kāma loka* or the lowest 11 realms. **Both these are examples of Pāli *sandhi* rules (connecting two words together).**

6. Therefore, "y*ampiccaṃ nalabhati tampi dukkhaṃ*" is the most important verse in the first *sutta* delivered by the Buddha, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*. It provides the key to understanding the Buddha's message and led to the attaining of the *Sotāpanna* stage by the five ascetics.

- Note that *icca* and *iccha* (ඉච්ච and ඉච්ඡ in Sinhala) appear in the *Tipiṭaka* under different *suttā*. The word "*iccha*" with the emphasis on the last syllable is used to indicate "strong *icca*" or "strong attachment."
- The word "*icca*" (liking) is closely related to "*taṇhā*" (getting attached). *Taṇhā* happens automatically because of *icca*.
- The intrinsic nature of this world is "*anicca*," i.e., we will never get what we crave for, and thus at the end (at least at death) we will leave all this behind and suffer, that is *dukkha*.

Nicca – The Wrong Perception We Have

7. It is important to realize that *nicca* is the PERCEPTION that one can maintain things that one likes to one's satisfaction.

- If this is indeed the case, then one is happy, i.e., *sukha* arises, or at least suffering does not arise. In that case, one is in control, and there is something fruitful to be had, i.e., *atta*. Thus even if one needs to work hard to get something that can be maintained to one's satisfaction, in the end, one can find permanent happiness, and one is in control of one's own destiny.
- Humans normally have that *nicca saññā*, and work hard to gain material things. But at death, one has to leave behind all those possessions, and thus one's life ALWAYS ends in despair and suffering (in addition to suffering due to old age).

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- Until one realizes the true "*anicca* nature", one will be trapped in the rebirth process, and will be subjected to much suffering because of that inherent "*anicca* nature." The Buddha advised cultivating the *anicca saññā.*
- More information on *anicca* as the opposite of "*nicca*": "Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses."

Root Cause of Suffering Is *Anicca* Nature

8. Thus the root cause of suffering is NOT impermanence, even though it does play a role.

- The world is inherently impermanent (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"). However, impermanence by itself does not lead to suffering. If that is the case, since no one can change that fact, no one will be able to end the suffering (and to attain *Nibbāna*).
- It is the wrong PERCEPTION (*saññā*) of *nicca* that leads to suffering. We struggle to find lasting happiness in a world that intrinsically has *anicca* nature.
- That wrong perception CAN BE changed by learning and contemplating on *Dhamma,* i.e., by cultivating the *anicca saññā.*
- The CORRECT PERCEPTION of *anicca* (once accepted by the mind), will lead to cessation of suffering (via the four stages of *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, Arahant*).

Also see, "Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?", ……..

Things We Like Cannot Be Kept That Way for Too Long

9. The above point can be illustrated using this set of pictures:

"WebLink: ranker.com: Celebrities Who Have Aged the Worst"

- We need to realize that we all will go through such inevitable changes as we get old; no matter how hard we try, it is not possible to maintain ANYTHING to our satisfaction. It is the nature of "this world."
- Now, of course, any of these celebrities (or their fans) would be saddened to see the comparison. They have not been able to maintain their bodies to their satisfaction.
- However, a person who is in bad terms with any of these celebrities could be happy to see the picture, because that person's wish is to see something bad to happen to the celebrity (in this case to lose their "looks").
- Thus "impermanence" is something that is inevitable; it is a property of anything in this world. **But the perception of "*anicca*" is in someone's mind.** In the above case, bodies or celebrities ARE impermanent; but that did not necessarily cause suffering to ALL. Even those celebrities, if they realize that *anicca* nature cannot be avoided, would not undergo additional suffering by subjecting themselves to plastic surgeries, botox treatments, etc. Most of all, depression can be avoided.
- *Anicca* nature leads to suffering for ALL. But many go through added suffering by trying to "overcome it." More importantly, one can stop future suffering by comprehending the *anicca* nature.

Root Cause of Depression

10. When one realizes that one cannot maintain something that desired after a long struggle, one becomes distraught, depressed, unsatisfied ("*yam pi* ***icchaṃ na labati*** *tam pi dukkhaṃ*", where "*na labati*" means "not get"). Thus the wrong perception of *nicca* (or a sense of fulfillment of one's desires) ALWAYS leads to *dukha* or suffering at the end.

- The mindset is that even if something is not permanent and breaks down, one can always replace it with a new one and feel a sense of fulfillment one desires. It is not the impermanence that gives a sense of

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invincibility **but the mindset that one can always find a replacement for it and maintain one's happiness.**

- But if one carefully examines the wider world view of the Buddha, one can easily see that this mindset of the possibility of "long-lasting happiness in this world" is an illusion.
- No matter what we achieve in this life, we HAVE TO leave it all behind when we die.
- And in the new life, we start all over; this is what we have been doing from beginning-less time.
- And of course, we make it worse by doing immoral things "trying to maintain things to our satisfaction" and thus generating bad *kamma vipāka,* leading to immense suffering in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*).

Anicca Nature Leads to Suffering and Helplessness

11. In the *Saṃyutta Nikāya (Anicca Vagga*), many *suttā* including WebLink: suttacentral: Ajjhattanicca Sutta (SN 35.1), WebLink: suttacentral: Bahiranicca Sutta (SN 35.4), and WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanicca sutta (SN 22.15), the Buddha stated that the three characteristics of "this world" (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) are RELATED to each other:

"*yadaniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ, taṃ dukkhaṃ tadanatta"* (expanded to *"yad* ***aniccaṃ*** *taṃ dukkhaṃ, taṃ dukkhaṃ tad* ***anatta****"*), or,

– "if something cannot be maintained (or managed depending on the case) to one's satisfaction, suffering arises, therefore one is helpless in the end."

Impermanence Does Not Always Lead to Suffering

12. Let us consider the same examples that we considered in bullet #6 of the introductory post "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

- If we take a "headache" as the "something", the statement now reads as follows. **"If a headache cannot be maintained (managed is a better word here) to one's satisfaction (i.e., if one cannot get rid of the headache), suffering arises, therefore one is helpless."**
- Similarly, you can substitute anything that we considered in the previous post and see that it will hold.
- On the other hand, if *anicca* means "impermanence", the statement reads: **"if a headache is impermanent, suffering arises, therefore one is helpless."** That is obviously not correct. Suffering would arise only if the headache becomes permanent!

Anicca Nature Is There in All the Realms of This World

13. No existence in "this world" is exempt from these three characteristics. It applies to all 31 realms. Even though one may be able to find happiness at certain times, nothing we do can get us out of the realities of getting old, sick, and finally dying. Then the cycle repeats in the next life, and next, ….

- Furthermore, any such "happy times" are insignificantly small in the *sansāric* time scale; see, "The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna," and "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

14. But the good news is that we can gain a kind of happiness that will not go away by comprehending the *anicca* nature, especially if one attains at least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?," and "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?."

15. The *Tipiṭaka* describes the concept of *anicca* in many different ways. Two more are discussed in, "Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction" and "Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things."

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3.3.3.2 Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction

1. *Anicca* has been analyzed in several different ways in the *Tipiṭaka*. In the *Patisambidhā Magga Prakarana* in the *Tipiṭaka*, it is explained as,

"***uppāda vayattena anicca***",

which means "(this world is) ***anicca*** because we just keep going through the birth (arising)/ death (destruction) process."

- Of course, in between birth and death there is mostly suffering (in the realms at and below the human realm, where most beings spend time). This is the ***dukkha*** characteristic.

2. This is what we have been doing for an unimaginably long time (beginning-less), there is no break from it until one attains *Nibbāna*.

- We see some people committing suicide hoping to end it all; but ending this life does not solve the "problem." In fact, it may lead to a birth in a lower realm, which will only increase the suffering.
- Thus continuing this ceaseless birth/death process is ***anatta***, i.e., it is fruitless, burdened with suffering, and thus one is truly helpless.

3. We can see the Three Characteristics (*Tilakkhaṇa*) of this world by carefully examining the fate of anything that arises in this world, which goes by the name *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala).

- Whether it is a living being or an inert thing any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) arises, lasts for a certain time, and then perishes.
- For an inert object, the process stops at the destruction step, and it does not feel anything as it goes through the process.
- But for a living being, there is (mostly) suffering during arising/living/death, even though there may be spurts of "happiness" if one is fortunate enough to be born in human realms or the realms above it.
- And the process does not stop at death unlike for an inert object. It just keep repeating.

The arising/destruction of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) is described in, in "Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts."

4. A living being's suffering is also enhanced by the "*saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) characteristics of inert objects" too. We work hard to acquire "things" but either they get run down/destroyed (houses, cars, furniture,….) or we die leaving them behind. Then if we are lucky to be born human in the next birth we just start this "accumulation process" and get distraught at death again….

- If we think through logically (and this is real meditation), we should be able to grasp this main concept of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- Through the ages, philosophers (as well as most people) have wondered, "What is the meaning of life?." And they normally think about just this present life; see, ""Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt"

5. Someone who has accomplished something significant may think otherwise at the moment of that accomplishment. But it lasts only a short time; at death, it is all gone. If he/she wanted to accomplish something significant in the next life (provided one is lucky to be reborn human), then one has to start all over.

- This point becomes poignantly clear, if one takes a little time and think about the life of any famous personality (emperors, kings, politicians, movie stars,…from times past to the present). Most of them are bound to be born in lower realms because of the heinous acts they did to get some of those positions.
- If one knows the "big picture" about the wider world and the beginning-less journey we have made, it becomes clear that all through uncountable number of lives we have struggled in vain "seeking an elusive happiness." There is no meaning to life in the long run, AND it makes one suffer, and this is the nature of this world: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

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6. If there is a birth, there MUST be a death. There is no exception, other than *Nibbāna*.

This is the "*akālika*" or "timeless" quality of *Nibbāna*.

- All *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) operate on the basis of *kamma vipāka*, which normally take time to bring their fruits. This is why people are unable to "see" the working of *kamma*. There may be drug dealers who live like kings, but they will be paying with interest in the future.
- *Nibbāna* brings fruits instantaneously, there is no time gap involved (it is "*akalika*"), unlike a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala). Furthermore, once attained there is no time duration after which it is destroyed; it is forever.
- The *magga phala* (*Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant*) are attained in one *citta* (lasting less than a billionth of a second). And since they were attained via ELIMINATION OF CAUSES, there is no destruction associated with them. i.e., they are forever.
- In comparison, a living being arises DUE TO CAUSES, and when the underlying cause or the fuel is spent, the living being dies. But the process does not stop, because the being had acquired NEW CAUSES (new *kamma*) during that life or in the previous lives.

7. In the *Dhamma Vandana*:

"***Svākkhato Bhagavatā*** *Dhammo* ***Sandiṭṭhiko Akāliko*** *Ehi-passiko Opanāyiko Paccattam*

veditabbo vinnuhitī",

the quality of *Dhamma* that is described by "*akālika*" is that it leads to effects that do not depend on time.

- And that is achieved via the quality listed before that: "*sandiṭṭhiko*" ("*san*" + "*diṭṭhiko*"). *Dhamma* explains and clarifies "*san*" that are the causes (*avijjā* and *taṇhā*) for arising of *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (whether they are living or inert); see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."
- "*Bhagavatā Dhammo*" can be taken as "*Buddha's Dhamma*," but it has a deeper meaning too (This *Dhamma* was only DISCOVERED by the *Buddha Gotama*, as had countless other Buddhas before him. "*Bhagavatā*" ("*bhaga*" + "*vata*" where "*bhaga*" means divide and "*vata*" means "the process" that looks like a "living being") means this Dhamma, by analyzing a "person" in terms of "actions", illustrates that there in no enduring entity in a "living being."
- And this process leads to "*svakkhata*" ("*sva*" for "self" and "+ "*akkata*" or "*akrutha*" or "*akriya*" means putting out of action) meaning it leads to getting rid of the concept of a "me" (*asmai māna*) — which happens at the *Arahant* stage. It is not about whether a "self" exists or not; it is rather to realize that nothing in this world is worth to be considered "mine."

8. Some people erroneously interpret "***uppāda vayattena anicca***" as "things are IMPERMANENT because EVERYTHING is formed and destroyed within 17 thought moments."

- This serious misconception is discussed in the post, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- Each *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) that arises has its own lifetime: a fly lives only for a few days, a human lives for about 100 years.

Next, "Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things", ……

3.3.3.3 Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things

August 20, 2017; revised June 8, 2020

Different Meanings of *Anicca*

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1. *Anicca* (pronounced "anichcha") is a profound concept that has several meanings (impermanence is only a small part of it). We discussed one interpretation as "it is not possible to maintain anything in this world to one's satisfaction"; see, "Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like."

- Another interpretation is the following. Whatever that seems to provide lasting happiness arises and destroyed. Anything is subjected to unpredictable changes (*vipariṇāma*) while it lasts. See, "Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction."
- Here we discuss another: There is nothing in this world that is valuable and can provide lasting happiness. Not only that, but more craving can only lead to more suffering!

We Like to Get Hold of Things That We Like (Crave)

2. The desire (*iccā* or *icchā*; pronounced "ichchā") for any object depends on the value that one places for that object. If one realizes that the object does not have any significant value, then one would not have any desire for that object.

- One has *iccā* for a given object which one perceives it to be of "*nicca*" (pronounced "nichcha") nature, i.e., that one thinks has value and can provide happiness.
- If one realizes that a given object does not have a real value, one loses craving for that. The *anicca* nature means NOTHING in this world has real value. Of course, full comprehension comes only at the *Arahant* stage. The starting point is to see that immoral actions MUST BE avoided regarding even "seemingly high-value things."

The Perception of "Value" Depends on One's Level of Understanding

3. Suppose you give the following choices for a five-year-old. A giant chocolate bar or the title to a brand new house (written to his/her name so that the child will be the owner of the house).

- What will the child choose? Of course, the child will want chocolate, and he/she will have no idea how a piece of paper can be more valuable than tasty chocolate! Thus the child has the perception of *nicca* for the chocolate, i.e., that it can bring happiness whereas the happiness from the house is hard to be grasped by the child.
- However, when that same child grows up and becomes an adult, he/she will choose the title to the house without hesitation. By that time, he/she would have realized that a house is much more valuable than a bar of chocolate. The adult will recognize the "*anicca* nature" of the chocolate: it can only bring happiness only for a few minutes!
- Did anyone have to explicitly tell that adult that the title to the house is much more worth than chocolate? No. One would realize that when one learns more about the world.
- Just the same way, when one learns Dhamma, one will AUTOMATICALLY realize that nothing in this world has real value. But that realization comes gradually.

The Tendency to Do Immoral Deeds Based on Cravings

4. All immoral deeds (*dasa akusala*) are done because of the "value" that one places on worldly things. A child may hit another over that chocolate. An adult may be willing to lie, steal, or even kill to get possession of a house.

- When that adult grasps the critical message of the Buddha, he/she will realize the "*anicca* nature" of the house too. That even craving for a house is not worth compared to the "cooling down" one can gain by getting rid of the **cravings** associated with the house. Of course, one does not need to get rid of the house.

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- He/she would realize that collecting "valuables" like houses, cars, etc. or making a lot of money **(much more than one needs)** can bring only suffering at the end (and lose precious time one could have spent on learning Dhamma and making progress towards *Nibbāna*).

Adverse Consequences of Cravings

5. Craving for sense objects can have adverse consequences in a wide range. At a lower level, just enjoying sense pleasures without harming others will make one bound to the *kāma loka* (via "*paṭi icca sama uppāda"* or "what one likes is what one gets"); see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda."

- However, if one does immoral deeds (*dasa akusala*) to get such "valuables," then one will be subjected to *dukkha dukkha* (direct suffering) in the *apāyā* in future lives; see, "Introduction -2 – The Three Characteristics of Nature". That is the worst kind of future suffering, and one would not be able to comprehend that if one does not believe in rebirth or that *kammā vipāka*, i.e., if one has *micchā diṭṭhi*.
- Once one gets rid of *micchā diṭṭhi*, it will be easier to see one aspect of the *anicca* nature. That is "***aniccaṃ*** *khayaṭṭhena,"* which means "*anicca* nature leads to one to the downside," i.e., to do immoral acts and to end up experiencing unimaginable suffering (*dukkha dukkha*) in the *apāyā*.
- Thus *anicca* nature not only means that one cannot maintain things to one's satisfaction in the long run but ALSO, it can lead to much suffering in the future.

The Understanding Leads to the *Sotāpanna* Stage

6. One can get to the *Sotāpanna* stage by comprehending the above harsh consequences of *anicca* nature.

- Buddha also said, "*dukkhaṃ bhayaṭṭhena"* or "one should be fearful of the *dukkha* nature" when describing the characteristic of *dukkha*. At the *Sotāpanna* stage, one can see that not comprehending the *anicca* nature can lead to suffering in the *apāyā*. But he/she may still not realize that much suffering (even though less than in the *apāyā*) can also arise due to just being attached to sense pleasures, i.e., *kāma rāga*.
- The full impact of "*dukkhaṃ bhayaṭṭhena"* is realized only at the *Anāgāmi* stage (having seen a glimpse of it at the *Sakadāgāmi* stage). **That is when one realizes the *dukkha* associated with just the craving for sensual pleasures.**
- Craving for sense-pleasures lead to *saṅkhāra dukkha* and *vipariṇāma dukkha*, as explained in detail in the post, "Introduction – What is Suffering?".

7. At the *Sotāpanna* stage, one comprehends the "*anicca* nature" at a preliminary level and grasps the *dukkha dukkha*. Even though one can see the truth of the other two types of *dukkha* (*saṅkhāra dukkha* and *vipariṇāma dukkha*), one does not "truly grasp their effects." Those two aspects of *dukkha* are present in the higher realms of *kāma loka* (human and *deva* realms).

- One truly starts comprehending *saṅkhāra dukkha* and *vipariṇāma dukkha* at the *Sakadāgāmi* stage, and it will be completed only at the *Anāgāmi* stage. That leads to further strengthening of "*dukkhaṃ bhayaṭṭhena."* One can see the danger in the types of *dukkha* arising from attachment to sense pleasures (even without engaging in immoral acts).
- Comprehending the bad consequences of sensual pleasures is much harder than seeing the dangers associated with immoral deeds. That is why a *Sotāpanna* is still "not free" from rebirths in *kāma loka*.

Cravings for Sense Desires Lost Only at the *Anāgāmi* Stage

8. By the time one gets to *Anāgāmi* stage, one would have removed the lower five types of bonds (*orambhagiya saṃyojana*) that bind one to the realms in the *kāma loka*; see, "Dasa Saṃyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process."

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- There are five higher *saṃyojana* associated with higher *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms. First one removes *rūpa rāga* (attachment to *rūpa jhāna*) and then *arūpa rāga* (attachment to *arūpa jhāna*).
- The *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms (highest 20 realms) mostly have *rūpa* and *arūpa jhānic* pleasures. In those realms, *dukkha dukkha* and *saṅkhāra dukkha* are mostly absent, and only the *vipariṇāma dukkha* (death at the end) is present. One lives with *jhānic* pleasure until the end when one becomes helpless and could end up even in the *apāyā*.

9. In comprehending the Three Characteristics of nature, the critical step is in realizing that collecting "valuables" (houses, money, etc.) as an adult is as foolish as collecting candy wrappers as a child.

- To make that step of "higher wisdom" per Buddha Dhamma, one needs first to understand the "world view of the Buddha," that the world is of *anicca* nature, i.e., CRAVING for those "valuables" only lead to suffering in the long run. "Long-run" involves not only this life but future lives.
- That is why belief in rebirth is an important requirement to even start on the mundane Path.

The World is of *Anicca* Nature, Not *Nicca* Nature

10. It is an illusion to believe that ANY object in this world will have the "***nicca*" nature. That there are things in this world that have real, lasting value.** The reality is the opposite expressed by the word "*anicca*." One meaning of "*anicca*" is that there is nothing in this world of value that can bring lasting happiness.

- However, it is challenging for one to comprehend this "*anicca* nature" unless one believes in the laws of *kammā*. That one's actions will have consequences. A natural extension of the laws of *kammā* is the validity of the rebirth process.
- Many actions committed in this life do not bring their results in this life. But they will appear in future lives. Therefore, the laws of *kammā* necessarily REQUIRE the rebirth process.
- One has more "*iccā*" (or more attachment) for an object that one perceives to be of high value. Then one would have the perception of "*nicca*" nature for that object. He/she thinks that it can provide happiness.
- But the reality is that either that object loses its value OR one dies, making any perceived value zero at the end. One of those two outcomes is inevitable.

It is Impossible to Comprehend *Anicca* Nature Without Belief in Rebirth Process

11. If one does not believe in the rebirth process, then one could be compelled to do immoral deeds to get possession of valuable objects. That is a hidden defilement (*anusaya*) that may not manifest unless the temptation is high.

- For example, one may not steal anything for a lifetime but could be tempted to take a bribe of a million dollars.
- Or, a drug addict could say, "I am just going to enjoy inhaling drugs until I die from it," thinking that there will not be any consequences after the physical body dies.
- However, one's outlook on such things will dramatically change if one can see the reality of the rebirth process. Most people just believe what "science says" and do not even bother to look at the ever-increasing evidence for the rebirth process. See "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Science agrees that causes lead to corresponding effects. Any action has a reaction. However, since science does not know much about how the mind works, it is unable to provide answers to issues that involve the mind. ***Kammā* and *kamma vipāka* are causes and corresponding effects.**

Greed Comes from the Perception of *Nicca* Nature

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12. *Lobha* (*abhijjhā*) is the greed generated in a mind that puts a "very high value" for an object. One is willing to do immoral acts to get possession.

- One with just *kāma rāga* (desire for sensual pleasures) has the desire to enjoy sensual objects but would not hurt others to get them. Most "moral people" belong to this category UNLESS the temptation becomes high. A *Sotāpanna* has *kāma rāga* but will not succumb to ANY temptation to do *apāyagāmi* deeds.
- A *Sakadāgāmi* has lost the desire to "own" such sensual objects but still likes to enjoy them.
- Any desire for sensual pleasures goes away at the *Anāgāmi* stage.

13. In other words, one starts losing the value that one places for "mind-pleasing" objects as one progresses to higher stages of *Nibbāna*.

- But the critical point to understand is that one LOSES such desires AUTOMATICALLY. One does not need to, and one CANNOT, lose such desires by sheer will power. One needs to "see" the dangers of such cravings by developing the "*dhamma* eye," or *paññā* (wisdom) by learning and contemplating on the *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Even if one forcefully keeps such desires SUPPRESSED, such desires will just stay dormant (remain as *anusaya*.) Those *anusaya* WILL resurface later in this life or future lives. They can only be removed by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*. See, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."
- With gradual cleansing of the mind, one will start seeing the worthlessness of worldly things.

Also, see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttā."

3.3.3.4 Anicca – The Incessant Distress ("Pīḷana")

Revised July 14, 2018; June 15, 2019; re-written with the new title June 1, 2020
[Old Title: The Incessant Distress ("Pīḷana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca]

Key Verse in The *Girimānanda Sutta*

1. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Girimānanda Sutta (AN 10.60)", the Buddha stated key features of the *anicca* nature of "all *saṅkhāra*": "*Katamā cānanda, sabbasaṅkhāresu anicchāsaññā? Idhānanda, bhikkhu sabbasaṅkhāresu* ***aṭṭīyati harāyati jigucchati****. Ayaṃ vuccatānanda, sabbasaṅkhāresu anicchāsaññā*".

Translated: "Ānanda, what is the *anicca saññā* associated with all *saṅkhāra*? One is **subjected to stress**, **one should be ashamed of engaging in such useless activity**, and **liking *saṅkhāra* is like embracing urine and feces**. That is the *anicca saññā* associated with all *saṅkhāra*".

- We will briefly discuss the "*aṭṭīyati*" nature. "*Atti*" means "bones" (ඇට in Sinhala). A dog thinks that a bone is precious. It spends hours and hours chewing it and becomes tired in the end. Sometimes, the bone would scrape the gum, and the dog would taste its own blood thinking that the taste it from the bone.
- In the same way, we only get tired and stressed out (*pīḷana*) by generating all types of *saṅkhāra*. However, we do not realize that while making that effort. That is why *saṅkhāra dukkha* remains hidden.
- We engage in *mano, vacī,* and *kāya saṅkhāra*; see, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

The Mental Suffering (*Pīḷana*)

2. Most people think that the first Noble Truth on suffering is the physical suffering itself, i.e., they associate it with *dukha vedanā*, which is part of the *vedanā cetasika*. However, the Buddha said, "This *Dhamma* is unlike anything that the world has ever seen." **The real truth about suffering is the following. It is the**

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suffering hidden in what everyone perceives to be happiness. That needs to be seen with the *paññā* (wisdom) *cetasika*.

- It is difficult to understand the first Noble Truth on suffering for someone who is feeling too much suffering. When someone is hurting with an ailment or when someone's mind is too weak at old age, it is not possible to contemplate the profound message of the Buddha, as we will see below.

3. *Dukkha sacca* (**pronounced, "sachcha"**) is the Truth of Suffering; *sacca* is truth.

- "*Pīḷana*" (pronounced as "peelana") is the Pāli word for distress or hardship. That is part of the suffering we undergo, even without realizing it.
- "*Peleema*" is the Sinhala word for distress, or hardship, where the first part "pe" rhymes like "pen."
- The spelling of Pāli words is according to an adopted convention that is different from "standard English." See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."

That is the kind of meditation (contemplation) one needs to do initially, even before starting on the *Ariya Ānāpānasati bhāvanā*. I cannot emphasize enough the importance in understanding the real message of the Buddha first.

Incessant Distress/Depression (*Pīḷana*)

4. Even though we do not realize it, we are stressed out ALL THE TIME. Constant work is necessary to keep our physical body in good condition. Anyone who has had temporary relief from this constant **distress (*pīḷana*)** via a good meditation program knows this; it is called *nirāmisa sukha*. It is even more apparent if one can have a *jhānic* experience. Only when one gets into a *jhānic* state that one realizes that one had been under incessant stress all life.

- We do not realize this because this is the "baseline" for existence (our "comfort zone"); this is what we have done over innumerable rebirths.
- To get some relief from this constant distress, we strive to bring about periods of happiness. We keep thinking of ways to get a better house, car, or zillions of other "things" that are supposed to provide us with joy. Thus, we are ALWAYS stressing out to adjust this "baseline comfort zone." We move to a bigger house, buy a set of new furniture, work harder to get a better job, etc.
- Furthermore, when we go a little bit below the current "comfort level," we need to do work (*saṅkhāra*) to remedy that. For example, when we get hungry, we may have to prepare a meal or walk/drive to a restaurant to get a snack.
- Or, we may be sitting at home, satisfied after a meal, but then all of a sudden, we again go "below the comfort level" for no apparent reason; we just become "bored" sitting at home and think about going to a movie. So, we get in the car drive to a movie theater.
- I am sure you can think about zillion other things we do all day long.

Dukkha Dukkha – Doubling the Suffering

5. We have to endure injuries and various forms of sicknesses because of the physical body that we have. That physical body had origins in past *kamma*. Then, based on such physical ailments, we also suffer mentally.

- Such "distresses" belong to one type of *dukkha*. That is ***dukkha dukkha***. **Thus, on top of physical suffering, we double that suffering by such "mental suffering.** That mental suffering is part of "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*." See, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

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- In addition to direct ailments, we have other forms of suffering associated with the physical body. We get hungry, thirsty, lonely, bored, etc. etc. Thus, we need to attend to the needs of our physical bodies continually. It is like taking care of an invalid. These are all part of *dukkha dukkha*.

Saṅkhāra Dukkha

6. Our senses continually ask for **enjoyment.** We want to see beautiful things, hear pleasurable sounds, smell sweet fragrances, taste sumptuous foods. The body wants luxurious touches, and the mind likes to think about pleasant thoughts.

- Then we have to do things (via *saṅkhāra*) to satisfy these "urges". **That is the second type of *dukkha*: *saṅkhāra dukkha*.**
- In addition to doing work going to a restaurant, traveling to a cinema, etc., we also need to do a job to make money for all those activities. Constant work (*saṅkhāra*) is required to keep us afloat.
- Most times, we get one urge on top another: we may want to eat and drink, we may want to watch a movie, but also may want company (gather friends).
- **We do not realize this suffering because our minds are focused on the result, the pleasure we MIGHT get after doing all that work.** That "made-up mental pleasure" is another part of "*samphassa-ja-vedanā"* mentioned above.
- You may be thinking, "What is he talking about? Isn't this what life is supposed to be?". Exactly! We do not even realize this because this is our "baseline" of existence. We have done this over and overextending to beginning-less time, and we PERCEIVE this to be "normal."

Dukkha Dukkha and *Saṅkhāra Dukkha* Go Together

7. What we perceive as happiness comes from the relief we get when the distress level decreases due to our efforts. All we do is to suppress the constant "imbalances." Let us consider an example.

- We naturally get hungry and thirsty, which are two main "*pīḷana"* that we cannot avoid as long as we have this physical body.
- However, when we eat and drink, that leads to a sense of happiness. But we never think that this "happiness" actually arose due to inevitable distress.
- If we cannot find water when we get thirsty, that will lead to real suffering. At that point, a glass of water will taste heavenly. However, after drinking a glass or two, we will not be able to enjoy drinking any more water.
- That "happiness" actually arose when getting rid of the *pīḷana* due to thirst.

8. The reality is that no matter what we do to please the senses, those delightful moments are limited. They do not arise without "*pīḷana"* or inherent distress associated with the body. Even if we can maintain that sense input for long times, we become tired after a while. Then the mind asks for a different kind of experience. Let us look at some examples.

- When we are in a warm climate, we are thrilled to be in an air-conditioned room. But we would not like to be in an air-conditioned room in the middle of winter in Alaska, where we would like the place to be warmed up. "Happiness" is not associated with cold or hot air. We will feel happy when we remove "*pīḷana"* or the discomfort/distress for the body by cooling or warming the environment.
- We can be lying in the most comfortable bed, but sooner or later, we start shifting and rolling, trying to find a better posture, and eventually cannot stay in bed anymore.
- The most beautiful scenery can be watched only for so long and would get bored. The joy of sex is gone once satisfied, and that urge will not arise until at a later time again.

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Vipariṇāma Dukkha

9. **Then there is a third type of suffering called *vipariṇāma dukkha*.** That is also associated with the body but is due to "unexpected changes" and eventual death. That is called "*vipariṇāma" dukkha*.

- For example, an accident can cause injury. We may come down with a major illness like cancer anytime.
- Death cannot be avoided in ANY realm and is "built-in" suffering. That WILL NOT be stopped until *Parinibbāna*.
- **All three types of suffering are associated with *anicca* nature.**

The Three Types of Suffering

10. In summary, out of the three types of suffering, we notice (and worry about) only the *viparināma dukkha*.

- One may not even notice the other two types of suffering (*dukkha dukkha* and *saṅkhāra dukkha*). They are masked by our perceived "happiness". Especially those of us who are born with a reasonable level of wealth can overcome both easily.
- Most of us get to eat before we become starving, and it becomes a "suffering". Furthermore, we don't need to go hunting and kill an animal to eat; we can go to a restaurant and have a nice meal.
- Therefore, those two types of sufferings are hidden from us. But we know that many feel such pain.

11. The worse part is that in the lowest four realms, beings become truly helpless. There is little one can do (*saṅkhāra*) to make amends for the incessant *dukkha dukkha* in those realms.

- For example, a wild animal has very few choices when it gets hungry. It will go hungry for days with much suffering.
- In the wild, you do not see any old, sick animals. When they become weak, they are eaten by bigger, stronger animals. That is the true meaning of *anatta.* There is absolute helplessness, especially in those lower realms.

Suffering Is Present in All Realms

12. There is nowhere in the 31 realms where *dukkha* is absent. The three types of *dukkha* are present in the 31 realms in varying degrees:

- In the lowest realm, the *niraya*, *dukkha dukkha* is predominant; there is only suffering, and no way to get relief by doing *saṅkhāra*. Even in the animal realm, there is relatively little *saṅkhāra dukkha;* they just suffer directly, as pointed out above.
- In the higher realms (above the human realm), there is very little *dukkha dukkha* because those are "good births" that originated due to meritorious *kamma*. In these higher realms, it is the *viparināma dukkha* that ends the life there. Also, any *Brahma* has not overcome suffering in the lowest four realms in the future, unless they have attained magga phala.
- It is in the human realm that all three types of *dukkha* are present at significant levels. The *saṅkhāra dukkha* is highest in the human realm compared to all the realms.

13. What we discussed is the First Noble Truth, *Dukkha Sacca.* There is hidden *dukkha,* even in bouts of apparent happiness. There is no place within the 31 realms where *dukkha* can be overcome.

3.3.3.5 How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā

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1. Many people tell me, "I think I understand what *anicca* means. But then what?."

- That statement itself says that person has not yet understood *anicca* at least to some extent. I am not saying this in a derogatory manner. Even a *Sotāpanna* is supposed to have comprehended *anicca* only to a certain extent. Thus if one gets at least a glimpse of what is meant by *anicca*, that goes a long way. And that is not hard, if one can just contemplate on it.
- Reading and learning about *anicca* and experiencing *anicca saññā* are two different things. First, it is a good idea to figure out what *saññā* is; **see,** "Saññā – What It Really Means."
- One really needs to contemplate on the *anicca* nature with real examples from one's own life to get that *anicca saññā* to sink in one's mind.

2. It is true that a Buddha is needed to first point out the basic truth about this world, i.e., "that we cannot maintain anything in this world to our satisfaction." But once told, it is not difficult to see the truth of it by just critically evaluating that statement.

- If one CAN maintain ANYTHING to one's satisfaction, that HAS TO BE one's own body and mind: "This is my body and these are my thoughts." Therefore, one should start by contemplating on one's own body and mind.

3. Close your eyes and try to fix your mind on something, your wife, husband, friend, house, anything at all. Can you keep your thoughts on that one subject for any significant time?

- It is not possible to do that. Our minds like to wander off, seeking "more enticing thought objects." You will notice that it is even harder when one's mind is excited, for example, when one has seen an attractive object or when one has done something strenuous and one is breathing hard (in the first case, *kamachanda nivarana* is strong and in the second case *uddhacca nivarana* or the "excitability" is high).
- Thus when one's mind is calm it is a bit easier to keep the mind on something, but still not for too long.

4. It is important to verify for oneself about these examples. Buddha Dhamma is to be experienced, not just to read about.

- One can cultivates wisdom only by "verifying for oneself that what the Buddha said is indeed true." Blind faith will not get anyone close to the truth. Thus true meditation is to learn the **true and pure Dhamma** and critically evaluate it **based on one's own experiences**.

5. Once we confirm that indeed one is unable to even keep one's own mind to the way one wants, the next step is to think about whether one can maintain one's own body the way one likes.

- It is quite obvious that we cannot change our basic body features like height, the color of the skin or the hair, etc. Furthermore, if one is born blind or without a limb, there is nothing much one can do about that either. Thus to a major extent, we just have to live with the body that we were born with.

6. Next, consider the body that we have at the present time, and see whether we will be able to maintain it like that, if we like that appearance.

- Of course we can do that for a while, especially if one is young. But it is inevitable that there comes a time when one will not be able to do that. One can verify that by looking at one's own parents and grandparents: look at their old pictures and see how young and vibrant they were back when they were at your age.
- Therefore, we need to contemplate on the fact that we cannot even maintain things that we consider as "our own" to our satisfaction in the long run. This is to help cultivate the "*anicca saññā*" to a large extent.

7. Contrary to those who believe that thinking along these lines is "depressing", it can be actually liberating to realize the truth. It is those who just keep on trying to "patching up one's losing body assets" by artificial

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means end up "highly depressed" at the end, and then even commit suicide. It is better to have thought about "inevitabilities of life" ahead of the time.

- If one contemplates deep enough, one realizes that no matter how much money one can throw at such problems, in the end one will become helpless. Just think about any of the old movie stars, beauty queens, bodybuilders, politicians, kings, emperors, etc and see how they died helplessly at the end.
- Each person dies helplessly at old age or die unexpectedly of an accident or a major illness. There is nothing that can be called "graceful death." It may seem to outsiders that "one is aging gracefully", but that person knows how hard it is, even if at normal health. One simply cannot do things the way once one did them and one cannot enjoy any sense pleasure at the same level. All our sense faculties degrade with time.

8. This was the basic message of the Buddha, and it is not something he made up. He just revealed that truth about the nature of this world, of which any normal person would not think about on himself/herself. We are too busy enjoying sense pleasures (or trying to get possession of enjoyable objects), even to take time to think about it.

- The Buddha also showed that unless we do something about it, this is what we will be doing forever in the future. We will be reborn and will go through the same cycle over and over. It is actually much worse, since most births in this cycle of rebirths is in the lower four realms where the hardships and sufferings are much higher.
- More importantly, he revealed a way to get rid of this cycle of births wrought with suffering.

9. The Buddha explained that the reason that we keep coming back to this world is the fact that we don't realize "**this unsatisfactory nature**." No matter how much suffering we go through, we always think we can overcome them (and sometimes we do, but at the end we all die). We have the wrong perception that somehow we can "beat the system", i.e., attain happiness and **MAINTAIN** that happiness. We have the incorrect "*nicca saññā*."

- He said as long as we have this "*nicca saññā*" we can never escape future suffering. The solution is embedded in that first truth about suffering (*Dukkha Sacca,* the suffering that can be eliminated): What we need to do is to fully realize the "*anicca* nature" of this world, that "we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction in the long run."
- **The fact that most people do not realize is that the mere change of perception can lift a heavy load that one has been carrying.** This is the basis of "*nirāmisa sukha*."
- That does not mean one will give up trying to give up everything and go to a forest; see, "If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?."

10. When we have this wrong "*nicca saññā*," we willingly embrace this world, and that is "*paṭicca*" ("*paṭi*" + "*icca*," where "*paṭi*" is bind and "*icca*" means willingly). When that happens, "*sama uppada*" (where "*sama*" is similar and "*uppada*" means birth) follows inevitably; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."

- Thus, we will be born in whatever the type of existence that we craved for.
- But that does not mean if we crave for a human rebirth we will get that. Rather the birth is according to "*gathi*," the key aspects of one's mindset. If one is excessively greedy, one may be born in the realm of "hungry ghosts"; if one is excessively angry or hateful, one will be born where that mindset prevails, i.e, in the *niraya* (hell).
- To put it another way, when one has the wrong "*nicca saññā*" one tends to do immoral things to get what one perceives to provide sense pleasures. Then those *kamma vipāka* will lead to worse existences in the future both in this life and more importantly in future lives.

11. As one cultivates the "*anicca saññā*," one begins to stay away from the ten immoral actions more and more due to clear comprehension **that such actions are unfruitful.**

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- What is the point of stealing money at the expense of others and acquiring a "good lifestyle" that will last only 100 years at most? And one will have to pay that with interest?
- What is the point of verbally abusing someone for a momentary satisfaction, if that will only hurt oneself at the end (even just by leaving oneself agitated, let alone those *kamma vipāka* that will come down later)? If one can stop with effort such an incident, then one can look back and see the "cooling down" that resulted from that effort. This is what "*ānāpāna*" or "*satipaṭṭhāna*" is all about.
- Even if someone physically hurt you, what is the point in hitting back? Will you feel PHYSICALLY better by hurting that person? Will your bodily pain go away? By the way, that also did not happen without a cause; it was a result of a bad *kamma* done sometime back (a *kamma vipāka*).
- By the way, *kamma vipāka* are not guaranteed. One can avoid many *kamma vipāka* by not allowing conditions for them to take place; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." Thus when one lives life with "*sati*," many such *kamma vipāka* can be avoided.

12. It may take some contemplation to sort these out, but one always has to look at the broader picture. Ignorance is not being aware of the "whole picture." We tend to act impulsively with what is discerned at that moment. But that tendency will diminish when one cultivates the "*anicca saññā*."

- Acting with "*sati*" or "being mindful" is being mindful of the "*anicca* nature of this world." This is the basis of both "*ānāpāna*" and "*satipaṭṭhāna*."
- *Nibbāna* or "cooling down" can be experienced in this very life by cultivating the "*anicca saññā*" and thus be motivated to strive harder; see, "Living Dhamma."

Next, "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – II",……..

3.3.3.6 How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – II

Revised November 26, 2017

1. *Saññā* is normally translated as "perception", but it has a much deeper meaning; see, "Saññā – What It Really Means" and the first part of the current post, "How to Cultivate Anicca Sanna." *Anicca saññā* has many different aspects, and in this and the next post we will discuss some of these deeper aspects.

- When reading about it, it may make sense that *anicca* means, "that we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction." And from the examples given, one can see that truth of that statement. **But that is just the start.** One just has just been informed of what *anicca* is. **Now one has to "see it with wisdom"**, in order to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage. This is what is called "*dassanena pahathabba*" or "start seeing things as they are."
- One needs to develop the "*anicca saññā*"; the mind needs to grasp the essence or the correct perception of what *anicca* implies. Book knowledge is one thing, and "grasping it with the mind" is much more deeper.
- In the previous post we determined that it is not possible to keep to our satisfaction what we think of as ours, our bodies and our thoughts; see, "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā."

2. When contemplating on external objects, there are many "levels of *saññā*": the more one KNOWS about a given object, one tends to cultivate a "better *saññā*" about it.

- Let us take an example to illustrate this important difference. Suppose a person from a remote region in the Amazon forest, who has never seen an apple, is shown an apple. He would not know what it is. If we give him the apple to hold and teach him the word "apple", now he knows what an apple is, but only in the sense that if he is shown an apple again, he will say "that is an apple." But he would still not know how it tastes. He will have to eat some apples to get an idea of its flavor. He may still not know how to identify a "ripened apple" that will taste better, etc. All that comes when he gets to experience apples at various stages of "ripeness" and even different varieties.

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- All those different aspects of an apple needs to be experienced in order to really get the *saññā* about an apple. Only then that one can picture an apple, know what it feels like to hold it, how it tastes, etc. At the mention of the word "apple" all that instantly comes to that person's mind.

3. In another example, if we see someone at work regularly at a distance, we can recognize him as X if we meet him at the market. But we would not know much ABOUT him. However, if we get to associate with him and start doing things together, pretty soon we will know much more about him.

- At that point, when we even catch a glimpse of him, everything about him comes to our mind. If we wanted, we can recall how many kids he has, where he went school, etc.
- Thus "*saññā*" can be at different levels. The more one gets to associate with someone or something, then our "*saññā*" on that person or concept will grow.
- **However, it is possible that our "*saññā*" about person X may not be really correct.** One day, police find video evidence that X is a child molester, and it becomes clear that there is no doubt about it. At that moment, our "*saññā*" or perception about X is altered permanently. We will no longer let him even come close to our children.

4. The Buddha said our "*saññā*" about "this world" — that it can provide happiness — is a "*vipareetha saññā*," **i.e., it is a distorted or wrong perception**. If one carefully examines the rebirth process in the 31 realms, that wrong peception has provided us with mostly suffering in the long run.

- When we realize the "*anicca* nature" of this world to some extent, our wrong perception will change. That is when one really sees "*Sammā Diṭṭhi*" or "correct vision" about this world. One becomes a *Sotāpanna*.
- Just like a fish does not see the "hidden hook" and that it will undergo unbearable suffering by biting the tasty worm, we normally do not "see" the suffering hidden in the "tasty materialistic things." **A fish will never be able to figure that out, and as normal human beings we cannot figure it out ON OUR OWN either.** Only a Buddha can figure it out, and a Buddha can TEACH us, and we can figure it out by spending some time contemplating on it.

5. Therefore, one should not be discouraged if one does not even realize "what the big deal is" about *anicca*. Like everything else, understanding comes with repeated application and by thinking about it. If one can see that "it makes sense" to say, "*anicca* describes the inability for us to maintain anything to our satisfaction in the long term" that is a good start. Then one should start checking the validity of that concept at every opportunity in real life.

- Also, *anicca* is not merely, "the inability for us to maintain anything to our satisfaction in the long term." There are many other implications that arise because of this characteristic of *anicca*. **Another way the Buddha described anicca was to use the term "*atteeyathi*"; i.e., "it is like a dog chewing on a meatless bone."** The dog thinks very highly of the bone, and values its "taste." But there is not even any real taste in that bone. It is taste that is made up by the mind, but sometimes, its gums start bleeding and it may taste its own blood.
- Various aspects of *anicca* are discussed at: "Anicca – True Meaning."

6. Just like a dog will spend hours and hours chewing its "highly valued" bone, we also give much value to sense pleasures that are fleeting in nature. We do get brief instances of real pleasure, **but we do not realize the effort and suffering that we go through to get that brief sense of pleasure.** Most of the time, the pleasure is a "pleasure of anticipation." We trudge through hard work with the mind cheering on showing the "possible pleasures to be had."

- The Buddha likened this to a cow (in the old days) who drags a heavy cart with eagerness to get to the pile of straw being held in front of it by a pole. It does not realize the futility of its efforts because it is only thinking about the "prize" being held in front of its eyes. It does not even feel the burden of the heavy load, or even if feeling it, just disregards that pain in anticipation of the "reward" that it thinks can be had by "just taking a few more steps."

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- Most of our pleasures are short lived and arise just out of putting down the "fires" or distresses. The water tastes best when we are thirsty. Think about how you felt when you were very thirsty; the first sip of water was heavenly. But as the thirst went down with drinking more water, the "sense of pleasure" went down as well. After at most two glasses, the "feeling of pleasure" turns to a discomfort.

7. Same thing applies in any of the sense pleasures. We are constantly under pressure from the mind to "provide relief to one or another sense faculty"; this is *dukkha dukkha* that we discussed elsewhere. If we have not eaten anything for a while, we get the urge to eat something tasty. If we have not listened to some good music for a while, that urge kicks in. If you think about any sense pleasure, this is true.

- Many people value sex very highly. But how long can one keep that pleasure going? Most of the sexual pleasure is gained by just thinking about it; it is mostly mind-made. One needs to think about this carefully. How much time does one spend "fantasizing" versus "actually having sex"?
- Even if we eat the most delicious food in the whole world, it will not taste good after the stomach gets full.But we keep thinking about that "great experience" of eating that meal many times afterwards. Then we form an urge to do it again.
- This "feeling of unsatisfactoriness" or even feeling of "something is missing" is "*atteeyathi*." The dog may get tired of chewing the bone and may leave it alone, but after a while the urge comes back and he is at it again.

8. Even if we are fully content and lying on a comfortable couch, we may get a "feeling of unfulfillment", that something is "missing." We then get the idea, "to go and watch a movie" or to "drop by a friend's place to chat." Then we have to get in the car and drive there. We do not even feel the burden associated with getting dressed and driving because our minds are focused on the pleasure of "watching the movie" or "having a good time with the friend." And after that session, we have to drive back and if it was a bad movie we might even get a bit depressed.

- This is "*atteeyathi*." Just like a dog that incessantly is chewing on a dry bone to get a mental satisfaction and eventually gets tired doing it, this is what we have been doing life after life (if born in the human realm). Many people eventually realize this at old age, but then it could be too late to do anything about it.
- As one gets old, the ability to derive pleasure from such activities goes down. If you have friends, relatives, parents, or grandparents who had enjoyed life at younger age, but now are in distressful situations it is easy to see what happened to them over the years. Now they do not have the energy to try to do all those activities and even if they do to some extent, their sense faculties have degraded to the point of not providing much sense pleasures.
- But most people still keep thinking back about the pleasures they had when they were young. This may even prompt them to seek ways to "somehow get those experiences back." And when that fails depression sets in.

9. As the mind realizes the burdens of the "incessant distress", and that one has endured all that for no real benefit, it will gladly give up those burdens and the mind will start losing those cravings automatically. This is the key to "giving up unnecessary attachments"; see, "The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca."

- That post discusses how we encounter suffering when *anicca* inevitably leads to unexpected "changes" in things we value; this is *viparinama dukkha*. We encounter more suffering by trying to overcome the effects due to *viparinama dukkha* by doing more *saṅkhāra*, and that is *saṅkhāra dukkha*. And if we do "bad types of *saṅkhāra*" or *apuññabhi saṅkhāra,* they lead to rebirths in realms where direct suffering or *dukkha dukkha* is unbearable. Thus all types of sufferings eventually arise due to *anicca*.

10. Those are key concept to meditate (or contemplate) on. This is real *vipassana bhāvanā*.

- However, it is important to make sure one starts abstaining from at the least the conventional five precepts and possibly the "BIG EIGHT" discussed in the "2. The Basics in Meditation." Otherwise, the

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mind will not be calm enough to grasp these concepts. The difference between "book knowledge" and "developing *anicca saññā*" will become slowly clear as one proceeds.

- That is why reading, listening, and contemplating on Dhamma concepts is so crucial. This is one component of the *Saptha Bojjanga* (*dhamma vicaya*) and one of the *Satara Iddhipada* (*vīmaṃsā*). **When concepts become clear, one will automatically develop *anicca saññā*.**
- And with time, one will be able to grasp it better. One will "start feeling" things in one's own body; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga."
- This is a process that goes all the way to the *Arahanthood*. It is said that one truly understands *anicca* only at the *Arahant* stage. But our goal here is to at least to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage. And that CAN BE DONE in this very life, as I discussed my own experience in the above post.

11. Finally, if anyone has spent long times — may be years — meditating on "impermanence" without results, it would be worthwhile to spend some time meditating on the "*anicca*" nature. I know by experience that will make a big difference if one does it right.

- I spent 4-5 years contemplating on wrong *anicca, dukkha*, and *anatta* (and a few other things like the wrong *ānāpāna sati bhāvanā*). I really believe that the very first *desanā* that exposed me to correct interpretation of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* changed my progress instantaneously. It was a profound effect.
- It is also important to realize that what ultimately matters is not just a "good feeling" or even getting to *jhānā*, but whether one has removed "*gathi*" suitable to be born in the *apāyā*. Thus one should be able to look back at one's life and see significant improvements in getting rid of greed, hate, ignorance; see, "Transition to Noble Eightfold Path."

Next, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttā"…….

3.3.3.7 If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?

Revised February 11, 2020

Introduction

1. *Anicca* means "we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction in the LONG RUN." The time scale of existence is an important factor when we contemplate the significance and implications of this fundamental characteristic of nature.

- So, the question is, "if nothing can be maintained to our satisfaction, what is the point in spending so much time in learning, getting a decent job, making plans for businesses, etc.?."
- We do need to pursue those short-term goals while keeping the "big picture" in mind. The "big picture" is the non-existence of a future birth without suffering. Since investigating that "big picture" takes time, we need to make sure we have the means to live a comfortable life that leaves time for such contemplation/investigations.

Short-Term Goals Are Necessary to Comprehend the "Big Picture"

2. During life, we do see many instances where we can attain certain things (pass exams, get jobs, initiate successful businesses, have a comfortable life, etc.) and be happy about such achievements. Of course, there are many times we encounter unexpected things too (coming down with health problems, traffic accidents, floods, hurricanes, loss of jobs, etc.).

- That is the nature of existence as a human. It is a mixed bag, at least until we get to the old age; then it becomes increasingly difficult to maintain things (especially our bodies) to our satisfaction, and of course, at death, we have to leave everything behind whether we like it or not.

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- In the realms above the human, in fact, life is even more predictable and enjoyable, that is of course until death comes calling.
- But the real problems encountered in the four realms below the human realm. It is increasingly difficult to "maintain things to one's satisfaction" in lower realms. Animals are truly helpless, especially the vast majority that lives in the wild. There are no "old animals" in the wild; they either get sick and die or even worse: they get eaten up as soon as they slow down a bit.
- There is no happiness at all in the lowest realm, the *niraya* ("*ni*"+"*ra*" means without ANY happiness).

The "Big Picture"

3. Thus the main reason why "we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction in the LONG RUN" is that all beings spend most of their lives in the lower four realms; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

- It may take time to convince oneself that this "big picture" about the rebirth process is correct. See, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- When one truly understands that, one will see the dangers in living an immoral life first. Then one will start getting rid of wrong views. Only then one would be able to "see" the bigger picture clearly. It is a step-by-step process. See, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?"
- Then one will see that one's own actions decide one's future rebirths. See, "Origin of Life."
- The above is a very brief summary. It will require a real effort to go through them and the references therein.

Some Implications of the "Big Picture"

4. Then we can examine the question in terms of this "big picture" while keeping in mind the need to attend to "short-term goals."

- If we do give up everything, we will probably die a miserable death (because we will be poor, unhealthy, etc. because we would not be able to even support ourselves,) and be born most likely in a lower realm. That it will make the situation much worse.
- We do need to contemplate on this situation. If one thinks through this line of thoughts, one can see that one is really helpless in this cycle of rebirths, which is the third characteristic of existence, *anatta*. Until a Buddha comes to this world and shows humans this "big picture", AND shows how to get out of it, no one is able to escape this trap.
- The only solution is to at least attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* in this life. We MAY have some *kammic* energy left for one or more human lives (see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein"), but this COULD BE the last for a long while, which could be billions of years. Even if we get another human birth, we do not know under what circumstances; it could be somewhere Buddha Dhamma is not readily accessible.

5. There is another point that we need to consider when tackling this issue. We have become indebted to numerous beings in this journey of rebirths, and thus we have debts to pay back. Having all these debts is a hindrance to attain any stage of *Nibbāna*; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

Short-Term Actions

6. Therefore, instead of abandoning our families (to whom we owe the most), we need to do our utmost to make sure they are well-off. We also need to make sure that we do not become dependent on the society (and thus accumulate more debt). Even in this life, we depend on others for so many things: we are indebted to our teachers, friends, as well to many unknown people who contribute to providing us with essentials to

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sustain life; we all are interconnected, and have responsibilities for each other. We have "to do our part" to live in a society.

- Therefore, part of the solution is to first prepare oneself (or one's children if one is a parent) with a good education so that supporting oneself (and a family) is possible. Furthermore, a good education helps with understanding Dhamma too. And if one can make a lot of money (by honest means) then one can do many meritorious deeds too, thereby helping oneself spiritually as well.
- In any case, giving up everything and hiding in a forest will not solve the problem of existence. But there are some who have a *sansāric* tendency to abandon the "householder life." What I am saying here is for the majority of people, not for everyone: Of course, we need to sustain the *bhikkhus* who spend all their time for the benefit of others as well as themselves.

Coping With Both "Long-Term" and 'Short-Term" Concerns

7. Therefore, what needs to be done is to understand the true nature of existence and realize that the ONLY solution is to try the best to attain at least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. Then one becomes free of rebirths in the lower four realms forever. This is THE solution to the problem.

In order to do that we need to,

1. Fulfill our obligations to our families, friends, and the society in general,
2. Make our best effort to learn pure Dhamma and attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.

When one does this, one will become happy, not depressed, about the outlook. One has understood the problem and knows what to do about it. And when one starts working on it, one's confidence will grow because one can feel the difference in oneself. One will become even more determined AND energetic, not just to save oneself, but also to help out the others.

Next, "The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca", …….

3.3.4 Anattā – A Systematic Analysis

December 12, 2018

The Pāli word *anattā* has a mundane meaning and a deeper meaning. The deeper meaning is discussed in a series of posts in a systematic manner.

Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma

Anatta – No Refuge in This World

Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link

Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?

Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – No "Unchanging Self"

3.3.4.1 Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma

May 31, 2019

1. *Attā* is a Pāli word with two basic meanings that are very different and depend on the context.

- In the conventional sense, "*attā*" just means "a person" like calling someone "John." In rural Sri Lanka, to refer to someone, one could say "this *attā*" (මේඇත්තා or මේඅත්තා) just like we say "this person."
- The deeper meaning of "*atta*" is "full control" and "with substance."

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- If one is in full control of SOMETHING, that THING can be called his or her *attā*. If something is not under full and complete control that is *anattā*.
- This is related to the key concepts of "*anattā*" and "*anatta*" (one of the three characteristics of Nature or *Tilakkhaṇa*); see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." "*Anatta*" is having "no control" and "without substance" or "without essence."

2. Therefore, we need to be able to determine which "*attā*" is meant based on the *context* where the word is used.

- For example, "**bear**" refers to the large animal in "I saw a **bear**" but in "to **bear** a burden" it has a completely different meaning.
- Let us clarify those two meanings of *attā* directly using the *Tipiṭaka*.

3. The usage of "*attā*" in the mundane sense is clearly seen in the famous *Dhammapada* verse; see, "Attā Hi Attanō Nāthō." There "*attā*" refers to "any person." It just says that each person has strive for his/her own salvation (*Nibbāna*). Even the Buddha can only teach the way.

- Another is "***attānaṃ*** *damayanti panditā*," which means, "a wise person would control/discipline **oneself**." This is in *Dhammapada* verse 80.

4. The second and deeper meaning of "*attā*" (or actually of opposite of "*attā*" or "*anattā"*) was described by the Buddha in his second discourse delivered after attaining the *Buddhahood*.

The second discourse, "WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59)" starts with the verse: "*Rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, anattā. Rūpañca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpe: 'evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahosī'ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ anattā, tasmā rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati rūpe: 'evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahosī'ti.*

- **Translated**: "*Bhikkhus*, form (physical body) is *anattā* (or not *attā*). For if, *bhikkhus*, if one's body is *attā*, one would have full control over it, and it would be possible to say: 'Let my body be like this; let my body not be like this.' But because the body is *anattā*, it is subjected to decay and disease, and it is not possible to have it the way one desires: 'Let my body be this way; let my body not be this way."

5. The verse in #4 is a very important because it clearly describes what is meant by *attā* and *anattā* in the deeper sense: *Attā* would be one in full control. If one has full control of something, one would be able to maintain it to the way one wants.

- For example, we like to think that if we "own" something we should be able to "have full control" over it. But we know that is not the case (cars, houses, anything we own evolve in their own way. Even though things like gold jewellery are stable, we will lose control over them when we die).
- Specifically, if one's body is *attā*, one should be able to make it the way one would like it to be: say, strong, healthy, and handsome/beautiful; one would be able to maintain it without catching any disease or injuries; furthermore, one would be able to make it live forever. But our bodies evolve in their own way. No matter how hard we try, they age, decay, and die.

6. This is emphasized in the another verse in that *sutta*: "*Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā"ti? "Aniccaṃ, bhante." "Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā"ti? "Dukkhaṃ, bhante."*

Translated: ""What do you think, *bhikkhus*, can one's body be maintained to one's liking or not?"—"not possible, *bhante*."—"Does that lead to suffering or happiness?"—"Suffering, *bhante*."

- As we have seen before, it is the *anicca* nature (inability to satisfy one's desires/expectations) that leads to suffering; see, "Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like."

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- We encounter such suffering whenever something that we own breaks down (houses, cars, etc) and when people we love get sick or die. However, the worst suffering is when we ourselves get sick or when we face death ourselves. This is expressed in the next part of the above verse.

7. The verse continues: "*Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ: 'etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'"ti? "No hetaṃ, bhante*."

Translated: ""If something cannot be maintained to one's liking, if it undergoes unexpected change, and lead to suffering, is it appropriate to say: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my *attā* (my essence)'?"—"No, *bhante*."

- **Now we are getting to the deeper aspect.** If X owns a car, X would say, "this car is mine." If that car breaks down, X will become unhappy (suffer).
- However, X will never says, "this car is me, this is my *attā* (my essence)."
- On the other hand, X is likely to say, "this body is me, this is my *attā* (my essence)."

8. What the Buddha logically pointed out in the above section of the verse is since one's **body** also cannot be maintained to one's liking, since it undergoes unexpected change, and since leads to suffering, is it NOT appropriate to say: 'This is mine, **this I am, this is my *attā* (my essence)" about one's body too.**

- This needs to contemplated at depth.
- This is one key aspect of grasping what is meant by *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, as we will discuss in a future post.

9. Furthermore, it is not only our body, but any *rūpa* (family, friends, cars, houses, etc) that is not under our control. In our deep past, we never had that control over any external or internal *rūpa*, and we will never be able to have such control in the future either. **Therefore, the whole *rūpakkhandha* is *anattā*.**

- The *sutta* now repeats the same argument for the other four *khandhās* or aggregates: *vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha, viññāṇakkhandha.*
- Those are our thoughts, experiences, hopes and dreams. We do not have much control over them, and whatever control we have will be lost at death. We have no idea where we will be born next.
- **We are really helpless in this beginning-less rebirth process and that is the *anatta* Nature.**

10. **There is nothing in a "living being" that is not included in the five aggregates.** Since one does not have any real control over any of them, none of them can be called one's *attā*.

- Therefore, there is NOTHING that can be called one's own, and thus can be maintained to one's liking, For example, one does not have any control over WHERE one will be reborn.
- That is dictated by *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, and most rebirths are the lower realms with much suffering. Thus one is truly helpless or *anattā*.

11. This can be expressed by saying one has "no real intrinsic essence", "one is helpless in the long run", "all struggles for a permanent happiness will go to naught", etc. **Even if one lives a perfect and healthy life, one WILL become helpless at death, with the future totally uncertain.**

- This is why a living being is ALWAYS subjected to the *anatta* nature. Note that "*rūpaṃ anattā"* refers to the fact that one's body cannot be one's *attā,* and that *anatta* (without the long "a") is a characteristic of the Nature.
- Realizing this particular aspect of *anatta* Nature, i.e., that **one's five aggregates are not be taken as "one's own"** is the **removal of *sakkāya diṭṭhi***.

12. Now we can see how this concept of ***anattā*** is clearly opposite to the concept of a "soul" in Abrahamic religions or the concept of an "*ātma*" (pronounced "*āthma"*) in Hinduism. Thus, according to those religions, there is an *attā* which is the "soul" or the "*ātma*."

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- In the case of Abrahamic religions, one's goal is to "purify" one's soul and make it got to heaven where one will live forever.
- In the case of Hinduism, the goal is to merge one's *ātma* with the *Mahā Brahma,* and again be in that *brahma* realm forever.
- However, the Buddha stated that there is no realm in this world that has a permanent existence like that.
- This concept of an "everlasting identity" or a "soul" or an "*ātma*" is referred to as the "*sassatavāda*" in the *Tipiṭaka*. [***sassatavāda*** :[m.] eternalism.]

13. Those who do not believe in rebirth say that a "person" exists only as long as his/her body is alive. When one dies, that identity is terminated. Most scientists today seem to believe in this idea: There is nothing that is "carried over" to a next life. This concept (or argument) is called the "*uccedavāda*" in the *Tipiṭaka*. [***uccheda*** :[m.] cutting off; perishing; annihilation.]

- But the Buddha explained that the real nature lies in between those two extreme views. Any "living being" exists as an ever-changing lifestream and that "lifestream" is carried over to a new life. But there is NOTHING that remains the SAME in that lifestream. The next life could be VERY DIFFERENT from the current life; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."
- The next life is determined by the root causes and conditions that exist at the moment of leaving the current existence (*cuti-paṭisandhi* moment) based on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- A second key meaning of anatta is discussed at, "Anatta – No Refuge in This World."

3.3.4.2 Anatta – No Refuge in This World

June 7, 2019

Recap of First Meaning of *Anatta* – No "Soul" or "Atma"

1. In the previous related post, we discussed one aspect of *anatta* — that there is no everlasting "essence" in a living being like a soul or an *ātma*; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma."

- However, life does not come to end at death. There is a continuation at death with birth in one of the realms "in this world of 31 realms"; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."
- When the life as human ends, one does not have any control over what the next existence would be. It happens according to the prevailing causes and conditions at that moment, i.e., via the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process.

2. Therefore, there is no "unchanging essence" in a given "person"; he/she is just a collection of the five aggregates that keep evolving according the the principle of cause and effect (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*).

- *Vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* all arise due to conditions present at a given time, i.e., they arise based on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* ("*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" lead to *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*; "*phassa paccayā vedanā*" leads to *vedanā* (and *saññā* since *vedanā* and *saññā* arise together; see, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises"). Furthermore, our bodies (*rūpa*) arise via "*bhava paccayā jāti*").
- A "person" is no more than the five aggregates: *rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha, viññāṇakkhandha*.
- Those aggregates evolve moment-to-moment according to *Paṭicca Samuppāda* or the principle of cause and effect where conditions play a major role.
- There is no "*attā*" or a "soul" or an "*ātma*" **that on its own power** causes these entities to arise when a new *ārammaṇa* comes to any of the six senses; see, "Complexity of the Mind – Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra" and "Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra."

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3. Now we can see that the Buddha explained the deep concepts of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* in his first two *suttā* (*Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* and *Anattalakkhana Sutta* that were delivered to the five ascetics just after attaining the *Buddhahood*.

- In the post, "Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like" we discussed the first discourse of *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, in which the Buddha described what *anicca* means, and how the inherent *anicca* nature leads to *dukkha* or suffering.
- As we discussed in that post, the key verse in that *sutta* is, "*yampiccam nalabhati tampi dukkham*" which is shortened version (that rhymes) of the full verse "*yam pi* ***iccam*** *na labhati tam pi dukkham*," and that the word "***anicca***" is the opposite "***icca***" that is hidden in that key verse (then ***dukkha*** arises because of the inability to satisfy one's expectations (***icca***).
- In the same way, *Anattalakkhana Sutta* introduced the term *anatta* which highlights the fact that one is unable to maintain **even things one perceives to be "one's own"** like one's physical body or one's mental faculties (*vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*); see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma."
- Of course, those two aspects are related: since one does not have complete control over ANYTHING, one will not be able to maintain things to one's liking and will inevitably subjected to suffering in the rebirth process.

Anatta – Becoming Helpless in the Rebirth Process

4. In this post we will discuss another aspect of the *anatta* nature: **how one becomes helpless (*anatta*) in the long-term**. That is another meaning of *anatta*, sometimes written as *anattha*. (The *Tipiṭaka* was written down in Pāli, but with Sinhala script; see, "Historical Background." The word "*anatta*" was written as අනත්ත. Sometimes –especially to provide the meaning that we are discussing now — it is also written as අනර්ථ and that we write here as "*anattha*").

- The Pāli word "*attha*" could mean "the truth" or "having refuge" or "meaningful" depending on the context. The opposites of "untruth" or "helpless" or "meaningless/unprofitable" is indicated by the word "*anattha*."
- When one does not really comprehend the *anicca* nature (that it is not possible to get what one wants AND keep it that way), one would be tempted to try to get one wants by any means necessary. This is when one starts engaging in immoral deeds.
- This is when one sets up causes and conditions to bring so much suffering in the future that will lead to becoming truly helpless (*anattha*) via bad rebirths due to bad *kamma*.
- Therefore, knowing the first meaning of *anatta* is not enough; one needs to comprehend the second, related meaning and work diligently to avoid *dasa akusala*. This is discussed below.

5. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhama Adhamma Sutta (AN 10.113)," the Buddha succinctly states what *dhamma/adhamma* and *attha/anattha* are:

"*Katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***adhammo ca anattho*** *ca? Micchādiṭṭhi, micchāsaṅkappo, micchāvācā, micchākammanto, micchāājīvo, micchāvāyāmo, micchāsati, micchāsamādhi, micchāñāṇaṃ, micchāvimutti—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave,* ***adhammo ca anattho*** *ca*," AND

"*Katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***dhammo ca attho*** *ca? Sammādiṭṭhi, sammāsaṅkappo, sammāvācā, sammākammanto, sammāājīvo, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati, sammāsamādhi, sammāñāṇaṃ, sammāvimutti—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave,* ***dhammo ca attho*** *ca*."

- Basically, "***dhamma***" are those thoughts, speech, and actions that are for the benefit of oneself. One who engages in those are engaged in fruitful/meaningful things and will lead to one's refuge ("***attha***"). As we can see this encompasses the Noble Eightfold Path followed by *sammā ñāṇa* and *sammā vimutti* (i.e., *Arahanthood*).

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- The opposites or "***adhamma***" are those thoughts, speech, and actions that lead to much future suffering. One who engages in those are engaged in unfruitful/immoral things and those will lead to one becoming helpless in the rebirth process ("***anattha***").

6. Another way to express the same idea is to say that one who is engaged in *dasa akusala* (***adhamma***) will become helpless in the rebirth process (***anattha***); see, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link."

One who is engaged in the opposites of *dasa kusala* (***dhamma***) will have refuge in the rebirth process (***attha***) and will become free of future suffering by becoming an *Arahant*.

- Many key *suttā* stating these "core facts" about Buddha Dhamma are listed in "Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts."

7. Therefore, we see that the first meaning of *anatta* is of "theoretical nature": It states that one will never have full control over one's affairs in the long run, and thus one is bound becomes helpless in the rebirth process.

- The second meaning provides a practical way out of this dangerous outcome: This special way to avoid future suffering and to find refuge can only be discovered by a Buddha and it is the Noble Eightfold Path.
- In other words, following *dhamma* to have refuge (*attha*) instead of following *adhamma* to become helpless (*anattha*).
- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamanātha Sutta (AN 10.17)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyanātha Sutta (AN 10.18)," the Buddha advised *bhikkhus* to live a moral life in order to avoid becoming *anātha*: "*Sanāthā, bhikkhave, viharatha, mā anāthā*."

Yadaniccam tam dukkham, tam dukkham tadanatta

8. With this second interpretation, It is easier to see how the *anicca* nature leads to suffering (*dukkha*) and eventually to helplessness (*anatta*).

- Any human who has not heard and comprehended to some extent what *anicca* nature is called an "***assutavā*** *puthujjano*." One who has is called a "***sutavā*** *ariyasāvako*." Here ***sutavā*** means "has heard about the true teachings of the Buddha (and comprehended)" and ***assutavā*** is of course one who has not heard/comprehended. [***sutavā*** : 已聞, have heard; ***assutavā*** : Not learned, ignorant, 無聞的、無知的] [See WebLink: suttacentral: AN 5.48 Alabbhanīyaṭhānasutta]
- If one does not realize that all struggles to achieve a "permanent happiness" is not possible, one would be doing one's best to achieve such a state of happiness. This is done by working to merge one's soul with a Creator God in heaven or one's *ātma* with *Mahā Brahma* in a *brahma* realm. But the Buddha explained that those efforts would be in vain.

9. It is of course necessary to have goals for certain achievements while one is living in this world — even mundane achievements. For example, one needs to get a good education and a good employment (and make sure that one's children will do the same). This is necessary to avoid suffering in this life.

- But then one would need to hear about the true nature of this world on a long-term basis: That life continues after the death of this physical body, and one needs to work towards attaining some spiritual goals. That will lead to stop suffering in the rebirth process.
- It is only when one contemplates this "long-term picture" that one can comprehend the *anicca* (and *dukkha* and *anatta*) nature of this world: No matter how many mundane achievements one may achieve, one would have to leave all that behind when one dies and then — if fortunate enough to be born human — re-start the whole process again.

10. Therefore, ignorance of the *anicca* nature leads to suffering (*dukkha*).

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- If one tries to attain happiness by doing *dasa akusala* (which is very likely to happen when the temptations become high), one would be born in the lower four realms and the suffering will be much higher. That is when one really becomes helpless (*anatta*).

This fact is stated repeatedly in many *suttā* with the succinct statement: "*yadaniccam tam dukkham, tam dukkham tadanatta*."

- That is a condensed version made to rhyme for easy oral transmission. The complete verse is: *"yad **aniccam** tam dukkham, tam dukkham tad **anatta**"*,
- **"if something cannot be maintained (or managed depending on the case) to one's satisfaction, suffering arises, therefore one is helpless in the end."**
- For more details see, "Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like."

11. The above important verse appears in many *suttā* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya (Anicca Vagga)*, including WebLink: suttacentral: Ajjhattanicca Sutta (SN 35.1), WebLink: suttacentral: Bahiranicca Sutta (SN 35.4), and WebLink: suttacentral: Yadanicca sutta (SN 22.15), the Buddha stated that the three characteristics of "this world" (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) are RELATED to each other:

- This statement is applicable in this life. No matter how many achievements/accomplishments/victories we make in this life, we will have to leave all that behind when we die.
- However, the key message of the Buddha was regarding the implications of this statement in the rebirth process. If one engages in *dasa akusala* (which is unavoidable if the temptation is high enough), one is bound to be subjected to much suffering via rebirths in the four lower realms. That is when one becomes really helpless (*anatta*).
- This is why one would need to remove the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* first (mundane Eightfold Path) in order to understand the fundamentals like the laws of *kamma* and the validity of the rebirth process. Only then one can start comprehending the *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* nature and start on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

All Meanings of *Anicca*/*Anatta* Self-Consistent

12. All meanings/interpretations of *anicca* and *anatta* are inter-related.

- The first meaning of *anatta* says that there is no "unchanging essence" in a living being, controlling its destiny. Everything happens due to causes and conditions even moment-by-moment *Idapaccayā Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Then the rebirth process takes place according to *Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda*; see, "Paticca Samuppāda." Once the basic idea is grasped, one can follow the steps in "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Overview" to understand things better.
- This is related to the *anicca* nature of not being able to maintain anything to one's liking. One does not have that ability because one does not have control over anything that one perceives to be "one's own."
- When one goes against the nature (i.e., do *adhamma*) and tries to maintain things to one's liking, one may do *dasa akusala* and then be subjected to their bad *kamma vipāka*. One critical aspect of this is to have births in the four lower realms where suffering is high. One can avoid much suffering by grasping this meaning of *anatta*.

13. There is something that is under our control, even though one has to be really disciplined to make it to work. This is one's own *gati*. One's destiny is controlled by one's own *gati*.

- Since one's *gati* can change any time, those are not fixed. Anyone can decide to change one's own *gati* and work towards a better outcome by rejecting *adhamma* and adhering to *dhamma*, i.e., by following the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

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- But first, one must fully grasp the fundamentals embedded in *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (and sometimes *asubha* is also added to the list).
- Even before that one must get rid of those 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. For example, one can never grasp the *anicca/anatta* nature if one does not believe in rebirth. The whole point is to stop suffering in future rebirths. Current life has already arisen due to past causes/conditions and will inevitably lead to decay and death.

3.3.4.3 Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link

April 2, 2017; revised November 10, 2017; August 30, 2018; September 1, 2018; June 6, 2019

1. This important post will help make the connection between **deeper teaching** of the Buddha Dhamma (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) and **the practice**, i.e., cleansing one's mind via abstaining from *dasa akusala* and cultivating *dasa kusala*.

- **The *Tilakkhaṇa* represent the "theory side" or the "nature of this world" and *dasa akusala* are associated with the practice.** Thus the connection between the two is important.
- I have not seen this addressed directly, outside of the *Tipiṭaka*.

2. We discussed in the previous post, "Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?," why the Pāli words "*atta/anatta*" do not convey "self/no-self" but rather "with essence/no essence" or "truth/untruth" or "useful/not useful" or "protected/helpless."

- We also discussed how "*atta/anatta*" are closely related to Sanskrit words "*artha/anartha*" (අර්ථ/අනර්ථ in Sinhala)also giving the meanings "truth/untruth" or "useful/not useful."
- Finally, we touched on the fact that the *anatta* (and thus *dukkha* and *anatta*) nature is a manifestation of engaging in *dasa akusala*.

3. Recently I realized that many *suttā* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (AN) express various concepts in brief. Many *suttā* are just a paragraph, providing the key idea; see, "Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts."

- Here we will discuss three short *suttā* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that can be used to clarify the connection between *dasa akusala* and *Tilakkhaṇa*.

4. First, the *Kusala Sutta* (WebLink: AN 180; in the *Sadhuvagga*) is just one paragraph providing the definition of ***dasa akusala***:

- "*..katamanca bhikkhave, akusalam? pānātipāto, adinnādānaṃ, kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisunā vācā, parusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, vyāpādo, micchādiṭṭhi akusalaṃ..*"
- Conventionally translated: "killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, slandering, harsh talk, empty talk, greed, hate, and wrong views." These are discussed in "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- In the next and last paragraph of the *sutta*, *dasa kusala* are defined as the opposites of *dasa akusala* (*veramani* means "abstain from"): "*..katamanca bhikkhave, kusalam? pānātipātā veramani, adinnādānā veramani, kāmesumicchācārā veramani, musāvādā veramani, pisunā vācā veramani, parusā vācā veramani, samphappalāpā veramani, abhijjhā veramani, vyāpāda veramani, sammādiṭṭhi kusalaṃ 'ti.*
- Therefore, *kusala* and *akusala* are stated clearly and succinctly in that *sutta*.

5. Then in the very next *sutta*, *Attha Sutta* (WebLink: AN 181; in the *Sadhuvagga*) ***anattho*** is **defined in terms of *dasa akusala*:**

- "*..katamo ca bhikkhave, anattho? pānātipāto, adinnādānaṃ, kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisunā vācā, parusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, vyāpādo, micchādiṭṭhi – ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, anattho..*"

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- In the next and last paragraph of the *sutta*, *attho* defined as the opposite of that*: panatipatā veramani, adinnādānā veramani, kāmesumicchacārā veramani, musāvādā veramani, pisuṇā vācā veramani, parusā vacā veramani, samphappalāpā veramani, abhijjhā veramani, vyāpāda veramani, sammaādiṭṭhi – ayam vuccati, bhikkhave, attho. 'ti.*
- This means *dasa akusala* are "not the real nature." When one goes against nature, one gets into trouble; see, "Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?."
- Here are more short *suttā* that confirm this point: "Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts."

6. Those two short *suttā* make it crystal clear the following important facts:

- ***Anatta* has nothing to do with a "self."**
- ***Anatta* is all about being helpless in the rebirth process due to one's engagements with *dasa akusala*.**
- **Therefore, getting to *Nibbāna* is all about avoiding *dasa akusala*, i.e., cleansing one's mind.**

7. Now, there are several *suttā* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that put it all together. The first verse in the *Patama Adhamma Sutta* (WebLink: AN 10.113 in the *Paccorohanivagga*) states it nicely:

- "*Adhammo ca, bhikkhave, veditabbo anattho ca; dhammo ca veditabbo attho ca.*"
- I will write another post explaining other verses in that *sutta*, but we can easily translate that verse: "*Bhikkhus*, it is to be comprehended that *adhamma* leads to |*anattā*| (helplessness), and *dhamma* leads to |*attā*| (refuge in *Nibbāna*)."
- **Furthermore, those who are still clinging to the incorrect interpretation of "*anatta*" as "no self," should be able to clearly see that it leads to the foolish statement: "*Bhikkhus*, it is to be comprehended that *adhamma* leads to no-self, and *dhamma* leads to self."**
- The root cause of this misinterpretation is explained in, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

8. *Dhammā* is what one bears, i.e., what principles one lives by. But it is normally used in the sense of "good *dhamma*."

- *Adhamma* (or *adhammā*) is the opposite: immoral living. If one engages in *dasa akusala*, then one is engaging in *adhamma,* i.e., one bears *adhammā*.
- This can be compared to the following: We use the word "smell" normally to mean "bad smell." We specifically say "good smell" to indicate an actual good smell.
- In the same way, *dhammā* can be good or bad ("what one bears"). However, we normally use the word *dhammā* to indicate good *dhammā*. Bad *dhammā* are *adhammā.*

9. Normally the word *dhamma* is used to indicate a teaching or a principle, as in Buddha Dhamma. The word *dhammā* (with a long "a") is used to indicate what one bears as a result of past *kamma*; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!." *Dhammā* are the same as *kamma bīja.*

- We need to be able to figure out meaning depending on the context, how the word is used in a given verse.

10. When one examines carefully ANY *sutta* in the *Tipiṭaka* they will be consistent with the above explanation.

- It is clear that those three *suttā* make the key connection between the deeper *Tilakkhaṇa* ("theory") and the practice (cleansing the mind via *sīla,* i.e., staying away from *dasa akusala*). We don't need to analyze hundreds of *suttā* to see the connection.
- When I go to online discussion boards, I get totally confused. People just quote *suttā* from different sites, and normally they have incorrect meanings of key Pāli words. It is a waste of time to read all those long

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posts providing "evidence" from different places, and of course there are usually inconsistencies among them.

- This was a major reason that I decided to start this website, because I can show that everything is consistent if one uses the true meanings of key Pāli words.

11. It is also good to keep in mind that a major problem with many texts is that they take conventional meanings of key words and apply them in the wrong places.

- Unless one is clear about the true meanings of such key words, and know where to use a given meaning, it is easy to veer-off in a totally wrong direction; see, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?." Also see, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

12. In the previous post, "Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?," we briefly mentioned that *anatta* is closely related to *dasa akusala*. I hope the connection is much more clear now.

- Engaging in *dasa akusala* can only lead to suffering and thus helplessness in the long run. Therefore, engaging in actions, speech, thoughts associated with *dasa akusala* are not only pointless but also dangerous.
- This idea is quite clear in the Sinhala word for |*anattā*|: "*anārtha*" that we discussed in that previous post. It literally means "doing things that are totally useless and can only bring harm."

13. Those who believe that doing *dasa akusala* can bring "bad *vipāka*" only in future lives are mistaken. Many people do not realize that even having immoral thoughts can bring us stress in this life itself.

This was discussed in detail in the beginning posts in the "Living Dhamma" section. That section is important in two aspects:

a. When one starts abstaining from *dasa akusala,* one can experience a definite sense of relief — also called *nirāmisa sukha* — and that should be the initial focus.

b. When one starts experiencing this *nirāmisa sukha,* one also starts comprehending deeper aspects of *Dhamma* like the *anicca* and *anatta* nature. Only with those insights that one can actually start to "see" the long-term *kamma vipāka* due to *dasa akusala* — like those leading to births in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms).

14. Finally, note that *atta* is sometimes spelled out as "*attha*" (with an "h") in many texts and each may imply mundane or deeper meaning. For example, the old Sinhala commentaries are called "*atthakathā*." It means "accounts about the truth" ("*kathā*" means "story").

- Those are the reliable commentaries in the *Tipiṭaka*: *Patisambhidamagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana.* Out of many Sinhala *atthakathā,* those three are the only ones that survived.
- On the other hand, commentaries by Buddhaghosa and others are do not belong to *atthakathā. Visuddhimagga* is one such popular but erroneous commentary; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."

15. Finally, we can now see the truth in the verse, "*Dhammo ca yathā Dhammo, yathā atto*" that is also in the *Patama Adhamma Sutta* of #7 above.

- That means, "when one bears true (*yathā*) *Dhamma*, one comprehends the truth (and avoids being helpless in future)."
- If one bears *dhammā* and stays away from *adhammā*, that will help one grasp the *Tilakkhaṇa*. Then one will not become |*anattā*| or helpless in this rebirth process. One will have "|*attā*|" or refuge.
- This is an important post which provides a simple but critical link between "theory and practice." It is good idea to read those relevant other posts and come back and re-read this post, until this connection is grasped.
- This basic idea can go a long way in comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.

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3.3.4.4 Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?

March 17, 2017; revised November 4, 2017

We can see how the word "*anatta*" got translated incorrectly as "no-self" by carefully examining the different usages of the word "*atta*."

- There is "*atta*" which is different from "|*attā*|" (with a "long a" at the end). *Anatta* is the opposite of "*atta*" not of "|*attā*|." [***atta*** : [m.] soul; oneself. |***attā***| : Self, body, person, individuality; life, mind soul.]
- The Sanskrit word *anātma* has been misinterpreted as *anatta*. That Sanskrit word *anātma* does mean "no-soul" but it was NEVER used by the Buddha. Similarly, *anitya* (meaning "impermanence") is a Sanskrit word, but that is not what is meant by the Pāli word *anicca*.
- We will discuss these in detail below.

1. In the previous post, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?," we discussed how the term *sakkāya diṭṭhi* gets incorrectly translated when the word "*atta*" in a key verse in the *Culavedalla Sutta* is misinterpreted. ***Atta* has two meanings**:

- One meaning is mundane: "I" or "myself" as in the first verse of "|*attā*| *hi attano nātho*" ("only I can be of salvation to myself"), and that is the meaning implied in the above verse.
- The other deeper meaning of "*atta*" is "in control" or "has essence", and the opposite of that ("*na*" + "*atta*") is the *anatta* in *Tilakkhaṇa*: "one is helpless in this rebirth process."
- Those two meanings are explained in "|Attā| Hi Attano Nātho" and in detail in, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?."

2. Comprehension of a concept is very different from memorization of the definition of a word. All one needs to do is to understand what is MEANT by a word; that is *saññā; see,* "Saññā – What It Really Means."

- *Atta/anatta* are key Pāli words in relation to the *Tilakkhaṇa*, so it is essential to get the correct *saññā* or the idea. In future posts, we will discuss several other critical usages of *atta/anatta*.

A. *Atta* as "a Person" versus "Essence" or "Truth"

3. Many of the misconceptions about "self" and "no-self" can be understood by taking a systematic look at how the Pāli word "*atta*" is used in the conventional sense and in the deeper sense (to give different meanings in different places).

- **"|*attā*|" (pronounced with a "long a at the end") is used to denote a person:** There is no word for the negation of that |***attā***|.
- In Sinhala, it is written as "අත්තා" That is how it appears in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* that is written in Sinhala.
- Even though |*attā*| has this meaning as a "person", *anatta* is never used as the opposite of **that** |***attā***|.
- Pronunciation:

  WebLink: Pronunciation - attā

4. The word "*atta*" (pronounced with a "short a at the end") is "the essence" or "the truth that is timeless." The negation is "*anatta*."

- In Sinhala they are written as "අත්ථ" and "අනත්ථ." That is how they appear in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* that is written in Sinhala.
- Pronunciation of the two words:

  WebLink: Pronunciation - atta and anatta

- **There is a third meaning too** (especially when it is written as "***attha***," with an emphasis at the end), which is closely related to the second meaning above:

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- The Sinhala word for *attha* is "*artha*" which means "truth" or "that which makes sense." The opposite word in Sinhala is "*anartha*," which emphasizes that what is "*anartha*" is not worth doing.
- In Sinhala they are written as "අර්ථ" and "අනර්ථ."
- Pronunciation of the two words:

  WebLink: Pronunciation - artha and anartha

I hope you can catch the differences in the pronunciations.

- *Anatta* is the negation of the latter two meanings: "na" + atta" (which rhymes as "anatta"): there is no substance/ does not hold any ultimate truth.

5. One who is engaged in things that are "*anatta*" or "*anartha*" will become "*anātha*" (helpless), the opposite of "*nātha*." As was mentioned in the post ""|Attā| Hi Attano Nātho," "*nātha*" is another word for *Nibbāna*.

- One who is trying to find refuge in this world will become truly helpless in the long run. On the other hand, the only refuge ("*nātha*") is *Nibbāna,* i.e., overcoming the rebirth process.
- Therefore, *atta/anatta* in Pāli can be translated to Sinhala as *artha/anartha*, and both usages convey the deeper meaning that conveys the following ideas: "essence/no essence", "truth/false", "useful/useless", etc.

6. On the other hand, the word "|*attā*|" (pronounced with a "long a at the end") is used as "me" only in the conventional sense. In order to communicate with others, we have to say things like, "one needs to defend oneself." Here "one" exists only in the conventional sense.

- **There is no single Pāli word to express the negation of that, i.e., "not |*attā*|"**; If there were to be such a word that would be "non-person." It just cannot be used that way.
- **As we see below in #11 and #12, other words to denote "me" or "self" are "*mama*," "*asmi*" or "*me*."**

7. Therefore, the critical mistake was made by trying to translate *anatta* as the opposite of "|*attā*|" with the conventional meaning of "a person" or "self."

- The word *anatta* was ALWAYS used with the deep meaning of "no truth or no essence." ***Anatta* is a fact** indicating there is no essence or truth to be had in this world of 31 realms.
- |***Attā***| (in the conventional sense) is used to indicate "a person." **There is no single Pāli word to give the opposite meaning to that.**

8. In relation to *anatta* in *Tilakkhaṇa*, "*atta*" can also be described as "utlimate truth" ("*sathya*" in Sinhala and Sanskrit). **That truth is *anicca* nature**: "this world cannot bring happiness anywhere in the 31 realms."

- Therefore, this whole world is of *anatta* nature, having no "essence" and thus lacking anything is worthwhile pursuing. Therefore, if one tries to do that impossible task, one will only get exhausted, i.e., subjected to suffering.
- Anyone who is struggling to achieve this impossible task is truly helpless.
- All the above statements convey the meaning of the word, "*anatta*"; that is the *saññā* that one needs to absorb.

9. When one pursues "pleasurable things in this world" assuming that the nature is *nicca* (i.e., can lead to happiness), one will be subject to suffering or *dukha* and thus one is *anatta* (becomes helpless). This is explained in the key post, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

- When one pursues worldly things assuming that the world is of "*nicca*" and "*atta*" nature, one tends to do *dasa akusala*.

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- When one realizes that the nature is *anicca* and *anatta*, one will try to stay away from *dasa akusala* even when pursuing worldly things. It is fairly easy to see potential problems with the three types of *akusala* done with the body and the four types done with speech. This is the first stage in the path (**mundane path**).
- When one follows the mundane path (i.e., live a moral life), one starts to cleanse one's mind and discard many *micchā diṭṭhi,* i.e., start cleansing the mind.
- At that stage, when one is exposed to the true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, one is able to comprehend them and start on the ***lokuttara* (Noble) Path**.
- One seriously starts tackling the *akusala* done by the mind when one becomes a *Sotāpanna* and starts on the Noble Path. All *dasa akusala* are removed only at the *Arahant* stage. That is **the "*atta*" or the "*nātha*" state**; one is no longer *anatta.*

10. One will be subjected to much suffering (*dukha*) until one realizes that it is fruitless to pursue "valuable things" by engaging in *dasa akusala*.

- The Noble truth of *dukkha sacca* (or *dukkha sathya*) is to see that relief from suffering comes only by rejecting *dasa akusala* and by engaging in "good and moral activities", i.e., *dasa kusala*.
- When one reaches *Nibbāna,* that is the state of *nicca, sukha, atta*, the opposites of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* that are characteristics of this world of 31 realms.

B. Discussion of the Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta

11. There are several Pāli (and Sinhala) words (***mama***, ***asmi***, and ***me***) that are used to indicate "me", "I", "myself." |***Attā***| is also used to indicate "self" in the conventional sense, and "having no essence" in the deeper sense. It is important to note the difference in all those usages.

- All these terms are in the *Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta* [SN 22.59], which is the key *sutta* that discussed the concepts of *atta* and the opposite, *anatta* in the deeper sense. Here are the key verses that are relevant to our discussion here:

"Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave: rūpaṃ ***niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ*** *vā ti? "Bhikkhus: is any rūpa (material entity)* ***nicca or anicca****?" or "Bhikkhus: can any rūpa be* ***kept to one's satisfaction*** *or it* ***cannot be kept to one's satisfaction****?"* [***maññati*** : (man + ya), imagines; is of opinion: deems.]

– Aniccaṃ , Bhante "It cannot be kept to one's satisfaction, Venerable Sir."

Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā ti? "Will such an entity lead to suffering or happiness?"

– Dukhaṃ, Bhante. "Suffering, Venerable Sir."

*Yam panāniccaṃ dukhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ: '****etaṃ mama, eso hamasmi, eso me attā 'ti****? "Will such an entity that cannot be kept to one's satisfaction, that leads to suffering, and is a vipariṇāma dhamma, should be considered as "****myself or mine, or can taken as my attā****?"*

– No hetaṃ, Bhante." "*No reason to think so, Venerable Sir."*

12. Now, that last verse also clearly states what words were used by the Buddha to mean "me", "I", "myself."

- This key verse with these words is, "*Etaṃ* ***mama****, eso'ham* ***asmi****, eso* ***me attāti***," which means, "That is **mine**, it is **me**, or **my *attā* (my essence)**."
- It is interesting to note that even today, the Sinhala word for "me" or "myself" is "*mama*," and "*asmi*" is the sense of "me" or "mine" as in *asmi māna*, which is one of the last *saṃyojana* removed at the *Arahant* stage; see, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?."

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13. The first type of "wrong *saññā*" or the idea that "I am my physical body" (and "I am my vedanā," etc) are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage by removing *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*. The much deeper-embedded *saññā* of "a me" is removed only at the *Arahant* stage; see, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?."

- *Anatta* — on the other hand — is the correct *saññā* that, (i) this world of 31 realms cannot offer any "essence" or "true happiness" and, (ii) therefore, one who is struggling to find such "ultimate truth in this world" is helpless.
- This is why a qualified person explaining Dhamma must have the *paṭisambhidā ñāṇa* to at least some extent, in order to figure out the correct meaning of key in the *suttā*. We discussed another important example in last week's post: "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?."
- One cannot just consult a Pāli dictionary and use the meaning given there; see, "Sutta – Introduction" and "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?."
- Of course, that seems to be the origin of the incorrect translation of *anatta* as "no-self", i.e., choosing the wrong (conventional) meaning of "|*attā*|" (with a long "a" at the end).

C. What About Athma/Anathma?

14. The final piece of this puzzle are the words *ātma/anātma*. These are Sanskrit words and NOT Pāli words. Pronunciation:

WebLink: Pronunciation - athma and anathma

- The confusion came when people started translating *atta/anatta* as *ātma/anātma* in both Sanskrit and Sinhala (many Sanskrit words have been adopted as Sinhala words, which is unfortunate because that makes things more confusing).
- In Sinhala they are written as "ආත්ම" and "අනාත්ම."
- In Sanskrit *ātma* basically means "soul", an indestructible entity that survives death and eventually merges with the "*Mahā Brahma*" equivalent of the "Creator God" in Abrahamic religions. This is different from both Pāli words of *atta* and |*attā*| that we discussed above.
- *Atta/anatta* are deep concepts with several underlying concepts. One meaning of *anatta* is that there is no unchanging soul/*ātma*. Therefore, *anatta* INCLUDES the concepts of *anātma* (the opposite of *ātma*); see, "Anattā in Anattalakkhana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma."

The connection between *dasa akusala* and *anatta* is discussed at, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link." That will complete this discussion, and will help to cultivating the "*anatta saññā*."

3.3.4.5 Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – No "Unchanging Self"

December 5, 2018

1. These days, most people translate the key Pāli word "*anatta*" simply as "no-self." However, just by looking at a few occurrences of "*anatta*" in the *Tipiṭaka*, we can see that it needs to be interpreted in different ways, depending on the context.

- The words "*attha*," "*atta*," and "*attā*" can have many different meanings depending on the context.
- Even in English, there are cases like this: The word "right" means two different things in "you are right" and "turn right." Even though it is pronounced the same way, "write" means something entirely different from both those meanings of "right."

2. Even though this a bit deep *sutta*, WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Sutta (SN 44.10), provides an excellent basis to start a discussion on *anatta*. Just as now, many people in the days of the Buddha wondered whether a "self" or a "soul" (*attā*) exists. That is, of course, the ordinary meaning of *attā*.

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- Vacchagotta comes to the Buddha asked "*kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, atthattā*" *ti?*" OR "Master Gotama, is it correct to say that there is a "self"?."
- **Note that "*atthattā*" is "*atthi attā*" where "*atthi*" means "exists" and (as Vacchagotta meant in this case) "*attā*" to be "self."** Thus, by saying "*atthattā"* Vacchagotta meant: "correct to say an *attā* exists."

3. The Buddha remained silent, and Vacchagotta asked the question again in the negative form. The second time, he asked: "*Kiṃ pana, bho gotama,* ***natthattā****" ti?*" or, "Master Gotama, is it **not** correct to say that there is a "self"?." Seeing that the Buddha is refusing to answer his question, Vacchagotta got up and left.

- **Note that "*natthattā*" is made up of three words: "*na atthi attā*" which negates "*atthattā*."**
- I have discussed some of these word combinations in Pāli: "Kāmaccandha and Icca – Being Blinded by Cravings."

4. When Vacchagotta left, Ven. Ānanda asked why the Buddha did not answer the question.

- The Buddha explained that if he answered in positive (i.e., there is a "self"), then he would agree with those who had the wrong view that such a "self" exists. This view is called *sassatavāda* or the belief that there is an "everlasting entity" (these days also called "a soul"). [***sassatavāda*** :[m.] eternalism.]
- If answered in the negative (i.e., there is "no-self"), then he would agree with those who had the wrong view that such a "self" does not exist. That is called *ucchedavāda* or the belif that the death of the body is the "end of a person," i.e., no re-birth. [***ucchedavādī*** :[m.] one who professes the doctrine of annihilation.]
- The Buddha rejected both views of "self" (*sassatavāda*) and "no-self"(*ucchedavāda*).

5. **Just from that verse, it is clear that if one takes "*anatta*" as "no-self," then one has the wrong view taken by one faction of *brahmins* in the days of the Buddha: that of *ucchedavāda.***

- I was surprised to that the Sutta Central English translation says precisely what I explained in the #4 above; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Is There a Self? (SN 44.10)." **Directly quoting from that translation:**
- "If, Ānanda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, 'Is there a self?' I had answered, 'There is a self,' this would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are eternalists. And if, when I was asked by him, 'Is there no self?' I had answered, 'There is no self,' this would have been siding with those ascetics and brahmins who are annihilationists."
- So, the translation of this verse is the same as mine. But the Sutta Central translation of the next verse uses the same meaning of "no-self" in '*sabbe dhammā anattā*' and gets into a contradiction, as we discuss now.

6. Then the Buddha told Ven. Ānanda that any discussion on this topic would confuse Vacchagotta because he would then get mixed up with the deeper meaning of "*anatta*" in '*sabbe dhammā anattā*.' That refers to "*anatta* nature": "*Ahañcānanda, vacchagottassa paribbājakassa 'atthattā'ti puṭṭho samāno 'atthattā'ti byākareyyaṃ, api nu me taṃ, ānanda, anulomaṃ abhavissa ñāṇassa uppādāya: '****sabbe dhammā anattā****'"ti*?." "*No hetaṃ, bhante.*" [See What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis and What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!]

- That is the confusion most people have today. They equate "*anatta* nature" in "*sabbe dhammā anattā"* with the "no-self" meaning of "*anattā.*"
- "*Sabbe dhammā anattā*" needs to be translated as "all *dhammā* are of *anatta* nature," i.e., of "without essence", and that one would become "*anattā*" or "without refuge" if one does not comprehend the "*anatta* nature."

7. In the Sutta Central translation, the same mundane meaning ("no self") is used for *anatta* in "*sabbe dhammā anattā.*"

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- The verse in #6 is translated in the Sutta Central translation is: "If, Ānanda, when I was asked by the wanderer Vacchagotta, 'Is there a self?' I had answered, 'There is a self,' would this have been consistent on my part with the arising of the knowledge that 'all phenomena are nonself'?."
- **First of all, the statement "all phenomena are non-self," does not make any sense.** *Dhammā* cannot have a "self" anyway. Here, the correct translation is something like, "all phenomena are of no real essence." We will discuss this in detail later.
- **Furthermore, that translation, "all phenomena are non-self," is self-contradictory to the Sutta Central translation of previous verses in #5 above, where both "self" and "no-self" were shown to be rejected by the Buddha.**

8. That is the danger in translating *suttā* word-by-word, without grasping the real meanings of Pāli words and without understanding that meanings depend on the context.

- Therefore, it should be quite clear that Vacchagotta's confusion is not different from the misunderstanding that many people have today.
- However, Vacchagotta was able to grasp that distinction later on and became a *bhikkhu*. Ven. Vacchagotta became an *Arahant*.
- I sincerely hope those who have the wrong understanding today will also be able to see the truth at some point.

9. The deeper meaning of "*anatta*" will become clear as we discuss this in detail in the future after the discussion of the essential material. Without understanding those more basic concepts, it is dangerous to just translate a given key Pāli word like *anatta* using a generic English word(s).

- For now, we will postpone the discussion on the deeper meaning of "*anatta*" and just focus on "*attā*" *and* "*anattā*" in the sense of "self" and "no-self."

10. A given living being can be born in any of the 31 realms (actually a few realms are reserved for *Anāgāmis*); see, "31 Realms of Existence" and "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."

- **But the point is that a human could be born a *deva* or an animal in the next life. Would a dog have the same "self" as a human?**
- So, it is quite clear that there is no "**unchanging self**."

11. On the other hand, a human **does not just become** a *deva* or a *brahma* or an animal or a *preta* in the next life **without underlying causes**. **It is not a random process.**

- There is a continuation of the "life-stream" from this life to the next. One's ***gati***, and one's ***kamma vipāka* play key roles.** I have discussed the critical and forgotten key word *gati* (or *gathi*) in many posts.
- **That is why it is not correct to say that there is "no-self." There are "personality attributes" that flow from this life to the next.**
- That is explained in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) or Dependent Origination. As we know, PS cycles start with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and go through "*bhava paccayā jāti*." That explains how *avijjā* leads to future births (*jāti*).
- Roughly speaking, high levels of *avijjā* (or *moha*) leads to births in the *apāyā*.

12. Therefore, from #10 and #11, we can see why the Buddha rejected both views of "an unchanging self" and "no-self."

- Instead, there is a next life (birth) according to the principle of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, which is cause and effect, just like in modern science. We will discuss PS later. However, it is easy to see this with just an understanding of *kamma* and *kamma vipāka*.

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- *Dasa akusala* (and *pāpa kamma* or immoral deeds) lead to bad births, and *dasa kusala* (and *puñña kamma* or moral deeds) lead to good births.
- This was discussed in: "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."

3.3.5 Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings

What really matters in the end is one comprehends, not words. The way different people interpret "no-self" could be different, even though the concept of a "self" is very clear.

- If *anatta* means "no-self", then there is nothing that can distinguish person A from person B. So, if A takes something belongs to B, he can say, "there is no "me" and there is no "you"; what is wrong in me using "your" stuff?." If B believes in "no-self" can he argue with A?
- Similarly, there are many other contradictions: If there is "no-self", (i) who attains Nibbāna?, (ii) who does moral or immoral acts?, etc.
- Instead one needs to comprehend that "one is really helpless in this rebirth process" or "one is not in control over the long run"; that is the concept of *anatta,* as we discuss below.

1. Let us look at the two words the Buddha used: "*āthma*" and "*anāthma*." In the *Brahmajala sutta*, the Buddha definitely said both those are not correct. The best translation of those two terms to present day, I believe, are "soul" and "no-soul":

- "Soul" in the sense of an unchanging entity; for example, most religions believe one's soul goes to hell or heaven and then that "soul" is forever in that state.
- "No-soul" in the sense interpreted by a materialist, i.e., "a person" is just the body (with thoughts arising from the material brain), and when one dies that is end of story; nothing survives physical death.
- Those were the two extremes rejected by the Buddha as "*athma*" and "*anathma*."

2. The real confusion arose when the Pāli word "*anatta*" was translated to Sanskrit as "*anathma*." Subsequently, the Sanskrit word *"anathma*" was translated to English as "no-self." This was done at the same time when "*athma*" was translated as "soul."

3. The real question is when one says, "there is "no-self"", does one imply that there is no "soul", i.e., no "*athma*"? There are two possibilities. Let us look at them carefully:

- If one means by "no-self" that when one dies that is the end of story, i.e., there is no rebirth process, then this is same as "no-soul."
- Or, it is possible that some people may have the idea of a "changing personality" rather than the above materialistic view of nothing surviving the death, i.e., one believes that a human can be reborn an animal. Then one has the right concept of "no-self" or what I call a "ever-changing personality."
- One needs to contemplate on this and clearly distinguish between the two possible interpretations.

4. But I have seen many people just use the phrase "no-self" in the wrong way.

- Some say, 'The Buddha told us that there is "no-self." So, what is the point of going through learning Dhamma etc., because there is no "me."
- Others say, "Even if I die and get reborn as an animal, it will be not "me", because there is "no-self."
- They are both wrong by talking about a "no-soul." What I ask them is, "If there is no "me", would it be OK if someone hits you hard with a stick or worse?." Then of course they realize that there is a "me." **That is the "me" who learns Dhamma or who could be reborn an animal.**

5. We can take a simple simile to get an idea of these two extremes of "soul" and "no-soul." We have all seen shapes and colors created by water fountains.

- We all know those structures created by water are not real. But we cannot say they do not exist.

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- In the same way, since we cannot say that a person does not exist. However, there is nothing that exists permanently, it is just transitory. Thus both "self" and "no-self" are wrong perceptions.
- Just like we can create different shapes and figures using that water fountain, we all go through various lifeforms in the rebirth process.
- However, the suffering (or the intermittent happiness) is real.

6. This is a deep concept. We cannot deny that we have the inner perception (*saññā*) of a "me" (unless one is an *Arahant*). That is also THE reason that we go through this rebirth process. But that *saññā* CANNOT be gotten rid by forcing the mind to accept that there is no "me." THAT DOES NOT WORK. When one starts learning the true nature of the world by understanding the real meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the mind gradually realizes that there is no real "me", but just an ever-changing "lifestream."

- Thus one could meditate for thousand years muttering to oneself, "it is *anāthma*" or "there is no-self", or anything equivalent with the meaning "there is no "me"", and would not get anywhere close to the *Sotāpanna* stage or even any *nirāmisa sukha,* because deep inside one does not really believe in that.
- Instead one needs to comprehend that "there is nothing fruitful to be had in this world in the long run", or "one is really helpless in this rebirth process"; that is the concept of *anatta*.
- Another word for *anatta* is "*anātha*" (this is the Sinhala word), which means "utterly helpless." That is the status of a human being who is unaware of the perils of the rebirth process. The opposite is "*nātha*," which is actually also used in Pāli to refer to the Buddha (as in one becomes "*nātha*" when one embraces the message of the Buddha).

7. **In other words,** "there is a 'me' as long as one craves for things in this world." **Denying that perception is not the solution. One craves for things in this world because one believes there is happiness to be had by seeking "things" in this world. That tendency to seek things will not reduce until one understands that it is fruitless to strive for such things in the long term; even though one may not know it, one is truly helpless. And that is a real meaning of *anatta*.**

- But that cannot be grasped just by reading about it. One needs to contemplate (meditate) using real examples from one's life. One will know that one is starting to get the concept when one starts realizing that one's cravings for things in this world is gradually waning.

Why Dukkha is not Merely Suffering?

1. There is confusion about what the Buddha said about suffering because most cannot distinguish between ***dukha*** and ***dukkha***. But the Pāli word for suffering is *dukha*. *Dukkha* (*dukha+khya*) means there is hidden suffering AND that suffering can be eliminated (*khya* is removal); see, "What is San? – Meaning of Samsāra (or Samsāra)."

- And *dukkha sacca* (the first Noble Truth) is the knowledge on seeing that those things we value as "sense pleasures" are in fact the CAUSE of this "hidden suffering."

2. *Dukha* is a *vedanā* (feeling). Anyone, and even animals feel *dukha*. No one has to convince anyone there is *dukha* in this world. If anyone can attain *Nibbāna* by realizing *dukha* in this world, then animals would attain *Nibbāna* first, because they know *dukha* very well.

- However, ***dukkha*** (or the ***dukkha sacca***) is the First Noble Truth. It says there is "hidden suffering" behind all this apparent happiness or the illusion of a future happiness that can be achieved by "working hard."
- *Dukkha Sacca* is comprehended not by contemplating on suffering, but contemplating on the causes for suffering, i.e., the immoral things we tend to do because of the lack of understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- In order to comprehend *dukkha*, one needs to understand the wider world view of the Buddha and see that most suffering will be in future rebirths unless one attains at least the Sotāpanna stage of *Nibbāna*.

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- That is why it takes a lot of time and effort to gain wisdom (*paññā*) and truly start on the Path. Since our senses cannot sense other realms, including the suffering-filled lowest 4 realms (except the animal realm), it is not a trivial matter to understand and truly believe the message of the Buddha.

3. This wrong conception has also led to the popularity of "breath meditation" (the incorrect *ānāpāna* meditation) as a way to remove "suffering."

- It is true that one could get "temporary relief" and even *jhānic* experiences using the breath meditation. But that does not solve the problem of "long-term *sansāric* suffering" emphasized by the Buddha.
- When one cultivates the true "*ānāpāna* meditation" (see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?"), one can achieve temporary relief AND work towards "long-term happiness" of *Nibbāna*.

4. Most people have the perception that Buddha Dhamma is pessimistic, because it emphasizes suffering. Actually, it is quite the opposite.

- The Buddha was just the messenger of the bad news. He DISCOVERED the true nature of this world: No matter where we are reborn within the 31 realms, we will not find happiness and in the LONG RUN, suffering prevails; see, "The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna."
- A world which is based on constant change, or more correctly constant disorder, (impermanence) is inherently incapable of providing stability (thus *anicca* is not impermanence, but *anicca* arises out of impermanence); see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."
- Yet, we have the PERCEPTION that we can somehow "beat the system" and find happiness. That is the wrong perception of *nicca*. Once we truly realize ***dukkha***, we will see that anything in this world has the *anicca* nature; nothing in this world can provide long-lasting happiness in the long term.

5. The Buddha not only discovered that "this world" cannot provide us with stable and lasting happiness. He also found the way to get out of this inherently unstable, and thus unsatisfactory nature of existence. This is the Noble Eightfold Path.

6. **Thus it is important to realize that *dukkha* has embedded in it the only optimistic message anyone can deliver: That we can overcome this inevitable suffering.**

- **When one truly realizes the true nature of "this world", one voluntarily gives up struggling in vain to achieve the impossible, and that automatically leads to a state of happiness in one's mind even before the *Sotāpanna* stage.**
- **This particular happiness, *nirāmisa sukha*, is different from the sense pleasures and one can experience it more and more as one follows the Path, and culminates in *Arahantship* or unconditioned happiness; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?." One can experience this *nirāmisa sukha* all the way up to its peak at *Nibbāna* during this very life.**

7. Another important thing to realize is that there are only two ways that anyone's destiny works out:

- One waits until one gets really old to EXPERIENCE the suffering even in this life itself. It does not matter how much money one has: One will NOT be able to enjoy the sensual pleasures as one used to in the younger ages: all sense faculties degrade including culinary pleasures, visual, auditory, sex, etc. And if one gets a major illness it will be worse. The absolutely worse thing is that by that time it will be too late, because even the mind starts to degrade (it is actually the brain that degrades), and one will not be able to make any spiritual progress.
- The other and the ONLY reasonable option is to develop insight NOW. The Buddha had revealed the true nature of 'this world" of 31 realms. At least one should examine the big picture laid out by the Buddha to see whether that picture makes sense, and if it does to work towards getting out of "this world."
- People commit suicide thinking that it will end the suffering. It does not. The only way to stop suffering is to stop rebirth. There is nowhere to be found in the 31 realms that will end the suffering. One may find

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relatively long periods of happiness in the higher realms, but in the *sansāric* time scale that will only be a blip; see, "Sansāric Time Scale" and "Infinity – How Big Is It?."

- And one can test the path prescribed by the Buddha. As one experiences the *nirāmisa sukha* by removing greed, hate, and ignorance, one can start feeling the "cooling down", the early stages of *Nibbāna*; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna." This will accentuate one's liking of Dhamma (*chanda*), enhance one's determination (*citta*) and effort (*viriya*) to seek insight (*vīmaṃsā*); see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipāda)."

Next, "Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction", ……..

3.3.6 Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttas

Revised: January 20, 2016; December 3, 2017; January 26, 2018; July 2, 2020

The key to understanding the First Noble Truth (*Dukkha Sacca*; pronounced "dukkha sachcha") is to understand the Three Characteristics or *Tilakkhaṇa* of "this wider world of 31 realms", i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Let us discuss a few key *suttā*.

Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)

1. How suffering arises from *anicca* is explicitly described in the very first *sutta*, WebLink: suttacentral: Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta (SN 56.11). Here is the text from the *sutta*:

Idam kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkham ariyasaccam:

jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhāṃ, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampiccham na labhati tampi dukkhāṃ—saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā. **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

2. *Bhikkhus*, What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?

- "*jātipi dukkhā*" means "birth causes suffering" (all births end up in suffering and death.) "*Jarā pi dukkhā*" means, "decay of something that is liked causes suffering." And "*maraṇaṃ pi dukkhā*" means, "Death of a liked causes suffering."
- Then comes, "*..appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho"* meaning, "it brings sorrow when a loved one has to depart, and it also brings sorrow to be with a hated person."

3. And then the summary of all that: "*yamp'**icchaṃ*** (*yam pi **icchaṃ**) na labhati tam'pi dukkhaṃ*." Here we see, "***ichcha***" that we encountered in both *anicca*, *dukka*, *anatta* and also in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* ("*pati+ichcha" "sama+uppada"*). And "*labhati*" means "get."

- **Thus, "If one does not get what one likes, that leads to suffering." This phrase has everything condensed. That is *anicca*.** It does not say suffering arises because of impermanence.
- For detail, see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."
- Note that *icca* and *iccha* (ඉච්ච and ඉච්ඡ in Sinhala) are used interchangeably in the *Tipiṭaka* under different *suttā,* as you can see below. The word "*iccha*" with the emphasis on the last syllable indicates "strong *icca*" or "strong attachment."
- For correct pronuciations see, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1."

Anatta Lakkhana Sutta

4. The Buddha delivered WebLink: suttacentral: Anatta Lakkhana Sutta (SN 22.59) to the five ascetics within a fortnight of the first *sutta*. The following are some questions that the Buddha asked the ascetics.

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*"Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ **niccaṃ** vā **aniccaṃ** vā"ti?*

- *"Aniccaṃ, Bhante."*

"Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā"ti?

- *"Dukkhaṃ, Bhante."*

*"Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ: 'etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me **attā**'"ti?*

- *"No hetaṃ, Bhante."*

5. The first question was, "*Bhikkhus*: is any *rūpa* ***nicca* or *anicca***?" or "Bhikkhus: can any *rūpa* (material entity) be **kept to one's satisfaction** or it **cannot be kept to one's satisfaction**?"

And the *bhikkhus* answer: "It cannot be kept to one's satisfaction, Venerable Sir."

- Here it is to be noted that "*rūpa*" can be either internal or external. There are many *rūpa* in this world that are "permanent," at least compared to our lifetimes. For example, an item made of gold or a diamond can last millions of years. But neither can be kept to "our satisfaction" since we will have to give them up when we die.

6. The second question is: "Will such an entity lead to suffering or happiness?" And the *bhikkhus* answer: "Suffering, Venerable Sir."

- Here it is essential to see that if an entity is not permanent, whether that will lead to suffering: How many people suffered when Bin Laden got killed? Only those who liked him to live! Many people rejoiced in his demise. See details in "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."
- The third question is: "Will such an entity that cannot be kept to one's satisfaction, that leads to suffering, and is a *vipariṇāma dhamma*, should be considered as "myself or mine, or has any **substance**?" And the *bhikkhus* answer: "No reason to think so, Venerable Sir."

Then the Buddha explained that those characteristics of anicca, dukkha, anatta also hold for vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā, viññāṇa.

Anicca, *Dukkha*, *Anatta* Are Related and Universal

7. Here we need to pay attention to the sequence of the three questions. The Buddha was pointing out that no "*rūpa*" can be kept to our satisfaction. **Forming attachment to such *rūpa*** will lead to suffering. Therefore, there is no reason to consider them having any substance. ***Anicca* leads to *dukkhā* and *anatta* because we have *nicca saññā* about such *(anicca) rūpa.***

- Of course, the same holds for *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā, viññāṇa.*
- This relationship among *anicca, dukkha*, *anatta* was pointed out as "*Yad **aniccaṃ** taṃ **dukkhaṃ**, yaṃ dukkhaṃ tad **anattā**.*" in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Ajjhattānicca Sutta* (SN 35.1) in the *Samyutta Nikāya.* See, "Anicca, dukkhā, Anattā – Wrong Interpretations".
- Therefore, *anicca, dukkha*, *anatta* are UNIVERSAL characteristics applicable to anything in this world.

Impermanence Does Not Always Lead to Suffering

8. It is essential to realize that the Buddha was not referring to just one's body. *Anicca* applies to all *saṅkhāra* and *sankata*. Nothing in this world can be kept to our satisfaction: "*Sabbē saṅkhārā aniccā"*. By the way, it is superfluous to say, "all *saṅkhāra* are impermanent." Of course, all *saṅkhāra* arise and fall. How can *saṅkhāra* be permanent anyway?

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- Furthermore, "impermanence" does not ALWAYS lead to suffering. When Osama bin Laden died, most people were happy.
- However, bin Laden's death caused suffering to his followers. In both cases, the statement, "if something cannot be maintained to one's satisfaction, that causes suffering" holds. **The death of bin Laden caused suffering only to his followers.**
- If we have a headache/injury/disease, and if it became permanent, would we not suffer? It is a good thing that those conditions are impermanent so that we can get rid of them with medical treatment.

9. We strive to accumulate "good stuff," but will have to leave them all behind at death. When we go through the rebirth process, we just repeat this process in each life.

- In most rebirths, the suffering is great, and in some, there is happiness (human, *Deva*, and *Brahma* realms.) But such "good rebirths" are encountered very rarely. The Buddha said that the lowest four realms are the "home base" for the living beings; they may visit other realms once-in-a-while, but always have to come back and spend the most time in the home base.
- That is why the Buddha said this never-ending process of the cycle of rebirths, where we suffer so much, is fruitless and one is truly helpless. That is *anattā*.
- It does not make sense to say because of *anicca* and *dukkha*, we have "no-self" or "no-soul." Instead, as long as we have the wrong perception of *anicca* about anything in "this world", we are subject to suffering, and thus we are truly helpless, *anattā*.

Girimananda Sutta

10. WebLink: suttacentral: Girimananda Sutta (AN 10.60) is another key *sutta* in the *Tipiṭaka* that describes *anicca* in the most profound sense. The Buddha delivered this *sutta* to Ven. Ānanda (for him to recite to Ven. Girimananda, an *Arahant*, who was in pain due to an ailment). Here is a key phrase (in the middle of the *sutta*):

Katamā cānanda (ca Ānanda), sabbasaṅkhāresu ***aniccha*** *saññā?*

Idhānanda (Idha Ānanda) bhikkhu sabbasaṅkhāresu ***aṭṭīyati harāyati jigucchati.***

Ayaṃ vuccatānanda (vuccati Ānanda), sabbasaṅkhāresu ***aniccha*** *saññā.*

Translated:

"Ānanda, What is the (correct) perception of all *saṅkhāra*?

Ānanda, all *saṅkhāra* are like meatless bones, without substance, to be rejected like urine and feces.

That is Ānanda, how one should perceive all *saṅkhāra.*"

11. Here the Buddha is describing the characteristics of all *saṅkhāra* ("*sabba*" is "all").

- "*Aṭṭi*" is "bone." A dog really enjoys chewing a bone. But a bone has no nutrition or taste. Most of the time, the dog's gum starts bleeding and that is what it tastes. But the dog does not realize that and values a bone very highly.
- "*Hara*" is "substance", and "*harāyati*" is without substance.
- Furthermore, "*Ji*" and "*gu*" (prounounced "jee" and "goo") are the Pāli and Sinhala words for "urine" and "feces." As we already know, "icca" (Pronounced "ichcha") means "like." Thus "*jiguccati*" (pronounced "jiguchchathi" means "it is no different than liking urine or feces." Note that "*jiguccati*" is "*ji*" + "*gu*" + "***icchati***" means "a liking for urine and feces."
- All *(abhi)saṅkhāra* should be avoided (but this applies only at the *Arahant* stage).

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12. Another critical point here is to note that the Buddha was talking about the "*anicca* ***saññā***," where *saññā* or perception is one of the main mental factors or *cetasika*. ***Anicca*** is a **perception** in our minds as we pointed out in the discussion on the *Anatta Lakkhana Sutta* above.

- Impermanence is a physical reality of anything in the universe. Scientists know quite well that **nothing** in our universe, including the universe is permanent. But that does not provide them with the perception of *anicca*. No scientist can attain *Nibbāna* via comprehending impermanence.

Anicca Does Not Mean Impermanence

13. **Thus it is quite clear that *anicca* has nothing to do with "impermanence."** The Pāli words for impermanence are *aniyata* and *addhuva*. Once one understands the true nature of the world, one will realize that any *saṅkhāra* (thought, speech, and action that is focused on attaining pleasurable things) is not to be valued. None can be maintained to one's satisfaction and will only lead to suffering at the end.

- The fruitlessness of ALL *saṅkhāra* is perceived only at the *Arahant* stage. We cannot even beginning to comprehend that yet. That is why an *Arahant* is said to see the burden associated with even breathing (which is a *kaya saṅkhāra*). Anything we do to live in this world is a *saṅkhāra*.
- **Initially, we should try to comprehend the unsuitability of *apuññabhi abhisaṅkhāra,* those associated with immoral actions. Since we can grasp the consequences of such immoral actions, we CAN get our minds to reject them. This is enough to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage.**
- Once we do that, our cleansed minds can begin to see the fruitlessness of *puññabhi abhisaṅkhāra,* and then even the pleasures of *arūpāvacara jhānic* states (*āneñjābhi abhisaṅkhāra*).

Icca Sutta (*Saṃyutta Nikāya*)

14. The "*WebLink: Suttacentral: Icca Sutta* (SN 1.69)" clearly describes what "*icca*" (and thus what *anicca*) is:

"*Kenassu bajjhatī loko, kissa vinayāya muccati;*
Kissassu vippahānena, sabbaṃ chindati bandhanan"*ti.*

"***Icchāya*** *bajjhatī loko,* ***icchā*** *vinayāya muccati;*
Icchāya *vippahānena, sabbaṃ chindati bandhanan*"*ti.*

Translated:

"What binds the world together? How does one get released? How can one gain release?

The world is bound by ***iccha***, one becomes free by losing ***iccha***, one becomes free of all bonds by losing ***iccha***"

The word "*icca*" means "liking" and is closely related to "*nicca*." Of course "*nicca*" means the perception that one can maintain those things to one's satisfaction (and "*anicca*" means the opposite: "*na* + *icca*"). The perception of *nicca* leads to *icca*, i.e., one believes that worldly things can provide everlasting happiness and thus one likes to hold on to them. Just like an octopus grabs things with all its eight legs and will not let go, humans (and other beings too) grab onto to worldly things with the hope of enjoying them.

- Note that in this *sutta*, the word "***iccha***" is used instead of "*icca*" to emphasize that "**strong attachment**" as in the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta* discussed above.

The Key Problem with *Sutta* Interpretations

15. There are many, many *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* that describe *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. But if one starts with the wrong interpretations, some of those *suttā* can be interpreted the wrong way. Many *suttā* do not describe the relevant concepts in detail. Instead, a *suttā* provides a brief description or the *niddēsa* version.

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The commentaries (Sinhala *Atthakathā*) were supposed to give the detailed (*patiniddēsa*) explanations; see, "Sutta – Introduction".

- The root cause for the confusion has been the acceptance of the *Visuddhimagga* by Buddhaghosa as THE key commentary by *Theravada* tradition.
- Nowadays, most *bhikkhus* do not read the *Tipiṭaka* or the remaining three original commentaries that are in the *Tipiṭaka.* They just follow what is in the *Visuddhimagga*. That has been the single-most obstacle for people attāining *Nibbāna* for the past many hundreds of years.
- Luckily, we have three of the original commentaries (even earlier than the Sinhala *Atthakathā*) preserved in the *Tipiṭaka.* See, "Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma" and "Preservation of the Dhamma."

Then there is the following *sutta* which clearly states that the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self", even according to conventional translations.

Channa Sutta – Anatta Does Not Mean "No-Self"

16. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Channa Sutta (SN 22.90)" clearly says *anatta* does not mean "no-self," even in a "traditional" English translation: "WebLink: accesstoinsightŏrg: Channa Sutta: To Channa (SN 22.90)":

"Everything exists": That is one extreme. "Everything doesn't exist": That is a second extreme. Avoiding these two extremes, the *Tathagata* teaches the Dhamma via the middle: From ignorance as a requisite condition come fabrications. From fabrications, consciousness. Similarly, to name-&-form, the six sense faculties, contact, feeling, craving, clinging/sustenance, becoming (*bhava*), and birth. From birth as a requisite condition, then aging & death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, distress, & despair come into play. Such is the origination of this entire mass of stress & suffering."

- "Everything doesn't exist" in the above translates to "no-self" when applied to a "living being." As far as a "person" is concerned, "self" is one extreme, and "no-self" is the other extreme. **Therefore, it wrong to say either "a person exists" or "a person does not exist."**
- Most *Theravada* websites (including the above sites) and texts today translate "*anatta"* as "no-self." But, it is clear from their translations (especially of the *Channa Sutta*) that the Buddha rejected this "no-self" view.
- **Whether it is a living being or the whole world, it is not correct to say they "exist" or "do not exist." Things exist when suitable causes and conditions (per *Paṭicca Samuppāda*) are there.**
- Also, see, "Atta – Two Very Different Meanings."

Next, "If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?", ……..

3.3.7 Tilakkhaṇa – English Discourses

February 3, 2018; revised February 11, 2020

Tilakkhaṇa or Three Marks of Existence or Three Characteristics of Nature (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) are discussed in detail in a series of four discourses. These are based on the first two *suttā* (*Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta* and the *Anatta Lakkhaṇa Sutta*) that the Buddha delivered to the five ascetics right after attaining Enlightenment.

- Only an essential outline is provided in these discourses. There will be five topics (for each discourse) in the the "discussion forum" under the forum **Three Marks of Existence Discourses**, where one can ask any questions/ express opinions.
- No question is too simple or too hard. We can find more details in other *suttā* or in *Abhidhamma*.

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- However, these discourses are not recommended for those who are not familiar with basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma. They might get discouraged. They may want to first get familiar with the basic concepts in "Moral Living and Fundamentals," "Working Towards Good Rebirths," and "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" sections.
- In-Depth analysis at, "Origin of Life."

February 3, 2018

Discourse 1 – Nicca, Sukha, Atta (Before understanding *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, it is necessary to understand the opposites).

WebLink: Desana 1 – Nicca, Sukha, Atta

WebLink: Desana 1 – Nicca, Sukha, Atta (Original - Larger file size)

Key Relevant Posts:

What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?

Could Bodily Pain Be Due to Causes Other Than Kamma Vipāka?

Saññā – What It Really Means

Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda

Bhava and Bhavaṅga – Simply Explained!

February 10, 2018

Discourse 2 – Icca, Nicca, Anicca

WebLink: Desana 2 – Icca, Nicca, Anicca

WebLink: Desana 2 – Icca, Nicca, Anicca (Original - Larger file size)

Key Relevant Posts:

How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – II

Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra

Viññāṇa – What It Really Means

What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!

What is Intention in Kamma?

February 19, 2018

Discourse 3 – Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa

WebLink: Desana 3 – Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa

WebLink: Desana 3 – Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa (Original - Larger file size)

Key Relevant Posts:

Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage

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February 27, 2018

Discourse 4 – Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – What is "a Person"?

WebLink: Desana 4 – Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – What is "a Person"?

WebLink: Desana 4 – Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – What is "a Person"? (Original - Larger file size)

Key Relevant Posts:

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

Udayavaya Nana

San

Bhūta and Yathābhūta – What Do They Really Mean

March 02, 2018

Discourse 5 – Tilakkhaṇa and Micchā Diṭṭhi

WebLink: Desana 5 – Tilakkhaṇa and Micchā Diṭṭhi

WebLink: Desana 5 – Tilakkhaṇa and Micchā Diṭṭhi (Original - Larger file size)

Key Relevant Posts:

Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)

What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!

Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means

Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means

Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial

Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga

Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa

This concludes the series of discourses on *Tilakkhaṇa*.

3.3.8 Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views

Associations (Sevana) – A Root Cause of Wrong Views

3.3.8.1 Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa

June 14, 2019; revised October 23, 2019

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Wrong Views of a "Self"

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1. When one gets rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (together with *vicikicca* and *silabbata parāmāsa*), one becomes a *Sotāpanna* and will never be reborn in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*).

- **It is a change in one's world view (*dassanena pahātabbā*)** that leads to this enormous change.
- It cannot be attained by just doing moral deeds. (In fact, *silabbata parāmāsa* is the wrong belief that living a righteous life by itself can liberate oneself).
- Getting rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* requires a deep understanding of how nature works. *Tilakkhaṇa* or the Three Characteristics of Nature encompasses those basic principles: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- Here we will examine this relationship, which will help get rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.

Definition of *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*

2. *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* is defined in the *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*: WebLink: suttacentral: 2.3.2.13.1. Dassanenapahātabbaduka.

"*Katame dhammā **dassanena pahātabbā**? Tīṇi saññojanāni—sakkāyadiṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbataparāmāso.*

- **Translation: "**What are those *dhamma* that need to be **removed via correct vision**? Three *saññojanā (saṃyojana* as commonly called today) – *sakkāyadiṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbataparāmāso.*

*Tattha katamā sakkāyadiṭṭhi? Idha assutavā puthujjano ariyānaṃ adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto sappurisānaṃ adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto **rūpaṃ attato samanupassati, rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ**. Vedanaṃ ... pe ... saññaṃ ... pe ... saṅkhāre ... pe ... viññāṇaṃ attato samanupassati, viññāṇavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇasmiṃ vā attānaṃ. Yā evarūpā diṭṭhi diṭṭhigataṃ ... pe ... vipariyāsaggāho—ayaṃ vuccati sakkāyadiṭṭhi.*"

- **Translation:** "What is *sakkāya diṭṭhi*? A person uninstructed in *Dhamma*, who has not associated with Noble ones, who is not well-versed or disciplined, has the following wrong views. '**I am my body, my body is me, my body is in me, I am in my body'.** He perceives *vedana..saññā,..saṅkhāra,..viññāṇa* in the same four ways **(e.g., I am my *viññāṇa*, my *viññāṇa* is me, my *viññāṇa* is in me, I am in my *viññāṇa*)** – that is *sakkāya diṭṭhi.*

That is exactly the same definition given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Cūḷavedalla Sutta (Majjima Nikāya* 44)" that we discussed in the post, "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?." This definition of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is in many more *suttā*, including "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyaisidatta Sutta (SN 41.3)."

Twenty Types of *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*

3. The key is to understand the meaning of "*rūpaṃ attato samanupassati, rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ, vedanaṃ attato samanupassati.*" Similarly for *vedana, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa.* Thus, when one has *sakkāya diṭṭhi,*one has four wrong perceptions each for the five aggregates.

- That is called the **20-types of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*** (***vīsativatthukā sakkāyadiṭṭhi***).
- The first four factors are regarding just one's own body. It turns out that those four wrong perceptions on one's body arise in those who have *uccheda diṭṭhi,* i.e., that one is not reborn after death.
- Then the same four factors are for the four "*nāma*" entities: *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa.* It turns out that those with wrong perceptions about these have the *sāssata diṭṭhi*, i.e., that one 's *attā* ("self" or "soul") is eternal or forever.

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- In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1), the Buddha discusses 60 more wrong views, but those are variations of the above two. Therefore, getting rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* leads to the removal of all wrong beliefs about this world.
- I will first provide the *Tipiṭaka* references for these two cases in the next post.

Sakkāya Is *Pañcupādānakkhandhā*

4. A definition of ***sakkāya*** is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sakkāyapañhā Sutta (SN 38.15)": "'*Sakkāyo, sakkāyo'ti, āvuso sāriputta, vuccati. Katamo nu kho, āvuso, sakkāyo"ti? "Pañcime, āvuso, upādānakkhandhā sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā, seyyathidaṃ—rūpupādānakkhandho, vedanupādānakkhandho, saññupādānakkhandho, saṅkhārupādānakkhandho, viññāṇupādānakkhandho. Ime kho, āvuso,* ***pañcupādānakkhandhā sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā****"ti."*

Translated: "***sakkāya is pañcupādānakkhandhā****: rūpupādānakkhandha, vedanupādānakkhandha, saññupādānakkhandha, saṅkhārupādānakkhandha, viññāṇupādānakkhandha*."

- Therefore, we can deduce that ***sakkāya diṭṭhi*** is the wrong vision that the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) are excellent and beneficial.
- The word "*sakkāya*" comes from "*sath*" + "*kāya*," which rhymes as "*sakkāya*." "*Sath*" means "good" and "*kāya*" means "a collection" or "an aggregate" (it could also mean "physical body," which is also a collection of parts). Thus "*sakkāya*" means those five aggregates (including one's own body) are fruitful.
- Our world consists of 12 types of *kāya* or "collections": *cakkhu kāya*/*rūpa kāya*, *sota kāya*/*sadda kāya*, etc. for the six sense faculties.
- That vision or mindset — *sakkāya diṭṭhi* — is what leads to craving for them (*upādāna*).

5. When one has the wrong view of *sakkāya diṭṭhi,* **some parts of *pañcakkhandha*** become *pañc**upādāna**kkhandhā* (*pañca upādāna khandha*). **Those are the parts that one likes based on one's *gati*,**

Therefore, one needs to comprehend that one gets attached to things based on one's *gati* AT THAT TIME. One's *gati* keep changing and can be very different, especially in one who is reborn. If one is reborn into a bad environment (conditions), one is likely to develop "bad *gati*."

- Those bad *Kamma* were done with bad *gati* AT THAT TIME. They can bring bad *vipāka* much later, even in future lives, when one maybe living a moral life. The opposite is correct too. One's good kamma in a previous life can bring good vipaka even while on lives an immoral life in this life.
- That is why we experience both good and bad *kamma vipāka*.
- This is also why we cannot speak about an "unchanging *attā*/soul/*ātma*." A living being is a "lifestream" that just encounter good/bad *vipāka* based on what had been done in the past based on one's *gati* at that time. Under suitable conditions, both kinds (good/bad *kamma*) bring *vipāka*.

There Are Only Causes and Effects

6. What is discussed in #5 is succinctly stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Catutthaabhabbaṭṭhāna Sutta (AN 6.95)."

Translation: "A *Sotāpanna* (or one with higher *magga phala*) accomplished in view (*diṭṭhisampanno puggalo*) is **unable (*abhabbo*)** to fall back on the idea that pleasure and pain are made by oneself (*sayaṃkataṃ*). Or that they are made by another (*paraṃkataṃ*). Or that they are made by both (*sayaṃkatañca paraṃkatañca*). Nor can they fall back on the idea that pleasure and pain arise by chance, not made by oneself, by another, or by both. (*Asayaṃkāraṃ adhiccasamuppannaṃ, aparaṅkāraṃ adhiccasamuppannaṃ, asayaṅkārañca aparaṅkārañca adhiccasamuppannaṃ*).

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– Why is that? It is because a person accomplished in view has clearly seen that phenomena arise due to causes and conditions (according to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*). Those are the six things that a *Sotāpanna* (or one with higher *magga phala*) accomplished in view will not fall back to."

- There is no "*attā*" or a "soul" or a "*ātma*" doing those things that will lead to pleasure or pain (sooner or later).
- Those *kamma vipāka* (pleasure or pain) materialize due to two factors. (i) Causes were created in the past based on the "*gati*" of the lifestream AT THAT TIME, and, (ii) Corresponding *vipāka* materialize when suitable CONDITIONS become available (at a later time).
- *Paṭicca Samuppāda* described that process.
- That is why understanding "*gati*" is so important. One may have had "bad *gati*" in the past, and those can bring "bad *vipāka*" now EVEN IF one has "good *gati*" now.
- That is why even the Buddha had to bear bad *kamma vipāka*. Even though he had "no *gati* left," he had to endure the results of past *kamma* done when he had "bad *gati*."

Deeper Aspects of *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*

7. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sakkāyadiṭṭhi Sutta (SN 22.155)" it is stated how *sakkāya diṭṭhi* arises:

"***Kismiṃ nu kho, bhikkhave, sati, kiṃ upādāya, kiṃ abhinivissa sakkāyadiṭṭhi uppajjatī"ti?*** *"rūpe kho, bhikkhave, sati, rūpaṃ upādāya, rūpaṃ abhinivissa sakkāyadiṭṭhi uppajjati. Vedanāya sati ... saññāya sati ... saṅkhāresu sati ... viññāṇe sati, viññāṇaṃ upādāya, viññāṇaṃ abhinivissa sakkāyadiṭṭhi uppajjati.*"

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, **because of focusing on what, attaching to what, and clinging to what leads to the arising of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*?** It arises due to focusing on *rūpa* (forms: things and people), attaching to forms, and clinging to forms. It arises similarly due to *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa*."

Buddha explains: "*Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā" ti*? "What do you think *Bhikkhus*, can *rūpa* be maintained to one's satisfaction?'.

"*Aniccaṃ, bhante*." "They cannot be, *bhante*."

"*Yaṃ panāniccaṃ ... pe ... api nu taṃ anupādāya sakkāyadiṭṭhi uppajjeyyā"ti*? "Understanding that if something cannot be maintained to ones' satisfaction, if it undergoes unpredictable change and is destroyed, would one get attached to it and generate *sakkāya diṭṭhi?*

"*No hetaṃ, bhante*." "No reason for that, *bhante*."

and the same for the other four aggregates: "*Vedanā ... saññā ... saṅkhārā ... viññāṇaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā"ti?*

"Aniccaṃ, bhante." *"Yaṃ panāniccaṃ ... pe ... api nu taṃ anupādāya sakkāyadiṭṭhi uppajjeyyā"ti? "No hetaṃ, bhante*." *"Evaṃ passaṃ ... pe ... nāparaṃ itthattāyāti pajānātī"ti.*"

8. Thus, one gets attached to the five aggregates and considers them to be one's own, only if one does not see the *anicca* (and *dukkha* and *anatta*) nature of those entities. When one understands that such attachments invariably (without exception) lead to suffering (because none of them can be maintained to one's satisfaction), one loses the craving for them.

- That understanding by itself first leads to "loss of craving" to the extent that **one would NOT be able** (***abhabbo***) do immoral *kamma* that makes one suitable for rebirth in the *apāyā*. When one loses such *upādāna*, one would also not grasp such thoughts at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.
- This word ***abhabbo*** is commonly mistranslated. It does not just mean "one would not do," but one "is incapable of doing." The enforcement is AUTOMATIC; one does not need to think about whether such

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an action is immoral. When certain types of *gati* are removed PERMANENTLY (with *magga phala*), one's mind WOULD NOT be CAPABLE of doing such sinful actions.

- When one cultivates such "bad *gati*," one would *upādāna* (and be born) to bad births; that is what is meant by "needing suitable conditions to bring *kamma vipāka*," In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Kukkuravatika Sutta (MN 57)" (English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Dog-Duty Ascetic (MN 57)"), the Buddha explains how those "dog *gati*" that Seniya was cultivating would lead to him to be born a dog.
- On the reverse, when one gets rid of such "bad *gati*" permanently, one would NOT be born in such unfortunate realms. That is what is meant by the verse, "*Catūh**apāye**hi ca vippamutto, Chaccābhiṭhānāni **abhabba kātuṃ***" ("(an *Ariya*) is free from the four ***apāyā*** because he/she is **incapable** of doing six highly immoral acts") in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ratana Sutta (Snp 2.1)."

What is *Attā*?

9. Now, it is important to figure out what is meant by "*attā*" in the description of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.

The "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭipadā Sutta (SN 22.44)" describes the way to get rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*: "*Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sakkāyanirodhagāminī paṭipadā? Idha, bhikkhave, sutavā ariyasāvako ariyānaṃ dassāvī ariyadhammassa kovido ariyadhamme suvinīto, sappurisānaṃ dassāvī sappurisadhammassa kovido sappurisadhamme suvinīto, **na rūpaṃ attato samanupassati, na rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ; na attani vā rūpaṃ, na rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ**. Na vedanaṃ attato ... na saññaṃ ... na saṅkhāre ... na viññāṇaṃ attato samanupassati, **na viññāṇavantaṃ vā attānaṃ;** na attani vā viññāṇaṃ, na viññāṇasmiṃ vā attānaṃ. ..*"

- **Translated:** "And what, *bhikkhus*, is the way leading to the cessation of identity with the five aggregates (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*)? Here, *bhikkhus*, the instructed noble disciple … does not regard *rūpa* as ***attā*** … nor *vedanā* as ***attā*** … nor *saññā* as ***attā*** … nor *saṅkhāra* as ***attā*** … nor *viññāṇa* as ***attā*** … nor ***attā*** as in *viññāṇa*.."
- See #2 above for the full translation of the verse.

Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (SN 22.59)

10. Let us compare the above definition to the following verse in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (SN 22.59)": "*Rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, anattā. Rūpañca hidaṃ, bhikkhave, attā abhavissa, nayidaṃ rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvatteyya, labbhetha ca rūpe: 'evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahosī'ti. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ anattā, tasmā rūpaṃ ābādhāya saṃvattati, na ca labbhati rūpe: 'evaṃ me rūpaṃ hotu, evaṃ me rūpaṃ mā ahosī'ti.*

- **Translated**: "*Bhikkhus*, form (physical body) is *anattā* (or not *attā*). For if, *bhikkhus*, if one's body is *attā*, one would have full control over it, and it would be possible to say: 'Let my body be like this; let my body not be like this.' But because the body is *anattā*, it is subjected to decay and disease. And it is not possible to have it the way one desires: 'Let my body be this way; let my body not be this way."
- The recent post, *"*Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma*"* explained the reality. That there is no *attā* or a "soul" or a "*ātma"* that can be associated with either one's physical body or its four mental aggregates.

11. Again, from the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (SN 22.59)": "*Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā" ti*? "*Aniccaṃ, bhante*." "*Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā"ti*? "*Dukkhaṃ, bhante*." "*Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ, kallaṃ nu taṃ samanupassituṃ: 'etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'"ti*? "*No, hetaṃ, bhante...*"

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Translated: "What do you think, *bhikkhus*, can form be maintained to one's satisfaction?"—"No, *bhante*"—"Would something of such nature lead to suffering or happiness?"—"Suffering, venerable sir."—"Is it prudent to regard such a thing thus: 'This is mine, this I am, this is my self'?"—"No, *bhante*."

AND

"*Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbaṃ rūpaṃ: 'netaṃ mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya daṭṭhabbaṃ*."

Translated: "Therefore, *bhikkhus*, any form (*rūpa*) whatsoever, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near, all form (these are 11 types of *rūpa* in *rūpakkhandha*) should be seen as it really is, with correct wisdom. Thus: 'This is not mine, this I am not, this is not my self.'

- The same argument would hold for the other four mental aggregates as well.

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and *Anatta* Nature

12. Therefore, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is permanently disappears when one comprehends the real nature of this world. That is the *anicca* nature (inability to maintain *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa* in the way one likes to). Because of the *anicca* nature, much suffering will result, including in the *apāyā* (*dukkha*). That is when one becomes helpless (*anatta*); see, "Anicca – True Meaning."

- Therefore, one is truly helpless in this rebirth process (*anatta*); see, "Anatta – No Refuge in This World." That is the same as not having full control ("*na*" + "*attā*" or *anattā*); see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma."
- The existence (*bhava*) in this world and corresponding births (*jāti*) filled with suffering arise because one tries to go against the true nature and generates *saṅkhāra* (due to *avijjā*). That is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- When one comprehends that, one would stop generating *saṅkhāra*, starting with the worst kind: *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* (leading to immoral deeds). That is how a *Sotāpanna* starts on the Noble Path.

3.3.8.2 Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views

June 22, 2019; revised October 23, 2019

Introduction – Two Types of Wrong Views

1. In the "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)," the Buddha explained that there are two eightfold paths; also see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and the post referred to therein. Therefore, there are two types of *sammā diṭṭhi*, attained via the removal of two types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.

- First, one needs to follow the **mundane eightfold path** and get rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. That is the necessary foundation needed to comprehend the nature of a broader world of 31 realms. One must realize the truth of *kamma/kamma vipāka*, rebirth process, that there is a *paraloka* where *gandhabba* lives, etc.; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- The more profound wrong views of *nicca*, *sukha*, *atta* can be removed, and one can then comprehend the real nature of this world of 31 realms (only after one gets rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*); see, "Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses."
- When that happens, one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* and starts on the **Noble Eightfold Path**.

2. Removal of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is the basis of one's start on the Noble Eightfold Path. It is really about getting a "new vision" about the true nature of this world of 31 realms.

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- **That requires getting rid of the more in-depth wrong views (*nicca, sukha, atta*) about the nature of this world.**
- In this post, we will discuss how "20 types of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*" is reached by getting rid of 5 types of wrong views on the five aggregates based on *uccheda diṭṭhi* and 15 types of wrong views on the five aggregates based on *sassata diṭṭhi*. [***uccheda*** :[m.] cutting off; perishing; annihilation. ***sassata*** :[adj.] eternal.]

Sakkāya as "*Sath*" + "*Kāya*"

3. In the previous post, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa," we discussed how *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is related to one's cravings. Those cravings (*upādāna*) are for one's own body and other material things of perceived value (*rūpakkhandha*). They also include one's mental constituents that define those cravings (*khandha* or aggregates of *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*).

- As we saw in that post, The word "*sakkāya*" comes from "*sath*" + "*kāya*," which rhymes as "*sakkāya*." "*Sath*" means "good" and "*kāya*" means "a collection" or "an aggregate" (it could also mean "physical body," which is also a collection of parts). Thus "*sakkāya*" means those five aggregates (including one's own body) are fruitful.
- These cravings for the five aggregates arise because of the wrong views of *uccheda diṭṭhi* or *sassata diṭṭhi* or views in between those two (with different combinations), as we discuss below.

Two Main *Diṭṭhis* (Deeper Wrong Views)

4. There are two main "*diṭṭhis*" or "wrong views" about the world that are discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1)." Note that I always provide the Pāli version of a *sutta*, because sometimes the commonly available English translations have errors. I usually give a link to the Pāli version at Sutta Central. One can get translations to English — and even a few more languages — there by clicking on the "hamburger icon" (represented by three short parallel lines) at the top left.

- One is the *uccheda diṭṭhi*, which says a "person" exists only until the death of the physical body; a "person" is nothing more than a collection of physical matter (molecules). When the "person" dies, that is the end of the story (*ucceda* means "cut off").
- The second is *sassata diṭṭhi* — which is the exact opposite of the first (*sassata* means "eternal.") It is the view that a "person" has a "mental body" that survives the death of the physical body: In Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam), it is called the "soul," which goes to either heaven or hell at death and will stay there forever. In Hinduism, it is called "*ātma*," which merges with *Mahā Brahma* at some point and remains there forever.
- **In the *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1), the Buddha discusses 60 more wrong views, but those are variations of the above two.** We can see that most scientists have the *uccheda diṭṭhi* (that one's physical body with its brain is all that is there). Most religious people (in Abrahamic religions and in Hinduism) have the *sassata diṭṭhi* that one's soul or *ātma* lives forever.

5. If *uccheda diṭṭhi* is the actual reality of the world, then suffering will end with the death of the physical body. Thus one may seek to "enjoy worldly pleasures" without paying attention to the harmful consequences of doing immoral deeds (when the temptation gets high enough).

- If *sassata diṭṭhi* is the actual reality of the world, then suffering will never end, because there is an "unchanging essence" that will survive the death of the body at any time. Even though the premise there is of a "suffering-less, joyful realm" (merge with the Creator), the Buddha said that there is no such existence. **All existences are subject to suffering, simply because matter (*rūpa*) is unstable. Any life with even a trace of tangible-matter is inherently unstable. Modern science has confirmed this fact;** see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."

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- In Buddha Dhamma, there is an entity (*gandhabba,* mostly "mental" with just a few *suddhaṭṭhaka* or smallest units of matter) that survives the death of the physical body. Any existence in this world is associated with such "mental body." The mental body of a human or an animal is a *gandhabba*.
- Buddha Dhamma says a living being comes into existence due to six root causes, but all six disappear with the removal of three root causes (*lobha, dosa, moha*). As long as those root causes are present there will be an associated life. And any being in this world has much more suffering than any short-lived happiness; see, "Six Root Causes – Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)" and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

6. Therefore, the concept in Buddha Dhamma is in between those two extremes of *uccheda diṭṭhi* and *sassata diṭṭhi*.

- There is a mental-body with a trace of matter (*gandhabba*) that survives the death of the physical body, but that mental body is ever-changing, according to *Paticca Samuppāda.*
- Therefore, there is no everlasting "self" or a "*ātma*" or an "*attā*." The denial of an eternal "*attā*" is called "*anattā*" ("na" + "*attā*"). That is the meaning of *anatta*; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma."
- Since the death of the physical body is not the end of suffering, one will become helpless (*anatta*) in the rebirth process since births in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*) are unavoidable. That is another meaning of *anatta* ("na" + "*atta*") or "without refuge or becoming helpless); see, "Anatta – No Refuge in This World." Here, *atta* means "with refuge.."
- When one understands this world view of the Buddha, one removes *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (together with *vicikicca* and *silabbata parāmāsa*) and attains the *Sotāpanna* stage.

Two Main Types of Character (*Carita*)

7. A reveling analysis of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* in terms of one's character qualities (*carita*, pronounced "charitha") is the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nayasamuṭṭhāna section" of the *Nettippakarana* (a Commentary in the *Tipiṭaka*). It defines the Four Noble Truths in terms of "*sakkāya*": "*Tattha* ***diṭṭhicaritā*** *rūpaṃ attato upagacchanti. Vedanaṃ ... pe ... saññaṃ ... saṅkhāre ... viññāṇaṃ attato upagacchanti.* ***Taṇhācaritā*** *rūpavantaṃ attānaṃ upagacchanti. Attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ, vedanāvantaṃ ... pe ... saññāvantaṃ ... saṅkhāravantaṃ ... viññāṇavantaṃ attānaṃ upagacchanti, attani vā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇasmiṃ vā attānaṃ, ayaṃ vuccati* ***vīsativatthukā sakkāyadiṭṭhi***."

Translated: "A person with "characteristic wrong views" (***diṭṭhicaritā***) perceives "**I am my body," "I am my *vedanā*," "I am my *saññā*," "I am my *saṅkhāra*," and "I am my *viññāṇa*."** A person with "characteristic cravings for sense pleasures" (***taṇhācaritā***) perceives **my body is me; my body is in me, I am in my body.** He sees *vedanā..saññā..saṅkhāra..viññāṇa* in the same four ways **(e.g., I am my *viññāṇa,* my *viññāṇa* is me, my *viññāṇa* is in me, I am my *viññāṇa*)** – that is **twenty types of *sakkāya diṭṭhi***.

- Thus, there are five types of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* due to *uccheda diṭṭhi* and 15 types of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* due to *sassata diṭṭhi.*

8. From the same section of WebLink: suttacentral: Nayasamuṭṭhāna of the *Nettipakarana*, we have two definitions for *uccheda diṭṭhi* and *sassata diṭṭhi.*

"*Tattha ye rūpaṃ attato upagacchanti. Vedanaṃ ... pe ... saññaṃ ... saṅkhāre ... viññāṇaṃ attato upagacchanti.* ***Ime vuccanti "ucchedavādino"ti***."

"*Ye rūpavantaṃ attānaṃ upagacchanti. Attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ. Ye vedanāvantaṃ ... pe ... ye saññāvantaṃ ... ye saṅkhāravantaṃ ... ye viññāṇavantaṃ attānaṃ upagacchanti, attani vā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇasmiṃ vā attānaṃ.* ***Ime vuccanti "sassatavādino"ti****, tattha ucchedasassatavādā ubho antā, ayaṃ saṃsārapavatti*."

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Translated: "One with *uccheda diṭṭhi* (***ucchedavādino***) perceives "**I am my body," "I am my vedanā," "I am my saññā," "I am my sankhāra," and "I am my viññāṇa."**

"One with *sassata diṭṭhi* (***sassatavādino***) perceives **my body is me; my body is in me, I am in my body'.** He also perceives *vedanā..saññā.. saṅkhāra.. viññāṇa* in the same four ways **(e.g., I am my *viññāṇa*, my *viññāṇa* is me, my *viññāṇa* is in me, I am my *viññāṇa*)."** Those with such extreme views are bound to the cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*).

9. This verse introduces dividing *anariyas* (*puthujjano*) into two categories: (1) ***diṭṭhicarita*** or those with personalities dominated by the wrong vision of *uccheda diṭṭhi*. (2) ***taṇhācarita*** or those with characters dominated by the wrong view of *sassata diṭṭhi*. If you look at the definitions in #7 above, you will see that a ***diṭṭhicarita*** is one with *uccheda diṭṭhi,* and a ***taṇhācaritā*** is one with *sassata diṭṭhi.*

- The last part says that the 20-types of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is the combination of *uccheda* and *sassata diṭṭhis*. Since all other 60 *diṭṭhis* or wrong visions about the world are different combinations or variations of *uccheda* and *sassata diṭṭhis*, 20-types of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* includes all the wrong views about "this world."

Sotāpanna Stage – A New World View

10. Now we look at the last of the verse in #8 above, which gives another clue: "..*tattha ucchedasassatavādā ubho antā, ayaṃ saṃsārapavatti*."

- Here, "ucchedasassatavādā" results from the combination of *uccheda sassata vādā*, i.e.,*uccheda vādā* and *sassata vādā*, where *vāda* means "argument or theory," or in this case "view." It says those two are the two extreme views. [***vāda*** :[m.] theory; saying; creed controversy.]
- Then it says, "*ayaṃ saṃsārapavatti*." That means those two extreme views lead to the continuation of the rebirth process! (*saṃsāra pavatti*, where "*pavatti*" means to "continue or sustain").
- That makes perfect sense. One removes *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (and get to the correct world view) by getting rid of the two main wrong views about the world of 31 realms, i.e., *uccheda diṭṭhi* and *sassata diṭṭhi,* and any combination of them.

11. If a living being does not cease to exist at the death of the physical body (*uccheda diṭṭhi* does not hold) AND if there is no "permanent essence of a being" like a soul or a *ātma* (*sassata diṭṭhi* does not hold), then what is the explanation?

- Continuation of a lifestream NOT ONLY at the death of the physical body but at ANY MOMENT is explained via the principle of causes and conditions (*Paticca Samuppāda*).
- One who gets to be a *Sotāpanna* comprehends this fact and realizes that there is nothing to be called "mine" because, in reality, there is absolutely nothing that can be under control of "oneself"; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma."
- As long as one does not comprehend that, one will become helpless in the future, especially when one is reborn in an *apāya*; see, "Anatta – No Refuge in This World."
- That is why getting rid of *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* REQUIRES one to get rid of any trace of *uccheda diṭṭhi* or *sassata diṭṭhi.*
- That is not possible until one first gets rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* and gets basic understanding of the broader world with 31 realms, laws of *kamma*, existence of a *paraloka* with *gandhabba*, and of course the validity of the rebirth process; also see, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?."

12. However, this is only a change of *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* (getting rid of muddled or distorted vision). There are two more *vipallāsa* (*saññā vipallāsa* and *citta vipallāsa* or "distorted perceptions and thoughts.") Their removal happen at higher stages of *Nibbāna*; see, "Discourse 3 – Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa" in "Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses."

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- Therefore, getting rid of ALL wrong views starts at the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage, and established at the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- However, all types of *vipallāsa* wear out step-by-step and ultimately go away only at the *Arahant* stage; see the forum discussion "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa."

3.3.8.3 Associations (Sevana) – A Root Cause of Wrong Views

June 29, 2019; revised July 1, 2019 (comment added at the end)

1. Our world views are first formed by our families. Most people just keep those views during their whole lifetimes. A good example is one's religion.

- With the advent of the internet, this is changing. Now, people are exposed to many world views, and can learn about different world views and decide for themselves which one(s) make more sense.
- Still, the basic mindset instilled at a young age can have a long-lasting effect. This is why it is important to make sure that our children are not exposed to "bad influences", especially bad friends.

2. In the terminology of the Buddha, one's "*gati*" (habits/character qualities) are determined by one's world views and *vice versa*. **Furthermore, whether one acts with *avijjā* (ignorance) at any given time depends on one's *gati*.** In simple terms, "good *gati*" are associated with *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (correct views) and "bad *gati*" are associated with *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong views).

- This is why *Sammā Diṭṭhi* comes first in the both the mundane and Noble Eightfold Paths.
- The basic concepts are discussed in, "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava" and the posts referred to there.
- This is also true at the deeper level; see, #8 of "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa" and "Sammā Diṭṭhi – Realization, Not Memorization." One's *gati* can lead to specific future births.

3. *Gati* are carried from from life-to-life. However, *gati* are FORMED mainly during human lives.

- If a human cultivates an "animal *gati*," that human is likely to be born as that animal in the next life (or a future life). This is explained clearly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Kukkuravatika Sutta (MN 57)" (English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Dog-Duty Ascetic (MN 57)"). There the Buddha explains how those "dog *gati*" that Seniya was cultivating would lead to him to be born a dog.
- Similarly, a human who cultivates "*deva gati*" by cultivating *saṅkhāra* that are good and moral (*puññābhisaṅkhāra*) — and thus engages in such thoughts, speech, and actions — that human is likely to be born a *deva*.
- A human is born with a certain set of gati acquired in past lives as a human. But a human CAN change those gati by WILLFULLY cultivating different types of *saṅkhāra* (and thus one's actions). In particular, a human can cultivate "*Ariya gati*" by cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path (which means cultivating *puññābhisaṅkhāra* AND by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*).

4. A human baby has similar *gati* to his/her parents. That is not an accident. Normally a *gandhabba* with *gati* similar to those of the parents can take possession of the zygote in mother's womb that was formed by the union of mother and father; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- This is another reason that a child would likely to maintain the *gati* (and thus world views, religion, behavior patterns) of the parents.
- However, if the child comes under strong influence of a bad set of friends, those *gati* can change for the worse. We discussed an example of a teenager transforming to a drug addict/gang member in our discussion of *Paticca Samuppāda*; see, "Phassa paccayā Vedanā….to Bhava."
- In the same way, that teenager could have been pointed in the right direction if, for example, the parents themselves started following the Noble Path, and encouraged the teenager to do the same.

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- Therefore, one's environment (whom one associates with) can have a major impact on one's *gati*. This is true for adults too, but children can be easily influenced. This is why one MUST associate with people with "good and moral *gati*."

5. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mangala Sutta (Snp 2.4)," a *deva* comes to the Buddha and asks, "what are the highest auspicious deeds to be cultivated ("*brūhi maṅgalamuttamaṃ"*); here, "*maṅgalamuttamaṃ"* is *"mangalam + uttamam",* where "*mangala*" means "auspicious" and "*uttama*" means "highest").

- The very first auspicious deed listed by the Buddha is: "***Asevanā** ca bālānaṃ, paṇḍitānañca **sevanā**.."* OR, "not to associate with ignorant people (*bāla*) and to associate with the wise (*paṇḍita*)."
- In the above I have translated "*sevana*" as "to associate" and "*asevana*" as "not to associate." A better description would be, "to get advice from and to follow" and "not to get advice from or to follow." Sometimes it is not possible to stop "associating" with a group of people, even if they have bad character qualities. For example, such people may be there at one's workplace, and it is not possible to stop interacting with them. However, one does not have to follow their bad opinions/world views.
- In the same way, just by "associating with an *Ariya*" does not necessarily qualify as "*paṇḍitānañca sevanā*." For example, there were many people who associated closely with the Buddha himself (Devadatta and King of Kosala, for example), who did not profit from that association: Devadatta was born in the *apāyā*, and the King of Kosala failed to become a *Sotāpanna*.

6. Of course it is prudent to minimize interactions with those with *micchā diṭṭhi.* However, this again depends on the context.

- For example, many prominent scientists have "*uccheda diṭṭhi*," that the physical body is all one has, and life ends at the death of the physical body. This is one of the two major wrong views associated with *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (that blocks the *Sotāpanna* stage); see, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views."
- It is fine to listen to them and even learn from them about MUNDANE things like science. Most of them have never been exposed to true Buddha Dhamma, and all of them are "moral people." I discussed a good example recently (June 27, 2019 at 9:48 am post) at the discussion forum, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa." As I explained there, Dr. James Tour is correct when he explains why there is more to life than just the physical body. Furthermore, he explains with clear evidence why life could not have evolved from "inert matter."
- However, since he apparently has not been exposed to true Buddha Dhamma, he cannot think of a good explanation other than to say that life must have been created by God, and that there is an everlasting "soul" (i.e., he has *sāssata diṭṭhi*). I do not blame him; as he firmly believes (and he is right), life is very complex and it is NOT possible to explain the origins of life by the theory of evolution.
- What he has not been exposed to is Buddha's explanation that life has ALWAYS existed (no traceable beginning to life) and evolves according to causes and conditions (*Paticca Samuppāda*); see, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

7. Among the four conditions that must be fulfilled to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*, "*Sappurisasaṃsevo"* or "Association with "*sappurisa* (*sath* + *purisa* or "Noble friend", i.e., an *Ariya*)" is the first condition; see, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."

- Since Buddha's teachings are unique, the true message has to come from a Buddha or someone "who can be traced back to the Buddha", as explained in the above post. The teachings can be explained accurately only by an *Ariya* who has GRASPED those unique teachings that have never been known to the world: "*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*.." (see #8 of "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction").

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- But it is not necessary to "hang out" or "directly associate" with an *Ariya*. The key is to "to get advice from and to follow" such Noble Persons, as explained above. That can be done by listening to their *desanās* (discourses) and/or by reading their writings.
- One cannot attain the *Sotāpanna* stage while having *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (i.e., *uccheda diṭṭhi* or *sāssata diṭṭhi* or some combination of the two): see, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views."

8. Now we can look into the term "*sappurisa*" in more detail to get a better picture of the whole situation. There are many *suttā* that describe *sappurisa/asappurisa* in different ways (all related to each other).

- For our discussion here, the description given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Aṭṭhaṅgika Sutta (AN 4.205)" is more relevant: "*Katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***asappuriso****? Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco micchādiṭṭhiko hoti, micchāsaṅkappo hoti, micchāvāco hoti, micchākammanto hoti, micchāājīvo hoti, micchāvāyāmo hoti, micchāsati hoti, micchāsamādhi hoti. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, asappuriso*."
- **Translated:** "An ***asappurisa*** is one who follows *micchā diṭṭhi, micchā saṅkappa, micchā vācā, micchā kammanta, micchā ājīva, micchā vāyāma, micchā sati,* and *micchā samādhi.*
- In other words, when one has wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*), one thinks in wrong ways, speaks in wrong ways, acts in wrong ways, follows a wrong livelihood, makes efforts in accomplishing wrong (or useless) goals, gets to the wrong mindset, and thus ends up with a perturbed state (and thus is prone to act unwisely).

9. Of course, a *sappurisa* is one who is on the correct pat with *sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappa hoti, sammā vācā, sammāka mmanta, sammā ājīva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati*, and *sammā samādhi.*

- Furthermore, the *sutta* explains that there is a **worse *asappurisa***, who in addition **encourages others** to follow the wrong path.
- Similarly, there is a **better *sappurisa***, who encourages others to follow the correct path.

10. Another definition of a *asappurisa* is given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭipadā Sutta (SN 22.44)," which is relevant to the present discussion: "***Sakkāyasamudayagāminiñca*** *vo, bhikkhave, paṭipadaṃ desessāmi,* ***sakkāyanirodhagāminiñca paṭipadaṃ****.*

Taṃ suṇātha. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sakkāyasamudayagāminī paṭipadā? Idha, bhikkhave, ***assutavā puthujjano*** *ariyānaṃ adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto, sappurisānaṃ adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto, rūpaṃ attato samanupassati, rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ; attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ. Vedanaṃ attato ... saññaṃ ... saṅkhāre ... viññāṇaṃ attato samanupassati, viññāṇavantaṃ vā attānaṃ; attani vā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇasmiṃ vā attānaṃ*."

Translated: "'*Bhikkhus*, I will teach you the way leading to the origination of ***sakkāya (diṭṭhi)*** and the way leading to the cessation of ***sakkāya (diṭṭhi)***. The description in blue is exactly same as discussed in #2 of the post, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa."

- The next verse in the *sutta* states that a *sappurisa* is one who has removed ***sakkāya diṭṭhi.***

11. Two more relevant terms are "*sutavā ariyasāvako*" (a Noble person who has comprehended Buddha Dhamma) and "*assutavā puthujjano*" (who has not heard/comprehended Buddha Dhamma).

- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānandatthera Sutta (SN 55.13)" describes a "*sutavā ariyasāvako*" as one who has "*buddhe* ***aveccappasādena*** *samannāgato*," "*dhamme aveccappasādena samannāgato*," "*sanghe aveccappasādena samannāgato*," "*ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato*." That means one who has "unbreakable faith in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, *Saṅgha*, and unbreakable moral mindset that would not do an *apāyagāmi* deed."
- Those are actually the four qualities of a *Sotāpanna*; see, "Sotapatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna." The key term "***aveccappasādena***" and "***ariyakānta sīla***" are discussed in that post.

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- Again, there are many *suttā* describe these terms in different (but related) ways. For example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyaariyasāvaka Sutta (SN 12.50)" describes a "*sutavā ariyasāvaka*" as one who has comprehended *Paticca Samuppāda*.
- Therefore, a "*sutavā ariyasāvako*" is a Noble Person or an *Ariya*.
- On the other hand, "*assutavā puthujjano*" is one who who has not heard/grasped those.

12. Therefore, even a person who may be considered highly moral by mundane standards (like famous philanthropists, scientists, etc) is likely to be an "*asappurisa*" or an "*assutavā puthujjano*." That is IF they have *micchā diṭṭhi* (10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* which include *sakkāya diṭṭhi*). As we have discussed, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is *uccheda diṭṭhi* or *sāssata diṭṭhi* or a combination of the two. Such persons would not be able to guide one on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Again, that does not mean one cannot learn other useful (mundane) concepts from them.
- One really needs to avoid those who are engaged in immoral deeds: drug use, excessive alcohol use, sexual misconduct, etc.
- In order to make progress on the Noble Path, one should associate (follow and take advice from) a *paṇḍita* (wise person) in the context of Buddha Dhamma, i.e., a *sappurisa*/*sutavā ariyasāvaka.* A *paṇḍita* is not determined by age, educational degrees, or other metrics, but only based on whether one has removed *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.

July 1, 2019: Regarding #5 above, it is important to note that *āsevana* is different from *asevana*.

- *Sevana* is association. *Āsevana* (Ā + sevana) is "came to associate with"; see, "Āsevana and Aññamañña Paccayā."
- *Asevana* (A + sevana) is "not to associate with", the negation as discussed in #5 above.

It is very important to see the difference, which illustrates how Pāli words combine (*sandhi*) to produce other words with very different meanings. Thanks to Tobias Große for bringing this distinction to our attention at the discussion forum today.

3.3.9 Why are Tilakkhana not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?

April 1, 2016

1. It is possible that one may ask, "If *anicca, dukkha, anatta* are so important, why are they not included in the 37 Factors of Enlightenment?." After all, one attains *Nibbāna* via cultivating the 37 Factors of Enlightenment (also called 37 *Bodhipākkhiya Dhamma,* or the Dhamma concepts that takes one to *Bodhi* or "*bhava*" + "*uddha*," i.e., to *Nibbāna; "pākkhiya"* means "on the side of").

- The key to the answer is that there are two 37 Factors of Enlightenment, one is mundane (*lokiya*) and one is transcendental (*lokuttara*). We have previously discussed that there are two eightfold paths as well: one mundane and one transcendental; see, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- The mundane versions are followed by those who do not comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*). Thus *Tilakkhaṇa* are preconditions (prerequisites) in order to be able to follow the Noble Path.

2. This is related to the fact that the 37 Factors of Enlightenment were there when Prince Siddhartha was born. The existence of the mundane version of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment or eightfold paths is possible only if there has been a previous Buddha in the same *mahā kappa,* where a *mahā kappa* is the time span of an "Earth system" or more precisely a solar system with an Earth-like planet supporting human life (an eon).

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- All Buddhas discover the *Tilakkhaṇa*, the Four Noble Truths, the Noble Eightfold Path, etc by their own efforts. But since these Dhamma concepts encompass Nature's laws, all Buddhas keep re-discovering the same Dhamma.
- However, like anything else in this world, a "Buddha *Sāsana*" or the "original Dhamma preached by a Buddha" lasts only for a certain time. For Buddha Gotama, his *Sāsana* is supposed to last only 5000 years (when the human lifespan is about 100 years), and we are half-way through.
- There have been four Buddhas on this Earth (which formed about 4.6 billion years ago), and Buddha Gotama was the fourth. The three Buddhas preceding him were: Kakusandha, Konagama, and Kassapa; one more Buddha, Buddha Maitreya, is supposed to appear long after the Gotama Buddha *Sāsana* disappears.

3. It is said that a Buddha comes to this world to reveal three words and eight letters (in Pāli): *"**Attakkarā theenapadā Sambuddhena pakāsithā, na hi sīla vatan hotu uppajjatthi Tathāgatā**,"* which means, "a Buddha (*Tathāgatā)* is born NOT just to show how to live a moral life, but to reveal three words to the world*."*

- These three words are: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

4. When a given Buddha *Sāsana* fades away, it does not disappear abruptly. What happens is that the true meanings gradually get lost, and are replaced by easier to grasp, mundane meanings; the first to lose the true meanings are *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Without them, all other concepts remain there with mundane meanings.

- When the Kassapa Buddha *Sāsana* faded away, most of the concepts survived only with mundane meanings and that is why most terms like *kamma* and even *satta bojjhaṅga* survived up to the time of Prince Siddhartha's birth.
- In fact, even during a given Buddha *Sāsana,* the true meanings of *Tilakkhaṇa* get lost for periods of time, but are revived by *Jāti Sotāpannas* (when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, it is not lost in future lives; so, if one is reborn human, he/she will be a *Jāti Sotāpanna)*. Thus during a given Buddha *Sāsana,* such *Jāti Sotāpannas* keep bringing back the true Dhamma until the end of that Buddha *Sāsana.*
- After that no more *Jāti Sotāpannas* are born and true Dhamma disappears from this world (or more correctly from this Earth). Again, the mundane versions may survive for long times.
- Then the world has to await the appearance of a new Buddha to reveal the true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. But a *mahā kappa* with five Buddhas (like ours) is a very rare event and it is called *Mahā Badda Kappa*.
- More common is to have no Buddhas or just a single Buddha in a given *mahā kappa.* For example, there were 30 *mahā kappas* before this *mahā kappa* where there was not even a single Buddha present.

5. This is why the Buddha emphasized that there is a very brief window of time to attain *Nibbāna* (at least to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage).

- Time span of each Buddha *Sāsana* is different because the average lifetime of humans keep changing. Gotama Buddha *Sāsana* is supposed to be 5000 years long, with the average lifetime of a human being about 100 years. The human lifetime during the Buddha *Sāsana of* Buddha Kassapa was about 20, 000 years; thus we can guess that Sāsana lasted about 20,000 x 50 = about a million years.
- Therefore, even though there will be one more Buddha appearing in this *mahā kappa*, the total time during which one could be potentially exposed to Buddha Dhamma would be only a few million years.
- Our Earth (i.e., the Solar system) may last a few more billion years, so we can say that the lifetime of this *mahā kappa* is roughly 8-10 billion years or 8000 to 10,000 million years. Only a few million years, at most, is the "short window" that is available to work towards *Nibbāna*.

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- Of course, one needs to be fortunate enough to be born human on this Earth during the Maitreya Buddha *Sāsana* to get the next opportunity to work towards *Nibbāna*. This is an extremely unlikely event for any given person.
- Also see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm." Even when one is born human, most *mahā kappas* (eons) will have no Buddhas present to teach the way to *Nibbāna*.

6. Going back to our main discussion, when Buddha Kakusandha appeared first in this world (i.e., on this Earth), there had not been a previous Buddha on this Earth. Therefore, concepts like eightfold path, *satta bojjhaṅga*, 37 Factors of Enlightenment (or terms like *kamma* and rebirth) **were not there even by name**.

- Now it is clear why those concepts were there before Buddha Gotama (i.e., when Prince Siddhartha was born). After Buddha Kassapa's *Sāsana* faded away, mundane interpretations of key concepts passed down through generations (initially through *vedic* traditions which then transitioned to the Hindu religion; of course most concepts survived only by the name).
- Therefore, not only concepts like *kamma*, rebirth, the five (and eight) precepts were there when Prince Siddhartha was born, but also *satta bojjhaṅga* and ways to attain *jhānā.* Of course, those meanings were mundane and the *jhānā* were *anāriya jhānā*. Without *Tilakkhaṇa*, it is not possible to attain *Ariya jhānā.*

7. The difference that the Buddha Gotama made was to bring back the true Dhamma that is based on the true nature of this world, i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. But even during a given Buddha *Sāsana,* the true Dhamma starts to fade away from time to time (**people have tendency to embrace the easy and mundane version**) and needs to revived by a *jāti Sotāpanna.*

- And that is what is happening even at the present time. The true Dhamma of Buddha Gotama had again started to fade away, and a *jāti Sotāpanna* in Sri Lanka is bringing back the correct or *lokuttara* version now. Within the past 2500 years, it had happened at least one time before, and we will discuss that when the time is appropriate.

8. The difference between the two versions of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment or the eightfold paths is that the Noble versions are based on *Tilakkhaṇa*: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Their true meaning is that it is fruitless, tiring, and often dangerous, to keep struggling to attain happiness in this world; that is the real meaning of *dukha* or suffering. And *Dukkha Sacca* (First Noble Truth) is that this *dukha* (suffering) can be overcome; see the second part of the following post: "Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings."

- The mundane versions can be grasped by a normal human who is unaware of the true *Tilakkhaṇa* or the true nature this world. The transcendental or *lokuttara* versions can be comprehended only with an understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*
- Without an understanding of the *anicca* nature, we perceive that sense pleasures are good, and are worth striving for. But when one starts comprehending the *anicca* nature, one realizes that suffering is actually rooted in sense pleasures; see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."

9. But the *Tilakkhaṇa* (starting with *anicca* nature) are hard to comprehend. It helps to understand and follow the mundane versions of Dhamma concepts first; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and the post "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?" referred to in that chart.

- Not everyone can grasp the deeper meanings of the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* right way. It takes a significant effort. After all, a *Sotāpanna* is better off than an Emperor or a King (see, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire"), and one should not think it can be done easily (even though it may be easier for those who happen to have cultivated the Path in recent previous births).

10. To summarize, the critical difference between the two types of 37 Factors of Enlightenment is the following:

- The mundane (*lokiya*) 37 Factors of Enlightenment are cultivated with the goal of leading a "moral life" and to seek "good rebirths" in future lives.

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- The transcendental (*lokuttara*) 37 Factors of Enlightenment are cultivated with the goal of attaining *Nibbāna,* AFTER one realizes that this world of 31 realms has nothing but suffering to offer in the long run.
- The 37 factors are named the same in both versions, but each term has a deeper meaning in the *lokuttara* version, since it has *Nibbāna* as the goal.
- As one starts to grasp the meanings of *Tilakkhaṇa*, one will automatically transition over to the *lokuttara* version. There is no need to worry about which version one is cultivating. **The difference is not in the terms, but in grasping the *anicca* (and thus *dukkha* and *anatta*) nature.**
- Furthermore, it is not necessary to cultivate (or even to memorize) all 37 factors. When one cultivates even one factor, all 37 grow together; but it is good to know what those factors and how they work together. The 37 factors are listed in "37 Factors of Enlightenment."

11. There are a lot of things to contemplate about in the above material, so I will continue this discussion on the 37 factors in a follow-up post. Some of the ideas discussed above may seem surprising (but also illuminating to those who may have been wondering about how terms like *kamma* and *satta bojjhaṅga* were in usage before Buddha Gotama). They will turn out to be supported by future evidence and also by the inter-consistency that I always try to emphasize.

- Even though we may not have all the evidence of historical facts (they keep emerging slowly), there is no need to wait for fool-proof archaeological evidence.
- One can analyze and examine the "bigger picture" of the Buddha, the soundness of Abhidhamma, and the solid inter-consistency of Buddha Dhamma to realize that the above explanation must be correct. Of course, we will discuss much more details in future posts.
- In many areas, I have been able to publish only a small fraction of material due to time limitations, and because I also keep learning things. I will not publish anything that I have doubts about. It is immensely satisfying to be able to figure out a "missing piece" and to be able to "see the bigger picture" with more clarity. It is also amazing how deep, consistent, and wonderful Buddha Dhamma is.

3.3.10 Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment

April 8, 2016

1. In the previous post, we discussed the fact that there are two versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment (*Bodhipākkhiya Dhamma*) as well as two versions of eightfold paths. Here we continue that discussion.

2. Throughout the website, I have tried to make the case that there are three broad categories that people can be divided into :

- Those who have one or more of the ten types of ***micchā diṭṭhi;*** see, "Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi."
- Those who have been exposed to some form of Buddha Dhamma, have removed *micchā diṭṭhi* and thereby have the **mundane (*lokiya*) version of *sammā diṭṭhi*.**
- Then there are those who have **transcendental (*lokuttara*) *Sammā Diṭṭhi***, i.e., they truly comprehend the true nature of this of 31 realms (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), i.e., that there is hidden suffering in what we perceive to be enjoyment.

3. When one is exposed to Buddha Dhamma, one can understand the need for the wider world view with 31 realms, and that beings are born in all those realms due to their actions (*kamma*). This leads to getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi;* see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

- When one gets rid of *micchā diṭṭhi,* one has the mundane *sammā diṭṭhi:* One knows that in order to avoid future births in the *apāyā* (four lowest realms) one needs to avoid immoral deeds (*akusala kamma*) and to cultivate moral deeds.

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- With mundane *sammā diṭṭhi,* one also strives to accumulate *kusala* by doing *puñña kriya* or good deeds; **this leads to gaining *āyusa* (long life), *vanna* (healthiness) , *sukha* (mundane happiness), *bala* (wealth) and , *paññā* (wisdom) in future lives. That enables one to grasp *Tilakkhaṇa* in future lives, if one fails to do so in this life.** Normally, those who are born with *tihetuka paṭisandhi* will have those qualities in this life. I will discuss this in the future post.

4. Now let us talk specifically about the mundane 37 Factors of Enlightenment, which is tied to the mundane *sammā diṭṭhi.* There is no specific order because they are all inter-related. But for convenience, we could use the following guide:

When one knows what is right (moral or *kusala*) and what is not (immoral or *akusala*), there are four obvious things to do. These are called satara Sammappadhāna, which is conventionally translated as Four Supreme Efforts. One exerts to:

- **00 prevent** immoral qualities **that have not yet arisen from arising**
- **01 abandon** immoral qualities **that have arisen**
- **10 initiate** moral qualities **that have not yet arisen to arise**
- **11 maintain and cultivate** moral qualities **that have arisen**

[compare 37 Factors of Enlightenment item 4]

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1. Not to let an unwholesome thought arise which has not yet arisen.
2. Not to let an unwholesome thought continue which has already arisen.
3. To make a wholesome thought arise which has not yet arisen.
4. To make a wholesome thought continue which has already arisen.

They can briefly be expressed as "avoiding," "overcoming," "developing," and "maintaining," and are called the four supreme efforts.

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By the way, these are intimately related to *viriya* in some other categories in the 37 factors: *Satara Iddhipada*, *Panca Indriya, Panca Bala, Satta Bojjhaṅga*, and the Noble Eightfold Path.

5. In a way, one could make a whole lot of progress (whether mundane or *lokuttara*) by focusing on the *Satara Sammappadhāna*. The word *sammappadhana* comes from "*san*" + "*ma*" + "*padhāna*." We have previously discussed "*sammā*" or "*san*" + "*ma*" means getting rid of defilements; see, "What is "San"?." In Pāli or Sinhala, "*padhāna*" or "*pradhāna*" means dominant or leading. *Satara* is of course four.

- Therefore, *Satara Sammappadhāna* means four key methods for getting rid of defilements, i.e., for cleansing the mind.
- If we can get to the habit of following the four guidelines listed in #4, then we will be cleansing our minds with time.

6. Satara Satipaṭṭhāna (Four Foundations of Mindfulness) helps one with the four tasks listed in #4 by being vigilant. These are discussed in detail in several posts in the "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."

- Basically, one keeps vigilant about committing immoral deeds with the body (*kayanupassana*), and becomes good at not reacting automatically to feelings (*vedananupassana*) or thoughts (*cittanupassana*), and when in doubt about the suitability of a given action one is about to do, compare with what is in the Dhamma (*dhammanupassana*).

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- We have not discussed *dhammanupassana* in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* yet, and we can go to great depths. But we can get a simple idea from what "dhamma" means: **Dhamma is what one bears.** If one engages in activities that lead to great suffering to another (say, rape or murder), then one has accumulated a "bad Dhamma" that will yield to corresponding results (*paṭicca samuppāda*) in future lives in the four lowest realms. Similarly, if one acts with kindness one grows Dhamma suitable to be born in human or higher realms.
- Thus one should think about the consequences of bad actions one is about to do and stop such an action; on the other hand one can be joyful about a good act that one is about to do or has done, and acquire much merits that will lead to *ayusa*, *vanna* , *sukha*, *bala* and *paññā* as discussed in #3 above.

7. Then there are Satara Iddhipada or the Four Bases of Mental Power; see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipāda)." When someone has a firm goal, one develops *chanda* (liking for it), *citta* (think about it always), *viriya* (make efforts on it), and *vīmaṃsā* (finds out all relevant information).

- That completes the "three sets of fours" in the 37 Factors of Enlightenment. Next there are "two sets of fives."

8. The *Panca Indriya* (Five Mental Faculties) are: *saddhā* (faith based on knowledge), *viriya* (effort), *sati* (mindfulness), *samādhi* (calming of the mind), and *paññā* (wisdom).

- These five factors helps one move forward on the Dhamma path. It is like a vehicle with two sets of wheels with a driver: *Sati* is in front and can be compared to the driver; *saddhā* and *paññā* are the two front wheels, and *viriya* and *samādhi* are like the back wheels.
- All five needs to be cultivated together, in particular those sets need to be balanced: one cannot move forward with *saddhā* without *paññā*, or just by sheer effort (*viriya*) without feeling the benefits in *samādhi*.

9. When the *Pañca Indriya* are cultivated, they grow and become *Pañca Bala* or the Five Powers.

- These "two sets of five" are discussed in detail in "Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala – Five Faculties and Five Powers."

10. Next, there is *Saptha Bojjanga* or the Seven Factors of Enlightenment.

- These seven factors are: *dhammavicaya* (which is closely related to *vīmaṃsā* and *paññā*), *viriya* (effort), *pīti* (joy), *passaddhi* (tranquility), *samādhi* (one-pointedness), and *upekkhā* (equanimity).
- Here again, *sati* should be in front and the other six are better cultivated in two sets; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhaṅga." In that post, the *Satta Bojjhaṅga* are those for the *lokuttara* Path, but as I mentioned before, the procedures are the same with deeper meanings.

11. Finally, there is the Ariya Attaṅgika Magga or the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Of course it has been discussed in many posts throughout the site. One could enter "Noble Eightfold Path" in the Search box on top right and get a list of relevant posts.
- A table in the post, "37 Factors of Enlightenment" shows how many of the factors in different categories overlap.
- Therefore, there is no need to try to cultivate each factor. It is much better to concentrate on one category: *Cattāro Sammāppadhāna* or *Cattāro Satipaṭṭhāna* are common ones. When further along the Path, one could cultivate *Satta Bojjhaṅga*. Of course, the Noble Eightfold Path encompasses all.

12. The cultivation of the mundane *sammā diṭṭhi* together with contemplation of "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" gradually moves one to transcendental (*lokuttara*) *sammā diṭṭhi*.

- Then one will gradually switch over to the *lokuttara* 37 Factors of Enlightenment. **Like a train smoothly switching railway tracks at a railroad switch, one will move over to the *lokuttara* track at some point; it happens in one *citta vīthi* and one may not even realize it for a while.**

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There is no need to worry about which one to be followed. As the meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* sink in, one will start seeing the deeper aspects of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment.

13. In fact, one will truly comprehend the Four Noble Truths starting from that point. One truly start grasping the First Noble Truth (*Dukkha Sacca*), only when one comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

- Again, this is why the first three Noble Truths are also not listed under the 37 Factors of Enlightenment. In the previous post we discussed why the *Tilakkhaṇa* are not included; see, "Why are Tilakkhaṇa not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?."
- Comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* at least to some extent, at the *Sotāpanna* stage helps one grasp the first Noble Truth, i.e., that this world is filled with suffering and that it can be overcome.
- The *lokuttara* version of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment — which describes ways to get to *Nibbāna* or Enlightenment — requires the comprehension of the *Tilakkhaṇa* and the first three Noble Truths first.
- Even before grasping *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* one can clearly see the dangers of a defiled mind, and be motivated to follow the mundane Path with mundane *sammā diṭṭhi*.

14. Therefore, it is better not to think much about which version of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment one is following. In fact, there is no need to think in terms of those factors.

- The key is to gradually purify one's mind: "*ragakkhayo Nibbanan, dosakkhayo Nibbanan, Mohakkhayo Nibbanan*," i.e., *Nibbāna* or *Niveema* or "cooling down" is achieved by getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance in steps.
- It happens with even the mundane Path, but accelerates when switching over to the *lokuttara* Path.
- The "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section could be useful in following a systematic path. But it is essential to read different posts on varying subjects, starting at the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section. It could be harder to grasp advanced topics, say, on "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta," without grasping the fundamentals.

3.3.11 Types of Bodies in 31 Realms – Connection to Jhāna

December 12, 2018

1. Even before the Buddha, people had three different basic ideas about "the essence" of a living being and specifically a human.

- Just like today, many people believed that the current physical body is all that is there. When one dies, that is the end of the story. One's body would decompose and be absorbed into the Earth. **Nothing at all will be leftover, either physical or mental.** The physical body is called "***karaja kaya***" in Buddha Dhamma.
- However, there was another view that there is something that survives the physical death of the body. **This is the same as the concept of a "soul" in major religions today.** In Abrahamic religions today, it is believed that upon death, the soul will either go to heaven or hell and will forever remain there.
- So, those are the two main views about "the essence" of a human being today.

2. **However, at the time of the Buddha, those with the second view of a surviving "mental body" were split into two camps.** In order to understand that, we need to remember that there were *yogis* who were able to get into *jhānā* and also had some supernormal (*abhiññā*) powers.

- There are three kinds of "pleasures", as we discussed in the post, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?." Two of these are "mundane pleasures", associated with the 31 realms of this world.
- One is of course the "physical sense pleasures": those associated with pictures, sounds, food, smells, and touches. That is what most humans experience. In fact, these are the pleasures associated with the 11 realms in the *kāma loka* (four lowest realms, human realm, and the 6 *deva* realms).

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- **The second are the *jhānic* pleasures, and those are of two varieties: *rūpāvacara jhāna* and *arūpāvacara jhāna*.**

3. If one can cultivate *jhānā*, one can experience "*jhānic* pleasures." Unlike the pleasures associated with the physical senses, *jhānic* pleasures are associated with less and less with the dense physical body as one gets to higher *jhāna*.

- Of course, *jhānic* pleasures have nothing to do with seeing nice objects, hearing nice music, eating tasty foods, smelling nice odors, or physical touching.
- In the **first four *jhānā***, one just experiences fine bodily feelings (lightness in the body, etc.) as well as mental happiness. By the time one gets to the fourth *jhāna*, almost all "bodily sensations" fade out and only "*rūpa*" that is left is a "white soothing light." So, by the fourth *jhāna*, one loses any awareness of one's own physical body, i.e., the only "matter" one experiences is that of light.
- We must remember that light is a *rūpa* in Buddha Dhamma, even though it is a "very fine *rūpa*." In fact, in quantum mechanics, photons (light) and electrons (matter) are treated on the same footing.

4. **The four *rūpāvacara jhānā* correspond to mental states of the *rūpāvacara brahmā*, i.e., those *brahma* in the *rūpa loka* realms.** Now we can see why those *rūpāvacara brahmā* do not have dense bodies.

- **They do not need dense bodies! *Brhamas* do not eat, smell nice fragrances, or engage in sex.**
- Those humans who can get to the fourth *jhāna* can cultivate the ability to separate the "*brhama*-like mental body" from the solid physical body. That means the "mental body" — called ***manomaya kāya*** — can come out of the physical body.
- This *manomaya kāya* essentially has the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) and the five *pasāda rūpa* for sensing vision, sounds, smells, taste, and touch.
- As we mentioned above, the physical body is called the ***karaja kaya***.

5. The Buddha gave several analogies to describe this separation of the *manomaya kāya* from the *karaja kaya*. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2):

"*..Seyyathā vā pana, mahārāja, puriso asiṃ kosiyā pavāheyya. Tassa evamassa: 'ayaṃ asi, ayaṃ kosi, añño asi, aññā kosi, kosiyā tveva asi pavāḷho'ti. Seyyathā vā pana, mahārāja, puriso ahiṃ karaṇḍā uddhareyya. Tassa evamassa: 'ayaṃ ahi, ayaṃ karaṇḍo. Añño ahi, añño karaṇḍo, karaṇḍā tveva ahi ubbhato'ti.*"

- **Translated:** "..suppose a man were to draw a sword out from its scabbard (sheath). He would think: "This is the sword; this is the scabbard. The sword is one thing, the scabbard another, but the sword has been drawn out from the scabbard." Or suppose a man were to pull a snake out from its old outer skin. He would think: "This is the snake; this is the old skin. The snake is one thing, the old skin another, but the snake has been pulled out from the old skin."
- Therefore, separating the *manomaya kāya* from the *karaja kaya* is just like pulling out a sword from its sheath: sword is the "active element" and the sheath is like the *karaja kaya*. In the analogy: "A snake shedding its old skin", snake is like the *manomaya kāya* and old skin is like the *karaja kaya*."
- ***Manomaya kaya* is the "active or important element."**

6. The bodies of the *rūpāvacara brahmā* are very similar to the *manomaya kāya* of those *yogis* who can get to those *rūpāvacara jhāna*.

- The only difference is that the *manomaya kāya* of the *rūpāvacara brahmā* do not have the three *pasāda rūpa* for smelling, tasting, or touch.
- *Rūpāvacara brahma*'s fine bodies have just the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) and two *pasāda rūpa* for seeing and hearing.

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- Of course, they do not need eyes. They see and hear using a different method. **Seeing by those *brahmā* is similar to how we see dreams with our eyes closed.**

7. This *manomaya kāya* is the same one that enters the womb at conception.

- We remember that a *gandhabba* has a *manomaya kāya* as well as fine, misty-like body due to inhaling aroma. When a *gandhabba* enters a womb, this "extra bit of matter" is shed and only the *manomaya kāya* (of the size of a few *suddhaṭṭhaka*) enters the womb.
- **We also remember that these five *pasāda rūpa* are the actual sensing elements.** When the *manomaya kāya* is inside a physical body, they get the signals THROUGH the five physical senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body. Those signals are analyzed by the brain and transmitted to the *manomaya kāya* inside the physical body.
- That can be compared to a human sitting inside a totally enclosed military tank seeing the outside with aid of cameras mounted on the body of the tank. This is discussed in "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba."

8. When a *yogi* cultivates the fourth *jhāna* and perfects it, he/she will be able to come out of the physical body or the *karaja kaya* at will.

- **Just like a *rūpāvacara brahma,* these *yogis* who come out of the physical body with just the *manomaya kāya* can "see" and "hear" over great distances.**
- Of course, we have a hard time imagining that. But it can be compared to what happens when we see a dream. There is no need for eyes or light to see dreams; we see dreams when it is pitch black at night with our eyes closed; we do not "see" dreams with our eyes.

9. In some stressful situations (like heart operations), the *manomaya kāya* can separate from the physical body, and that is what is called the "out-of-body experience (OBE)."

- It also happens to some who had almost died, but "manage to come back to life." These are also called Near-Death Experiences (NDE).
- There are many books written on OBE and NDE. "Consciousness Beyond Life", by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of OBE experienced by people undergoing heart operations.

10. This *manomaya kāya* (with a *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa*) that can be separated from the *karaja kaya* was called "***rūpi manomaya kāya***" by those *yogis* at the time of the Buddha.

It is called "***rūpi manomaya kāya***" because it has all five *pasāda rūpa* and thus essentially has all five senses. Even though one cannot move solid objects with the fine body, one will be able to "touch." Just like vision is not with physical eyes, all five "physical senses" are different than with physical body.

- There is a second type of *manomaya kāya* discussed by the Buddha in the WebLink: suttacentral: Poṭṭhapāda Sutta (DN 9). This was called "***arūpi saññāmaya kaya***." We will discuss that in the next post. **These bodies or "*kaya*" are associated with *arūpāvacara brahmā* (and thus *arūpāvacara jhānā*).**
- It could be a good idea to get refresh the memory on what is meant by *saññā*: "Saññā – What It Really Means."
- Basically, when one recognizes an object or understands a concept, then one has "an understanding" of what it is. That is what *saññā* is. So, an "*arūpi saññāmaya kaya"* basically means a "body (almost) devoid of matter but has the ability to recognize/understand."

3.3.12 Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma

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1. As we discussed in the previous post, we can get some insights on "what survives the death of a physical body" by analyzing *jhānic* experiences; see, "Types of Bodies in 31 Realms – Connection to Jhāna."

- As discussed there, one can experience for oneself that life is possible without a heavy, solid physical body. This can be experienced for oneself by cultivating *jhāna*.
- There are many people even today who can experience *jhāna*, especially up to the fourth *jhāna*.

2. When one gets to the first *jhāna*, one "transcends" (or go beyond) the *kāma loka* or "sense sphere." Our human realm is one of 11 realms in the *kāma loka* as we discussed before.

- There are 16 realms in "*rūpa loka*" where *rūpāvacara brahmā* live and there are 4 realms in "*arūpa loka*" where *arūpāvacara brahmā* live. Those are the 31 realms.
- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Anupubbanirodha Sutta (AN 9.31): "*Paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ samāpannassa kāmasaññā niruddhā hoti*" OR "**"When one has attained the first *jhāna*, perceptions of sensuality (*kāma saññā*) stop from arising**."
- That means *kāma saṅkappa* (or sensual thoughts) would not arise in the *yogi*. However, the *yogi* still feels his/her physical body. Those "bodily sensations" decrease as the *yogi* attains from the first to the fourth *jhāna*.
- Those *jhānic* levels one through four correspond to the 16 *rūpāvacara brahma realms.*

3. If the *yogi* can advance above the fourth *jhāna*, he/she next gets into the fifth *jhāna* which has a different mental experience. *Jhānās* fifth through eighth are called *arūpāvacara jhāna.*

- The fifth *jhāna* or the first of the *arūpāvacara jhāna* is called the *ākāsānancāyatana*.
- Even though those *arūpāvacara jhāna* are labelled as fifth through eighth *jhāna* these days, in *suttā* they are just called by their names: *ākāsānancāyatana, viññāṇañcāyatana, ākiñcaññāyatana, nevasaññānāsaññāyatana.*
- **The experiences of *yogis* in *arūpāvacara jhāna* are similar to those of *arūpāvacara brahmā* in the highest 4 realms in the 31 realms.**

4. Those *arūpāvacara brahmā* cannot even see or hear, unlike the *rūpāvacara brahmā.*

- Those *arūpāvacara brahmā* have just a trace of matter: a *hadaya vatthu*, which is the seat of the mind. However, unlike *rūpāvacara brahmā*, they do not have *pasāda rūpa* for seeing and hearing.
- They only have an awareness (*saññā*) of existence. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Poṭṭhapāda Sutta (DN 9) (and other *suttā*) **this "third type of body" is called an "*arupi saññāmaya kaya*."**
- *Arupi* means "without *rūpa*" (it actually has a trace of *rūpa*, just the *hadaya vatthu*). *Saññāmaya* means "with *saññā",* i.e., one can still experience that one is still alive, one has perception (*saññā*).

5. It may be a good idea to re-read the following posts in this series just to firmly grasp these key ideas. Then it would be easier to follow the upcoming discussions. The first was, "Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – No 'Unchanging Self'."

- We discussed in the second post that the *manomaya kāya* (with a *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa*) that can be separated from the *karaja kaya* was called "***rupi manomaya kāya***" by those *yogis* at the time of the Buddha:"Types of Bodies in 31 Realms – Connection to Jhāna."
- With that extremely small *manomaya kāya,* a *rupavacara brahma* or a yogi who can come out of the physical body can hear and see. Since this *manomaya kāya* is much smaller than an atom, this is something that is hard for us to even imagine.
- However, those who experience out-of-body experiences, that is exactly what happens. So, this effect has been experienced by many people; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

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6. Now we can summarize what we have figured out so far: **Any living being is born with a basic *manomaya kāya* that comes in three basic varieties:**

- Those in *kāma loka* have a *manomaya kāya* with *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa* (i.e., all six "sensing elements." **That *manomaya kāya* is "enclosed in" in a solid physical body (*karaja kaya*) that allows one to experience "sense pleasures."**
- In the 16 *rūpāvacara brahma* realms, the *manomaya kāya* has two *pasāda rūpa* (for vision and hearing), in addition to the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*).
- The finest *manomaya kāya* is in the *arūpa loka* (4 *arūpāvacara brahma* realms), which only has the *hadaya vatthu*. They can only think.

7. There are 11 realms in *kāma loka* (four *apāyā*, human realm, and 6 *deva* realms).

- The six *deva* realms belong to the *kāma loka*, and all those *devas* have "physical bodies" (*karaja kaya*) but they are finer than those of humans.
- Of course, a solid physical body (*karaja kaya*) is not there for either a *rūpāvacara* or an *arūpāvacara brahma*.

8. By the way, we can now see how suffering decreases as one starts at the lowest realms (*apāyā*) and move up to human, *deva*, and *brahma* realms. Human realm is where both suffering and happiness are present. Sense pleasures are optimum in *deva* realms.

- However, sense pleasures are not available in *brahma* realms. But the *jhānic* pleasures in those *brahma* realms are much better than sense pleasures.
- Thoughts of greed and hate/anger cannot arise in any *brahma*, including *rūpāvacara brahmā*. This is why their minds are at peace.

9. That is also true of those who can get into the corresponding *jhānā*. While in those *jhāna*, thoughts of greed or hate/anger do no arise.

- This is as close as one can get to *Nibbāna*, without even comprehending Buddha Dhamma. As we know, *yogis* were able to get to those *jhānā* even before the Buddha by using breath or *kasina* meditations.
- If those *yogis* do not lose the ability to get into *jhāna* until death, they will be born in the corresponding *brahma* realms. However, since they have only SUPPRESSED greed and hate, they will come back down to the human realm at the end of "*brahma bhava*." Subsequently, they can eventually end up in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*).

10. So, now we can see that there are two types of *jhānic* pleasures, and that those two varieties give rise to "**two types of mental bodies or *manomaya kāya***" (**in addition to the dense body or the *karaja kaya* that we are familiar with**).

- However, a human who cultivates *jhāna* and even get to the highest *arūpāvacara jhāna* (8th *jhāna*), will still have the human *manomaya kāya* that he/she was born with.
- If a *yogi* comes out of the physical body with that *manomaya kāya*, it would have five *pasāda rūpa* and a *hadaya vatthu*.

11. Therefore, that *manomaya kāya* that can be separated from the physical body of a human would have all five *pasāda rūpa* that are the actual "sensing elements" for seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, and touching. Of course the "seat of the mind" — or the *hadaya vatthu* — would also come out with those five *pasāda rūpa*.

- This is because it is not possible to separate any *pasāda rūpa* form the *manomaya kāya* that is born at the beginning of the human *bhava*.

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- In fact, it is that *manomaya kāya* that lives as a *gandhabba* in between two adjacent human births (*jāti*) until a suitable womb becomes available for it to enter.

12. In Buddha Dhamma, the closest equivalent of a "soul" is the "*manomaya kāya*" or the "mental body." **However, it is not the same an unchanging soul.**

- As we saw, *manomaya kāya* will take fundamentally different forms in the three types of *loka* that encompasses the 31 realms: *kāma loka, rūpa loka*, and *arūpa loka*.
- Furthermore, even during the human *bhava*, the *manomaya kāya* can undergo drastic changes. When one attain *jhāna* or *magga phala*, it will undergo significant changes. In the case of *magga phala*, those changes are permanent.

13. In the next post, we will summarize the information that we have discussed so far with reference to key sections in the WebLink: suttacentral: Poṭṭhapāda Sutta (DN 9).

- In that *sutta*, the Buddha explained those three types of "*kaya*" to Potthapāda, **who was asking whether there exists an "absolute, unchanging, self" or an *attā* in the deeper sense (just like a "soul" that would have a "permanent existence" in heaven or hell in *Abrahamic* religions today).**
- It must be kept in mind that the above descriptions provide only the basic framework of the three types of *loka* (*kāma loka, rūpa loka*, and *arūpa loka*), that encompass the 31 realms.
- However, that is sufficient to get a good idea about the key differences among the 31 realms.
- Furthermore, it explains a deeper meaning of "*attā*."

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3.4 Gati, Bhava, and Jāti

- Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)
- Gati and Bhava – Many Varieties
- Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control
- Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka
- Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein
- Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna
- Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma

3.4.1 Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)

Revised September 1, 2018; Mar2, 2020

1. A strong *kamma* can bring *vipaka* in the future. **The mind releases a bit of energy and that is a *kamma bīja* (or *kamma bhava*.)** Where are those *kamma bīja/bhava* are "located"? That is a bit hard to explain because we have no "feel" for mental phenomena. We have a hard time connecting with anything that is not discernible to our five physical senses. We need to see, hear, taste, smell, or touch to feel confident that "something is real".

- Yet, if one makes an effort, it is quite possible to get a good idea of what these are. Modern science helps here too.
- If someone is serious about figuring this out, I would really recommend reading the posts, "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)" and, mainly, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)" first.

2. From the second post above, It is clear that complete records of ALL our past activities during even just this life will be impossible to be "stored" in the neurons in the brain. Some people can remember EVERYTHING that happened to them over many years, in minute detail.

- The Buddha said those memories are in the *mano loka* ("*nāma thalaya*" in Sinhala) which could be called the "mind plane"; those memories in the *mano loka* come to our mind via *mana indriya* in the brain: "WebLink: suttacentral: Indriyakathā" (no details given in this link).
- The "storage" is not in a physical device like a tape. *Mano loka* is devoid of any material things; it is all "*nāma*" and matter.
- The closest analogy we have to the mental plane is the "dream world." When we dream, we can "hear", "see" and "do" things but it is all "*nāma*." When we "playback" memories, it is somewhat like seeing a dream.
- We can recall our memories (whatever we can remember) very quickly. If we have a strong memory of some event, even from many years ago, we can recall it in our mind instantaneously. We just think about it and we can "see" it playback with sounds and the background just like it happened. Our minds can connect to the "mind plane" and recall things without a delay; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- In this "recall process", the brain acts as the intermediary; the brain (actually the *mana indriya* in the brain) acts like a "transmitter" and a "receiver" in communications with the mental plane. As we get old, the brain gets weaker and thus the "recall power" gets diminished. Meditation (especially *dhamma vicaya* or contemplation on dhamma concepts) helps keep the brain healthy.
- It is just that some (few) people are born with the ability to recall ANYTHING from this life, as that post on memory records (HSAM) described. This ability can be also cultivated by developing *abhiññā* powers as I discussed in another post.

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3. **When we "wish or hope for something" that thought will have a record of that in the *mano loka* too**; later, we can recall that we made such a "wish."

- While a "*nāmagotta*" (I have written this as *nāma gotta* too) is just a record, a wish has certain energy in it, but if not cultivated by further thinking and doing things relevant to that wish, that energy will soon fade away.
- When we make a "determination" that has more "*javana* power" than just a "wish" and such records are stronger, i.e., they do not fade away quickly.
- Our wishes, determinations, cravings for things, future plans, etc are all *saṅkhāra* (moral and immoral). Some of them are strong and become *abhisaṅkhāra*. They all lead to "*kamma bīja* (seeds)" or varying strengths. Some are strong enough to lead to rebirths; others bring *vipāka* during a lifetime. They can be good or bad.
- Thus "*Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacāriṃ*" or "dhamma will guide those who live according to dhamma" applies to both "good" and "bad" dhamma. Moral people will be guided upwards, and immoral people will be guided downward. **Mother nature is neutral; each one chooses which way to proceed. However, the results are ALWAYS according to *kamma* or actions;** see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."

4. Records of both past "*nāmagotta*" and our mental energies associated with "future plans" ("*kamma bīja*") are in the mind plane. **The difference is that past "*nāmagotta*" are permanent and have no energy to do anything. On the other hand, the energies for "future plans" ("*kamma bīja*") are in flux and can get stronger or fade away.**

- However, the record for even a determination (whether or not fulfilled yet) will be recorded in the mind plane, because just after passing away it is in the past and **that thought becomes a record in "*nāmagotta*."** For example, if one makes a determination to kill another person, that thought will be recorded in the mental plane as a *nāmagotta*. In addition, there will be a tentative record of a "*kamma bīja*" associated with the future too. The more he thinks and plans, the stronger the "*kamma bīja*" gets. If, somehow he comes to his senses and discard that thought the "future" imprint (and associated energy) will fade away, and there will not be a "*kamma bīja*" associated with it anymore.
- When one is thinking about a good or a bad act, it has not acquired the "full *kammic* potential", i.e., it is said that the "*kamma patha*" is not complete. If that person ended up killing the other person, then the "*kamma patha*" is complete and there will be a "*kamma bīja*" established that will be there up to 91 *mahā kappas* (a *mahā kappa* is the lifetime of a universe, roughly 30 billion years).
- If that strong "*kamma bīja*" brings about a bad rebirth thus depleting its energy, at that point that result (new birth) now becomes a "*nāmagotta*" or just a record.
- This is a simple overview of what happens; if one contemplates it, one should be able to get an idea of the concept.

5. Depending on the nature of the deed, a "*kamma bīja*" may be in different types of "bins", called "*kamma bhava*."

- For example, if someone cultivates *rūpa jhānā*, then the associated *kamma bīja* will be in the "*rūpa loka bhava*" or simply, "*rūpa bhava*." If another cultivates *arūpa jhānā* (one of the highest four *jhānā*), then the associated *kamma bīja* will be in "*arūpa bhava*" and when that *kamma bīja* releases its energy, he/she will be born in the *arūpa loka*.
- **All other *(abhi)saṅkhāra*** will bring about *vipāka* in the *kāma loka* (*deva*, human realms and the four lowest realms). We will discuss this in more detail in the next post.
- **To summarize:** When we do a *kamma* (*abhisaṅkhāra*), we generate certain energy called a *kamma bīja*. Those energies will be "stored" in the appropriate "*bhava*" in the mind plane. When the *vipāka*

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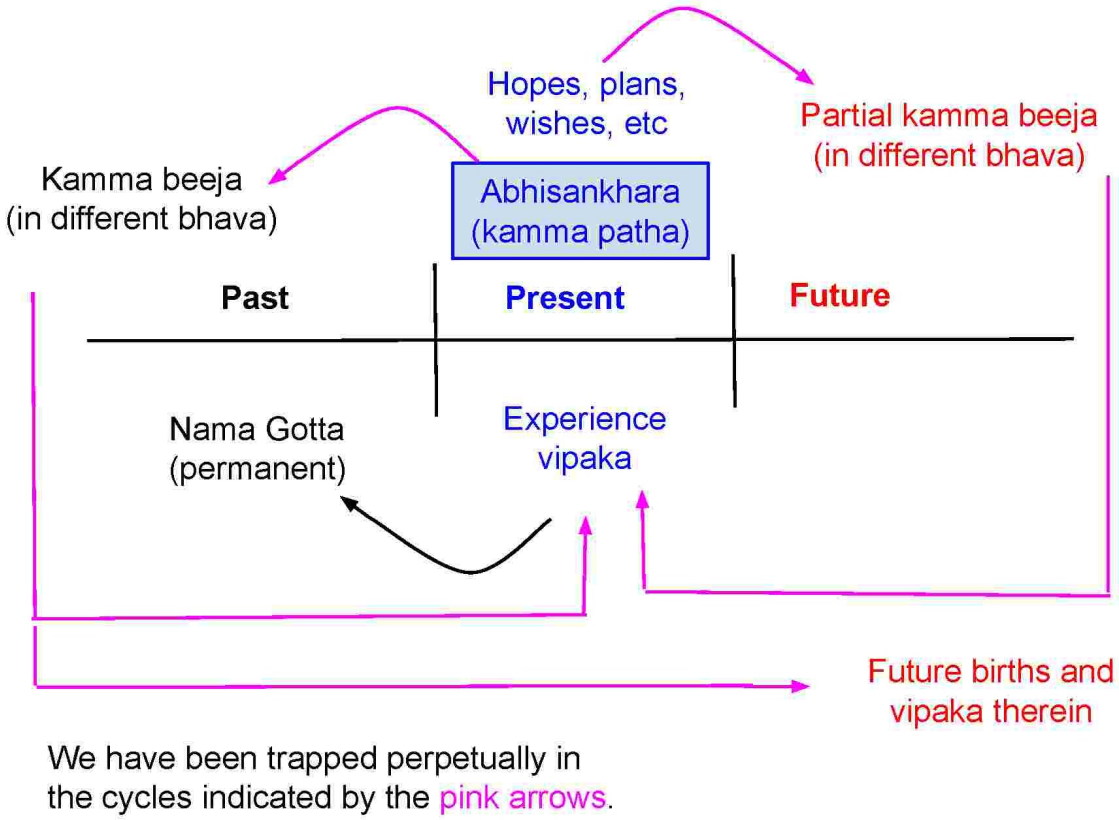
associated with a *kamma bīja* is experienced, that energy is spent. Only a record of that (*nāmagotta*) survives in the mind plane.

6. Here is a chart that summarizes the above:



Mind Plane Drawing

Click to open and print the above chart: WebLink: Mind Plane Drawing

- **As the chart shows, we make "*kamma bīja*" of varying strengths in various "*bhava*" during a lifetime that will lead to more rebirths as well as uncountable *kamma vipāka* during those rebirths.**

6. Another important point is that there are two ways to "bypass" a strong "*kamma bīja*" associated with such a "*kamma patha*" of, say, killing of a human.

- He could realize the enormity of the deed, ask for forgiveness in his mind (genuinely), and start engaging in moral deeds, then he may be able to "wear out" some of the energy of that "*kamma bīja*." **More importantly, if he can cultivate *Ariya metta bhāvanā*, he may be able to wear it out completely** (unless it is one of the *anantariya kamma*, like killing a parent); see, "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā."
- The other way is of course to attain the *Arahanthood*. Unless that particular "*kamma seed*" brings about the *vipāka* before that *Arahant* passes away, it will become null at the death of the *Arahant*.
- Furthermore, if that "*kamma seed*" is not that strong and does not bring *vipāka* within 91 *mahā kappas*, then it will become null and void too. Only the "*nāmagotta*" are permanent, **"*kamma bīja*" are waiting for appropriate conditions to bring *vipāka*** and are changing with time. However, "*nāmagotta*" just records, but "*kamma bīja*" have the energy to bring about results (*vipāka*).

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7. There are special cases where a "*kamma bīja*" (and associated "*kamma bhava*") WILL NOT change. An *anantariya kamma* establishes a "*kamma bīja*" (and "*kamma bhava*") that WILL bring about *vipāka* without exception.

On the immoral side, there are five *anantariya kamma* that WILL bring rebirth in the *apāyā* at the end of this life (i.e., when one dies). Those are, killing of mother, father, or an *Arahant*, injuring a Buddha, and causing a schism in *Saṅgha*. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Parikuppa Sutta (AN 5.129)."

- On the "moral side", all stages of *Nibbāna* can be thought of as "*anatariya kamma*." For example, when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, he/she WILL be born only according to that "*Ariya bhava*" or that special *kammic* energy; thus a rebirth in the lowest four realms WILL NOT happen.
- Another interesting point is that when a *Bodhisattva* cultivates "*paramita*" to become a Buddha, what he is doing is to establish a very strong "*kamma bīja*" over innumerable lives. But at some point that "*kamma bīja*" gets fully established and at that point, the *Bodhisattva* gets "*niyata vivaraṇa*" (confirmation of attaining the Buddhahood or "Buddha *bhava*") from a Buddha at that time.

The above concepts are looked at from a bit different perspective in, "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka." Of course, they are consistent!

In the next post, we will discuss how different types of "*bhava*" are fueled by our actions: "Gati and Bhava – Many Varieties", ……..

3.4.2 Gati and Bhava – Many Varieties

Revised February 27, 2019

Humans have many *gathi* (*gati*) or character qualities. These character qualities lead to one's future existences (*bhava*). It is that important.

1. We see that there are three major "*bhava*" or existence corresponding to the three major levels of existence that the 31 realms can be divided into: *kāma bhava, rūpa bhava*, and *arūpa bhava.*

- Each of those can be now subdivided into the 31 realms; see, "31 Realms of Existence."
- These living beings with *kāma bhava* live in *kāma loka*: 4 *apāyā*, 1 human, and 6 *deva* realms. Those with *rūpa bhava* live in *rūpa loka* made of 16 *rūpāvacara brahma* realms. Those with *arūpa bhava* live in the 4 *arūpāvacara brahma* realms in the *arūpa loka.*

2. The following chart shows the division of the 11 *kāma loka* realms into the 4 *apāyā*, the human realm and 6 *deva* realms.

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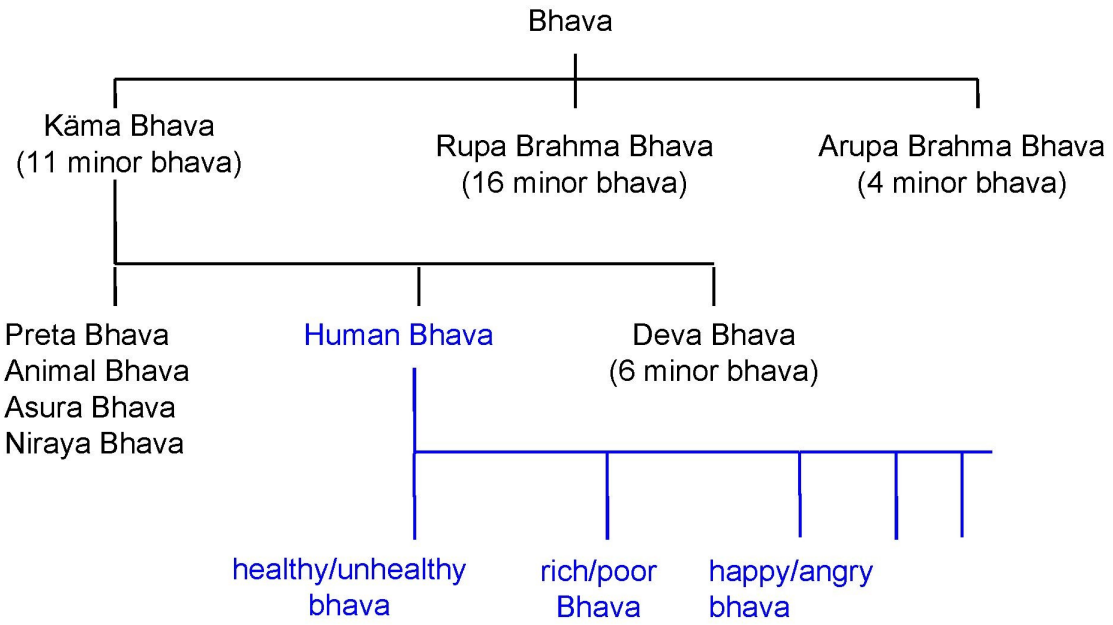

1. Ultimately there are infinite number of "bhava" according to one's "gathi".
2. **Within each bhava, there are numerous kamma beeja (seeds)**. Within "unhealthy bhava" there may be a kamma beeja for cancer, back pain, etc.
3. Same person may have different bhava (e.g., rich/poor) at different times.

Click to open and print the above chart: "WebLink: PDF Download: Bhava and Gathi Chart."

- The human realm (or *bhava*) can now be subdivided into an infinite number of smaller subdivisions, corresponding to the vast number of varieties that "human *gathi*" can give rise to: healthy/unhealthy, rich/poor, happy/angry, etc as shown in the chart. Now we are getting into personal *gathi*. Most major ones (rich/poor, healthy/unhealthy, etc) we inherit from the kamma *bīja* that was responsible for this birth.

3. Most of the activities of humans are associated with the enjoyment of sensual pleasures in the *kāma loka*. Instead of enjoying *jhānic* pleasures like a few of us (see below), most of us normally enjoy sensual pleasures associated with the five physical senses.

- We like to see eye-pleasing views, hear ear-pleasing sounds, taste tongue-pleasing flavors, smell nose-pleasing odors, and touch body-pleasing objects.
- All five sense faculties are there only in the *kāma loka.*
- *Rūpa loka Brahmā* do not have noses or tongues, and in *arūpa loka* there is only the mind.

4. When we are unable to satisfy some sense desires, we as humans tend to do immoral things to fulfill such sense desires; these are the *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* associated with strong "*kamma patha*" that will generate "bad *kamma bīja*" to bring about bad consequences or *vipāka* that could lead to rebirth in the lowest four realms of *kāma loka*; see the previous post, "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)."

- For example, a married man, not satisfied with sex with the wife, may have sex with another woman or even worse, with a child. His tendency to do that may even come from previous lives or he may have slowly built up that "*gathi*" over time increasingly engaging in sexual activities outside the marriage. Either way, such acts are done by animals; they engage in sex without any discrimination. Thus such activities will generate *kamma bīja* (or *kamma bija*) in the *animal bhava*; see the above chart.

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- Or, one may be engaging in fishing or hunting both for the pleasure of it or even to make a living. Either way, it is an "animal *gathi*"; animals kill for food. Thus one is building up *kamma* seeds in *animal bhava*.

5. If one is very greedy, one may build up *kamma bīja* appropriate for "hungry ghosts" in the *preta loka*. If one is lazy and depends on others for their livelihood one may build up *kamma* seeds in the *asura bhava*; see the chart. We can thus think about how the desire for sense pleasures can lead to the generation of "bad *kamma bīja*" in three of the four lowest realms.

- "Bad *kamma bīja*" in the lowest realm of *niraya* (hell) are generated by strong hate or *vyāpāda*. As we have discussed before, attachment to sense pleasures (greed) can turn to hate when someone else gets in the way. Most heinous crimes, including killing of other humans, are done with such strong hate.
- As one follows the Path, one will gradually lose animal, *preta*, *asura*, and *niraya gathi*, and one day will attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Thus birth in the lowest realms of the *kāma loka* are not just due to *kāma rāga*, but strong versions of greed (*lobha*) and hate (*dosa*); see, "Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Taṇhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)."

6. If you think about it for a minute you will realize that most of the *abhisaṅkhāra* that we do, are done targeting one or more of those sense-pleasing activities (and they are normally not even immoral, i.e, but they are still *apuññābhisaṅkhāra,* but with less *kammic* energy). But these do not lead to births in the *apāyā.*

- Since we crave those things, we are attached to those things, and according to "*pati+ichcha*" (or bonding with liking or desire) leading to "*sama + uppāda*" (births accordingly).
- Thus the more we engage in these activities with zest (an *Arahant* does some of these too, but without any cravings), we make *kamma bīja* in the *kāma bhava*; we keep strengthening "*kāma gathi.*"

7. On the other hand, some people get dissatisfied with the sense pleasures, and cultivate *jhānā* to enjoy "mind pleasures" either in the *rūpa loka* or *arūpa loka*.

- Thus, those who have *kāma rāga* will generate *kāma bhava*;
- *Rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga* (in #2 above) lead respectively to *rūpa bhava* and *arūpa bhava*.
- Thus we can see that how "*bhava*" are prepared and strengthened by habitually doing things that one likes according to one's *gathi.*
- Doing things involve *kāya saṅkhāra*; speaking and thinking about them involve *vacī saṅkhāra.* This is why *saṅkhāra* lead to a "defiled mindset" or *viññāṇa*, which in turn lead to the corresponding *bhava* via those steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

8. Thus "*bhava*" is an energy that we build up ourselves through our actions. Even if someone does not like to be born a dog, if one keeps doing things that are normally done by dogs, then one is preparing *bhava* to be born in the "*dog bhava*."

- One time I heard over the radio in the news that a person was arrested for engaging in sex with a female dog. Even though he was still in the human realm, for a while he got "born" in the "*dog bhava*." Since that is what he is willingly doing, he is very likely be born a dog at death. This is a good example for both "*pavutti kamma bhava*" and "*uppatti kamma bhava*."
- This is also a good example of how one can become morally blind (*kāmacchanda nivarana*), when greed or lust rises to a high level.

9. One thing that should have become clear is that even if we do not do any immoral deeds, we are bound to be reborn in the *kāma loka* (sense realms of the four *apāyā* and the human and *Deva* realms) as long as we crave sense pleasures. But such sensual cravings, by themselves, do not lead to birth in the *apāyā;* birth in the *apāyā* is due to *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* or immoral *saṅkhāra* (see #5 above).

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- As long as we like sense pleasures (and do not realize the dangers in them), we will have "*kāma gathi*" and thus we will have "*kāma bhava*," i.e., we will keep generating both good and bad *kamma bīja* that belong to the *kāma bhava*.
- So, what are the dangers in remaining in *kāma loka*? Even though we may not do any immoral deeds in this birth (because of our circumstances of being born in a good family, good country, etc), we are bound to be reborn in a bad environment where we may have to do immoral deeds to survive; and then we will make *kamma bīja* suitable for rebirth in the *apāyā*.
- In fact, it is very likely that we all already have such bad *kamma bīja*, because we have no idea what kind of deeds we have done in the past lives.

10. The mundane way to escape from the *kāma loka* is to cultivate *anāriya jhānā* (either *rūpa jhānā* or *arūpa jhānā*), and seek rebirth in *rūpa* or *arūpa loka*. But the problem is even then we will not be "really free" from rebirth in the *kāma loka* in the future. This is because after the *kammic* energy of that *rūpa bhava* or *arūpa bhava* is worn out, that *anāriya* person will be reborn in *kāma loka* again.

- This is why the Buddha admonished the *bhikkhus* to strive hard to attain at least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. He said if we really knew the dangers of rebirth in the *kāma loka*, we will make haste like a person who will try to find a way to put out a fire that is engulfing oneself.
- Some people think these are depressing thoughts. **But the facts cannot be avoided by not thinking about them.** In fact, when one realizes the true nature of this world and make some progress to be free from that predicament, one will start feeling relieved and happy; this is the *nirāmisa sukha* of *Nibbāna*.

11. In general, as we have referred to before, "*bhava*" means existence somewhere in "this world." It is even better to say that "*bhava*" means the "potential for existence" somewhere "in this world of 31 realms."

- When someone cultivates "*rūpa loka*" *jhānā*, one generates a *kammic* energy in a *kamma bīja* that can lead to "existence in the *rūpa loka*." That means, even while in the human realm, he/she can get into a *jhāna* and "effectively live in the *rūpa loka*," because that is what a being (a *Brahma*) in the *rūpa loka* experiences; **this is called "*pavutti kamma bhava*"** (NOT "*kāma bhava*," which we will discuss below)**.**
- Furthermore, the more one practices that *jhāna*, one makes that *kamma bīja* strong, and when one dies one will be born in that *rūpa loka* if died while in the *jhāna*, because that *kamma bīja* will be the one he/she will "*upādāna*" or grasp at the moment of death; **this is "*uppatti kamma bhava*."**
- Thus, that *kamma bīja* is said to be in "*rūpa loka bhava*."

12. Similarly, another person practising *arūpa jhānā* will be cultivating a *kamma bīja* in "*arūpa loka bhava*." Furthermore, he/she is likely to display qualities or "*gathi*" of a "*arūpa Brahma*" even while leading a human life.

- **Therefore, when one has a certain *bhava*, one has the potential to be born in that *bhava* for a short time during the current life (called *pavutti kamma bhava*) or to be born in that realm at death (*uppatti kamma bhava*).**

13. The strength of a *kamma bīja* comes from the *javana* of the *citta* while one is engaging in the activity. The worst consequences and hence strong *kamma bīja* are generated with a mind that enjoys the evil act. This is why the "*somanassa sahagata diṭṭhi sampayutta citta*" or the "thought (act) done with pleasure and with wrong views that arises automatically" is the strongest immoral *citta*. **Such a thought arises automatically when one has "*gathi*" compatible with such acts.**

- For example, when one engages in unlawful and immoral sexual activities, the more one enjoys such acts, and "gets used to such activities" by building up that habit or "*gathi*"; then the likelihood of such a thought to arise automatically will be higher. Then one will have higher and higher levels of *kāmacchanda* (one of the five *nivarana* that covers the mind), and thus one will not think twice before committing such an act. **The only way to break out of that vicious cycle is to contemplate the consequences**

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(possible rebirth in the animal or worse realms), and make a commitment to stop such activities.

- The real danger in building up bad habits (*gathi*) is that one could progressively get into worse habits. A teenager who starts drinking could then start using drugs; then it could lead to hanging out with even worse friends and get into drug dealing or even killings. As we saw in the previous post, "*Dhammo ha ve rakkati dhammacāri*" or "Dhamma will guide one in the direction of the type of *dhamma* one associates with", can work both ways, moral or immoral.

14. To break away from bad *gathi*, one needs to make a determination not only to stop such bad activities but also to build up the opposite good *gathi*, and start heading in the right direction. We just have to follow the mundane Eightfold Path and then the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

- Once firmly on the mundane eightfold path, the next steps are to do the correct *Ānāpāna bhāvanā* ("6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)") and the *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* ("Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta").

15. Also, it is NOT possible to grasp all this with a mind that is not purified. As I emphasized many times, what matters in making progress is not the "book knowledge", **but cleansing the mind and grasping the key Dhamma concepts.**

- Any person, no matter how intelligent or educated, cannot grasp the dangers of the rebirth process UNTIL the mind is cleansed of defilements to a certain extent by both staying away from highly immoral acts AND by learning Dhamma.

16. Some people worry about whether they can get rid of certain bad habits they have. They just try to suppress them quickly by sheer will power. That does not work most of the time. One has to be patient and just follow the Path, while learning and grasping the key Dhamma concepts.

- The Buddha gave the following example: When a farmer cultivates his plot, he just needs to make sure to provide enough water, get rid of weeds, fertilize etc. There is no point in worrying about "when am I going to get the harvest?." The crop will grow in time and bring a good harvest IF the necessary work is done.
- In the same way, if one follows the Path by leading a moral life and learning Dhamma, one will be guided in the right direction. And just like the farmer could see that the crop is growing well, one will be able to experience the progress, but not the end result in a single step.

17. In the previous post, "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)," we discussed how both *nāma gotta* and *kamma bīja* (and *bhava*) are "located" in the mind plane. *Nama gotta* are just records without any embedded energy; when one thinks, speaks, and bodily acts, a trace of those thoughts, speech, and actions are recorded (like a tape) in the mind plane.

- On the other hand, the *kammic* energies associated with those activities are also recorded in the mind plane as *kamma bīja*, and those have *kammic* energies associated with them. Those *kamma bīja* are in different "bins" or "categories" called *bhava*.

3.4.3 Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control

Revised November 15, 2018

Introduction

One's character (*gati*) determines one's future births. The ability to figure that out is called the "*nāmarūpa paricceda ñāṇa*."

1. We have discussed the background material in the previous two posts: "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)" and "Gathi and Bhava – Many Varieties." Now I want to bring it all together

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and show that "*bhava*" is actually something that we create AND maintain on our own with the way we think, speak, and act with our ingrained habits (*gati*).

- If you have not read the previous two posts, I highly encourage reading them. It is important to get the basic concepts right, and then to rehash them in different (and yet consistent!) ways, so that the ideas sink in.
- We will use those ideas and use the *paṭicca samuppāda* sequence to trace how we make "*bhava*" OURSELVES, which in turn give rise to *jāti* (births) not only in future lives but also during this life.
- There is no one else, or even a "super being", that can either help or hurt you in the long run. One's destiny is up to oneself. The Buddha said, "*attā hi attano nātho, ko hi nātho parosiyā*" or "One is indeed one's own refuge; how can others be refuge to one?." Even the Buddha could only teach the way.

What Are *Gati*?

2. "*Gati*" is a key word in Buddha Dhamma. There is no perfect English translation but habits, tendencies, and biases convey similar meaning. *Gati* has a deeper meaning because sometimes one's *samsāric gati* (habits and tendencies from previous lives) may lie dormant.

- For example, a teenager may not have a "habit" of drinking, but after a few drinks may get "hooked" easier than others if he had a corresponding *gati* from past lives.
- Also, I get messages from people who never even paid attention to "Buddhism" getting to *samādhi* (state of calmness) just reading these posts; that is also a "*gati*" from past lives. They are likely to have been exposed to Buddha Dhamma in previous lives.
- Most of the time we do inappropriate things (immoral *abhisaṅkhāra*) because we have a *gati* or tendency to do so. This is what is embedded in the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step most of the time. Our *avijjā* in such a case is not knowing that we have such *gati* or knowing about it but does not know why or how to get rid of it.
- As I pointed out in "Sutta – Introduction," "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" is just a condensed or "*uddesa*" version. We need to analyze it ("*niddesa*" and "*patiniddesa*") to get the idea, depending on the context.

3. When we (repeatedly) do such *abhisaṅkhāra* (thoughts, speech, actions), we build-up a *viññāṇa* for it. For example, if someone likes to watch porn, the more one does it, the more that "*viññāṇa* for watching porn" will grow. It will be in the subconscious ready to "pop up." In other words, that "*gati*" gets more established.

- Then comes "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*," i.e., it becomes easier to think about clips from previous views or fantasize about them. Here *nāmarūpa* are the memories (mental pictures) of past activities or "blueprints" for future plans. It is important to realize that *nāmarūpa* for *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* will be somewhat different; see, "Akusala-Mula Paṭicca Samuppada."

4. Now the next step is hard to resist: "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*." Here *saḷāyatana* means not all six senses, but the appropriate one(s) for the activity. Here they are *cakkayatana* (based on the eye) and *manayatana* (mind).

- It is important to realize that "*āyatana*" does not mean the sense faculty like the eye; it is rather "using the sense faculty for this purpose", for doing *abhisaṅkhāra* (for watching porn and enjoying it, in this particular example). An *Arahant* has eyes and can see, but will not use them as "*āyatana*" to "acquire '*san*'."
- Then comes, "*saḷāyatana paccayā phasso*." Here of course it is not just "*phassa*" but "*samphassa*," i.e., generate "*san*" (according to one's *gati*) in the process; see, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."

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- Because it is not just "*phassa*" but "*samphassa*," then one generates feelings: "*phassa paccayā vedanā*." For example, an *Arahant* watching a porn movie will not generate any joyful feelings, because that would only involve "*phassa*" and NOT "*samphassa*."

5. Now comes the last few steps. Because of the *sukha vedanā* (in this particular example), one will get attached to it: "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*"; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- And then, "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*," i.e., one grasps whole-heartedly because one really enjoys it, and would like to do it again. "*Upādāna*" means one likes to keep it close.
- Thus one makes "*bhava*" for it; one has plans to do it again, and it is a "reality" or future existence at some point: "*upādāna paccayā bhava*."

Connection Between *Gati*, *Bhava*, and *Jāti*

6. As we can see, all this is going in our minds. The bottom line is that we just keep thinking and doing things (also called cultivating *saṅkhāra*) that we have become "attached to" or we have formed "*gati*" for. Each time we go through this series of steps we just make that "*bhava*" grow stronger.

- Then it becomes easier to be "born in that *bhava*," i.e. *jāti* (pronounced "*jāti*"). Most people think "*jāti*" means rebirth; but it is not restricted to rebirth.
- Just like one can be born in a certain realm (animal, human, etc) at death, one can be born in the "drunken state" when one has "*bhava* to get drunk." If one makes a "*bhava*" to watch porn, then each time one does it, it becomes easier the next time to be "born in that *bhava*," i.e., to watch again.
- And it is easy to extend this to any other misdeed. If one forms a habit to drink without control (i.e., "get drunk to the point that one cannot think clearly"), then each time one does it one makes that *bhava* stronger; if not controlled, one day one could be an alcoholic. And it does not stop in this life. If a strong *bhava* is formed it can affect future births. In a new birth, one is born to a mother (and to a lesser extent father) with similar *gati*. Thus an alcoholic in this life is LIKELY to be born to an alcoholic mother if the next birth is in the human realm.
- It must be pointed out that "hateful *bhava*" for certain things or even for a certain person, also can be carried from life-to-life. There are many mentions in the *Tipiṭaka* of how Devadatta clashed with the Buddha (or rather the *Bodhisattva*) in previous lives.
- One's physical body will change (most of the time drastically) from life-to-life, but one's *gati*, *āsava*, and *bhava* are carried from life-to-life; of course those keep changing all the time too, but significant changes happen when one is human with the most ability to change one's destiny.

7. Thus "*bhava paccayā jāti*" applies both in this life and also for future rebirths. This is the difference between "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda" and that for *paṭisandhi* to a new life: "Akusala-Mula Paṭicca Samuppāda."

- As explained in #6 above, one's future births are due to one's *gati*. The realization that one's future births are determined by one's *gati* — and the ability to figure out the *bhava* and *jāti* (*jāthi*) according one's *gati* — is called "*nāmarūpa paricceda ñāṇa*" or "*nāmarūpa paricceda ñāṇa*." This basically means "*rūpa*" are according "*nama*" (literally, one's body is according to one's thinking).

What Are *Āsavās* (Cravings)?

8. To make the final connection to *Nibbāna*, we see that one's *gati* are intimately connected to one's *āsavās* (cravings). Just like *gati*, *āsavās* are deep-seated and ingrained in one's lifestream and most can be traced back numerous lives in the past; see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- While there can be an infinite number of *gati*, there are four basic categories of *āsavās: diṭṭhāsava, kāmāsava, bhavāsava, avijjāsava;* see below.

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- This logical connection is clearly shown in the *Sammā Diṭṭhi sutta*. It was Ven. Sariputta who delivered that *sutta* after being asked by the Buddha to explain "*Sammā Diṭṭhi*" to other *bhikkhus* on one occasion. He went through the steps of the *paṭicca samuppāda* backwards and eventually the *bhikkhus* asked, "Is there a cause for *avijjā*?." He explained that indeed *āsavās* contribute to *avijjā*, and vice versa.
- In fact, as we see in the *Abhidhamma* section, four of the eight "basic units of matter" in a *suddhaṭṭhaka* arise due to *avijjā* and the other four due to *taṇhā* (which arise due to *āsava*). *Avijjā* and *taṇhā* are called "*bhava-mūla*" for this reason.

9. One way to explain *Nibbāna* or "complete cooling down" is to say that it is attained by getting rid of all *āsavās*. When one follows the Noble Eightfold Path, "*āsavakkhaya*" is achieved in steps.

- At the *Sotāpanna* stage, the first component of *āsava* or *diṭṭhāsava* (craving for various *diṭṭhis* or wrong worldviews) is removed. This all important component of *diṭṭhāsava* is solely due to not knowing the true nature of this world of 31 realms: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Most people carry certain *diṭṭhis* all their lives, most even coming from previous lives. The most prevalent *diṭṭhi* is the belief that there is no rebirth process.
- When one truly comprehends that consequences of *immoral* acts can be much harsher than we normally believe (birth in the *apāyā*), that itself removes the causes for rebirth in the *apāyā*.

Connection to the Four Stages of *Nibbāna*

10. A *Sotāpanna* would still have the other three *āsavās*: *kāmāsava* (craving for sense pleasures), *bhavāsava* (craving for living somewhere in the 31 realms), and *avijjāsava* (cravings due to not knowing *anicca, dukkha, anatta* fully).

- *Kāmāsava* is reduced at the *Sakadāgāmi* stage and is removed at the *Anāgāmi* stage.
- *Bhavāsava* and *avijjāsava* are removed only at the *Arahanthood*.
- Of course, all four *āsavās* keep getting reduced at each stage of *Nibbāna*. Thus a *Sotāpanna*, for example, would have reduced the other three *āsavās* to some level.
- It is also clear that comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* gradually increases at each stage and is complete only at the *Arahant* stage.

11. It is nice to see the self-consistency, and the fact that one can analyze a given situation in different ways.

- One may have a Ph.D. or one may be able to recite the whole of the *Tipiṭaka*; yet one would not be even able to get to the *Sotāpanna magga* without comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* to some level.
- *Diṭṭhāsava* cannot be removed until one is well on the way on the mundane eightfold path, because one's mind needs to be cleared of the strongest defilements. As I keep saying, this is not about "book knowledge"; it is all about cleansing one's mind.
- Of course, *diṭṭhāsava* gives rise to various *gati*, and thus removal of such *gati* is the key to attacking *diṭṭhāsava*. The foremost is the tendency to "cling to a certain belief" and not even willing to consider the counter arguments.
- If one has the *diṭṭhi* that there is no rebirth, one needs to carefully examine the evidence for and against.
- **Another is the refusal to believe anything "that cannot be proven" by a "scientific method."** Thus, just over 400 years ago, people looked around and asked "where are those infinite number of universes and infinite number of living beings that the Buddha was talking about?." Even now, science is only aware of a minute fraction of our physical universe, not to mention pretty much nothing about the mind; see, "Dhamma and Science" for details.

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12. The bottom line is that whether one will be a human,a *deva* or an animal in the next life will depend on what kind of *gati* we develop, and NOT what we wish/pray for. Furthermore, one can become a *Sotāpanna* in this very life by cultivating the "*gati* of a *Sotāpanna*" or "*Ariya gati*." The key is to develop *Sammā Diṭṭhi* by learning and comprehending Dhamma (the correct world view).

Next, "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka", ……..

3.4.4 Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka

There are many confusing terms like *citta* and *mano* which have been differently interpreted in different books. In order to clarify these concepts, I am writing a few posts in "Dhamma Concepts" section under "Mind and Consciousness" starting with: "1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction."

1. Think about a past event that is still vividly there in your mind. You can visualize the whole "event" just like watching a movie; you can recall what those people looked like, what they said, etc.

- Suppose a 40-year old recalls an event where she was a 10-year old playing with her mother. She will recall the event just as it happened 30 years ago: she was young and her mother was 30 years old; it took place in her parents' house which does not even exist now. But in the "playback" that exact same time sequence is played back with the 10-year old playing with her 30-year old mother in the same house that they lived in. It is not just a "summary" of what happened, rather an exact playback showing her young mother's features at that time, what she said, etc.
- Recently, it has been reported that some individuals have an astounding capability to instantly recall past events (during this life) in vivid detail; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."

2. Most scientists and philosophers believe that the memories are kept in the brain. Is this a realistic picture? They do not have any evidence to back this claim.

- How can all those details be "stored" in a biological membrane, ready to be retrieved at a moment's notice? No one has explained a plausible mechanism yet.

3. Whatever we do with body, speech, and mind, a "record" (*nāma gotta*) gets established ("*bihiwelā pihitanava*" in Sinhala) in the *kamma bhava*: In the word "*bhava*", "*bha*" means "appear and gets established"; thus the act we did, i.e., *kamma*, gets recorded in the *kamma bhava* exactly the same way it happened. **We cannot "see" *bhava* but we can see the results of *bhava* as "*jāti*."**

- **Not only potent *kamma*, but ALL memories are stored intact in the *nāma loka*.** Basically, the thought stream is recorded continuously like a movie recording and thus can be "played back"; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."
- Thus while the "fruits of *kamma*" are embedded in *kamma bīja* (seeds) in the *nāma loka* as *kamma bhava*, the movie like sequence is recorded in the *nāma loka* as *nāma gotta.*
- Therefore, while *kamma* seeds in the *kamma bhava* can bring their results in the future, the *nāma gotta* are just records without substance: see, "Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra (Sankhata)." Thus unlike anything else in this world (*saṅkhāra* or *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)), *nāma gotta* are PERMANENT.
- This is why the Buddha Gotama could recall the exact scene that happened billions of years ago, when he received the first confirmation ("*niyata vivarana*") of his future Buddhahood by the Buddha Deepankara. At that time he was an ascetic by the name of Sumedha and the Buddha Gotama described the whole event that took place in detail; see, WebLink: WIKI: Dīpankara Buddha.
- In the same way, the *kamma bīja* stored in the *nāma loka* are instantly activated when proper conditions are realized; see, "Anantara and Samanatara Paccaya." However, unlike *nāma gotta*, *kamma* seeds fade away with time unless brought to bear fruit under right conditions.

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4. Thus, memories (whatever the portion that is remembered) are played back in a "movie-like" manner, like in a dream. It is like a segment of a "movie recording." It is not just a "gist" or a summary; we can recall the whole "sequence of events" like in a movie.

- This is why when someone describes an event by memory he/she always tends to tell the story sequentially: The person listening may not want to hear the whole story and could become impatient waiting for the narrator to "get to the point", but for the narrator recalling the event, it is easier to go sequentially as the event is "played back" in his/her mind.

5. We cannot say where that memory is "located", because they are not stored in the "physical space" or the "material world"; they are in the "*nāma loka*" or "mental world." In contrast what we experience through our five senses is the "*rūpa loka*" or the "material world" that consists of 31 realms.

- This is also why scientists will not be able to describe the mind in terms of matter; see, "The Double Slit Experiment – Correlation between Mind and Matter?." Mind and matter belong to two distinct domains.
- As I will clarify in detail in the future, this is related to the fact that there are six fundamental entities (six *dhātus*): *pathavi* (hardness), *āpo* (cohesiveness), *tejo* (vitality), *vāyo* (motion), *ākāsa* (space), and *viññāṇa* (consciousness). The *viññāṇa* dhātu is associated with the "*nāma loka*" and the other five *dhātus* are associated with the "*rūpa loka*" or the "material world." But we don't need to worry about that right now. You will see other pieces falling into place in a "big jigsaw puzzle" as all these seemingly unrelated aspects come together to form a cohesive, complete picture of the "wider world."
- This could be related to the possibility of higher "curled up" dimensions that is being discussed in String Theory in physics; see, "What Happens in Other Dimensions?."

6. We can normally access our own "information" from this life but some people, especially some young children, have the ability to recall *nāma gotta* from past lives. Those who have *abhiññā* powers can access such "information" or "*nāma gotta*" of other people as well; **however, even they cannot read another's "thoughts" or "*kamma bīja*" or "*kamma bhava*."**

- We can retrieve this memory by thinking about it. There is a mechanism for that memory to be retrieved; the mind initiates the process, but the brain acts as the "receiver" for the incoming information.
- When we think about something that happened in the past, the mind sends mind rays out and they bounce off that specific target in the "*nama loka*" and the memory is reflected back. That retrieval process does not change the memory record, and the record stays intact. Thus one can go back and recall it again.
- When the retrieved information comes back, that signal is processed by the brain. Our whole body is prepared by the *kamma* seed that led to this human existence to limit/facilitate certain capabilities; thus what we can actually remember depends on the status of our brain. Our human bodies are generally setup (by *kamma vipāka*) to be able to retrieve only the strong memories from the early days of this life and cannot access memories of previous lives. But few people can, and so can some children. Furthermore, if the relevant parts of the brain gets damaged, then the retrieval capability may be lost.
- **Some beings in *preta loka* can remember past lives to impart more suffering on them.** They can remember the bad deeds done by them that led to the birth in the *preta* world, and how long they will have to suffer to "pay back the debt."

7. How much of that memory one actually recalls depends on two things: the health of the brain and the purity of the mind.

- If the brain is not functioning well, only bits and pieces of the memory will be actually experienced. When people get old, the brain's efficiency goes down and thus memory will not work well. The brain is like a playback device and if it is defective, the display will be blurry or at worst no display will result.

8. Secondly, even a person with a healthy brain, may not be able to recall memories if the mind is "covered" by the five hindrances (*panca nivarana*); see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

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- When there is *kāmachanda* or *vyāpāda*, the mind is too much focused on those objects of thought (*ārammaṇa*). When there is *thina middha*, the mind is now "stuck" lazily at something (sleepy or just distracted), and will not retrieve the memory. With *uddhacca kukkucca*, the mind is normally "intoxicated" with power, money, beauty etc is stuck at a "low level." With *vicikicchā* (which is due to *micchā diṭṭhi* or not knowing the true characteristics *anicca, dukkha, anatta*), one engages in inappropriate acts and thus the mind is not "sharp."
- Thus, any, some, or all of these five factors can affect the memory of even a person with a healthy brain. When we purify our minds of the *pañca nīvaraṇa*, its ability to pinpoint a given "memory location" is improved.
- Furthermore, when the mind is purified, that can make one's brain to function better by changing the conditions for better *kamma vipāka* to come to fruition; see, "Anantara and Samanatara Paccaya." This "mind effect" on the brain and the body in general is being re-discovered by scientists; see, for example, "The Biology of Belief" by Bruce H. Lipton.

9. Most scientists and philosophers believe that our memories are stored in our brains. There are key problems with that assumption:

- If that is the case, then the "state of the mind" should not be a factor in recalling a memory, because then it is like retrieving a sound track from a disc; the playback should be good as long as the "playing device" (i.e., the brain) is in good condition.
- It is astounding how much one can recall from the memory. And it comes out like a video clip; we can visualize and even recall the conversations that took place a long time ago in case of poignant memories. Can all those details be "stored" in a biological membrane?
- Even if it is possible to encode all that information (exact features of the 10-year old child and her 30-year old mother, what they spoke at that time in the same tone, etc. in the hypothetical example of #1 above), how can it be recalled instantaneously?

10. Here is an article which discusses these unresolved scientific issues: WebLink: VIEWZONE: Are your memories really in your brain?

- Here is a good site if you need to dig in deeper: **WebLink: HUMAN-MEMORY: MEMORY STORAGE**

3.4.5 Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein

Revised September 7, 2016; Revised May 7, 2017; October 25, 2018; January 18, 2020

Bhava and *Jāti* – Two Different Things

There is much confusion about the terms "*bhava*" and "*jāti*." But that does not need to be the case. Here we will clarify these two important terms in the *paṭicca samuppāda* (PS) cycles.

- By the way, *jāti is* pronounced "*jāthi*" with "th" sound as in "three."

1. In both Pāli and Sinhala, *jāti* means birth; *bhava* means "භවයෙහි බව" in Sinhala, or "existence."

- When one gets a "human existence" or a human *bhava*, that can last thousand of years. Within that time, one can be born (*jāti*) with a physical human body many times.
- When one gets a human existence at a *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, what is formed first is a "mental body" with a mind-base (*hadaya vatthu*), and a set of *pasāda rūpa*. That "mental body" is called a *gandhabba*.
- When the *gandhabba* comes out either at the death of the physical body or in an "out-of-body experience" (OBE), the physical body becomes inert; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

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- Details are available in two subsections: "Mental Body – Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."

Human *Bhava* Is Rare

2. Human *bhava* is hard to get, see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

- However, a human *bhava* or a human existence can last thousands of years. On the other hand, a human birth (*jāti*) with a human body lasts only about 100 years. Therefore, within a human bhava, there can be MANY births with a human body or *jāti*.
- In between human births, the human lives as a *gandhabba* (with just the mental body) in the nether world or *para loka*. This *para loka* co-exists with our human *loka*, but we cannot see those *gandhabbas* without physical bodies. For details, see, "Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body," "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- A good visualization of *gandhabba* is at, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."

3. In rebirth stories, there is always a "time gap" between successive human births (*jāti*). They separate by many years or at least few years. In between those successive lives, that life-stream lives as a *gandhabba*, without a physical body.

- In most rebirth stories, the previous human life was terminated unexpectedly, like in an accident or a killing. Therefore, the *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* may not been exhausted. In that case, the *gandhabba* just came out of the dead body and waited for another womb to enter.
- Furthermore, the Buddha has described how difficult it is to get a human existence; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm." If "*bhava*" means "birth," then all those rebirth stories cannot be true.

A *Sotāpanna* May Have Many *jāti*, But Only Seven *Bhava*

4. From the WebLink: suttacentral: Ratana Sutta; "..*Na te* ***bhavaṃ aṭṭhamam****ādiyanti*," means, "(A *Sotāpanna*) will not be born in an **eighth *bhava***." But there could be many rebirths within those seven *bhava*.

- For example, King Bimbisāra, who was a *Sotāpanna* died and was to have 14 rebirths; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Janavasabha Sutta (DN 18)."

What Does *Bhava* Mean?

5. Also, "*bha*" means "establish." When we have strong feelings about something, say we like something and thoughts "wheel around" in our mind about how to get it, that is very potent *abhisaṅkhāra*; this mental power gets established in the "*kamma bhava*" as a *kamma bīja* (seed).

- That is also why it is easy to make *kamma bīja* or *kamma bhava* based on our *gati* (habits/character). Each person likes certain kinds of things. So, we keep strengthening existing *kamma bīja/kamma bhava,* which, if strong enough, can lead to a rebirth with such "*gati*" or "*bhava*," because that is what is "gets attached to" or 'likely to grasp" or "*upādāna.*"

Bhava and *Gati* – Examples

6. Let us take some examples.

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- An alcoholic drinks habitually, and thus people refer to him as a drunkard. He has a drinking habit (*gati*) and a craving (*āsava*) for it.
- But he is not in a state of intoxication all the time, only when he is drunk, i.e., only when he is born in that "*jāti*." The mindset of liking for a state of intoxication is the "*bhava*" corresponding to his "*gati*" (habit); he has that *gati* or *bhava*, and thus, he can be "born" *(jāti)* in that state easily.
- **That is the "*bhava paccayā jāti*" step in *paṭicca samuppāda* (PS) cycles that operate during this life, leading him to get drunk many, many times.**

7. On the other hand, someone who does not like to drink may even have an aversion to drinking alcohol. That person does not have "*gati*" or "*bhava*" for intoxication, and thus it is unlikely that he will be "born" in that state. Therefore, it is doubtful that he will get drunk or "be born" in that condition. The "*bhava paccayā jāti*" step in the PS cycle does not happen here, because the condition (*bhava*) is not there.

- A person who has a really nasty temper has a "*gati*" or "*bhava*" for that, and thus may be born in that, i.e., may flare up with the slightest provocation. Another may have a less strong "angry *bhava*," and a third person who is very calm may have only a trace of that "angry *bhava*." The stronger the "*bhava*," the easier it is to be born (*jāti*) in that "*bhava*."
- Similarly, a person who may have excess greed will have a "*gati*" or "*bhava*" for that. And such a "greedy *bhava*" may have focused areas: some are greedy for food, some for power, some for fame, money, etc.

Bhava and *Gati* – Related

8. ***Bhava* is intimately related to *gati* (habits/character).** One "builds up" a given *bhava* by engaging activities that cultivate that *bhava*; this happens via repeated *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles during a given life.

- An alcoholic does this by associating with friends who are alcoholics, frequenting places where they all hang out, etc. See the discussion in "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- People with similar habits ("*gati*") tend to "hang together" (see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)," which accelerates that whole process.

Habits Build *Gati*

9. **The above examples describe how "*pavutti kamma bhava*" are made,** i.e., how one prepares a particular *bhava* in this life via engaging in relevant *saṅkhāra* or *kamma* repeatedly.

- An alcoholic does this via *mano, vacī, and kāya saṅkhāra*: such thoughts (*mano saṅkhāra*) come to his mind often. Then he consciously thinks about such activities and speaks about them (*vacī saṅkhāra)*, i.e., engages in *vitakka* and *vicāra* focused on drinking activities). Of course, he will also physically engage in such activities with *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- The more he does those, the stronger the "drinking *bhava*" or "drinking habit" becomes.
- Someone who has cultivated such a *kamma bhava* for drinking can be appropriately born in that state (getting drunk) many times, DURING a lifetime.

10. Let us take another example. A child may enjoy torturing a cat or a dog. If this habit is not stopped, he may start gaining pleasure by torturing humans too.

- The "*pati+ichcha sama+uppāda*" cycle will take him to an extreme if not disrupted early enough. He will build a habit for doing it (i.e. born in that state) many times during the same lifetime.
- Those two are examples of the *pavutti bhava* described in the "Akusala-Mūla Pavutti (or Pravutti) Paṭicca Samuppāda."

Kamma Bhava Becomes *Uppatti Bhava*

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11. **Such *kamma bhava* can get strong enough to become "*uppatti bhava*," leading to rebirth in a "good existence" (*Deva, Brahma*) or a "bad existence" (animal, *peta*, etc.).**

- That is the real danger. At the dying moment, one will be drawn ("*upādāna*") to an environment that is compatible with one's prominent habits (*gati*) or *bhava*.
- Because one got attached willingly (i.e., *upādāna*), a similar *bhava* will result: i.e., *pati+ichcha* leading to *sama+uppada* or *paṭicca samuppāda*. That is the "*upādana paccayā bhava*" step.
- An alcoholic is likely to be born to family where the father or mother (or both) are alcoholics. That is the most suitable environment for his *upādāna* and *bhava*.
- One who enjoys torturing animals/humans may be born in *niraya* (hell) where there is constant torture. Depending on the nature of the *bhava*, one could be born there to impart torture on others or to be subjected to torture.

12. On the other hand, one who has benevolent qualities of a *deva* (i.e., *deva bhava*) could acquire "*deva bhava*" and be born a *deva*. One who has cultivated compassion for other beings (i.e., Brahma *bhava*) may acquire "Brahma *bhava*" and be born a Brahma.

- Similarly, one who has developed disgraceful qualities of a dog may be acquire a "dog *bhava*," and be born repeatedly a dog until that *kammic* energy is wears out.
- It is the universal principle of "*pati+ichcha sama+uppāda*" working to yield an existence that is similar to the actions that one willingly engaged in; see, "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda" and "Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."

Kamma Bija, *Bhava*, and *Gati*

13. A *kamma bīja* (seed) is also related to *bhava*; when one develops a habit (*gati*) by keep doing things related to it, that *bhava* or the *kamma bīja* gets stronger. It leads to "*bhava paccayā jāti*" under suitable conditions many times during this life itself.

- In the case of the person who developed a *bhava* for torturing other living beings may have that *kamma* seed being the one selected for next *bhava* upon death from a *bhava* that had exhausted all its *kammic* energy.
- In that case, he may be born in the *niraya* repeatedly (many jāti) until the *kammic* energy for that *kamma bhava* is wear out. That is an example of an *uppatti kamma bhava*.

14. Thus it becomes clear that one needs to look at the root cause for having certain habits or behavior patterns.

- We can go backward in the PS to find the causes. To be born in a drunken state, one needs to have a *bhava* of an alcoholic.
- That *bhava* was conditioned via *upādāna* (willing and forceful embracing.) *Upādāna*, in turn was due to *taṇhā* (getting attached to drinking). That was due to feeling (i.e., he got to like the "drunk" feeling, the state of intoxication). Feelings arose due to *(san)phassa* or contact, *saḷāyatana* (use of the six senses inappropriately.) Then *saḷāyatana* arose due to *nāmarūpa* (associated visuals of names and activities), which in turn were due to *saṅkhāra* (*kaya, vacī, and mano saṅkhāra* for that activity.) Of course, the starting point of *avijjā* (ignorance of the consequences).

Connection to *Avijjā* and *Taṇhā*

15. By examining these steps, we can see that the whole cycle can be stopped primarily at two places.

- By contemplating on the adverse consequences of drinking, he could remove ignorance (*avijjā*), and make a firm decision to stop.

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- If he is mindful, whenever a thought about drinking comes to the mind, he can stop "wheeling around" (stopping *mano/vacī saṅkhāra*) and thus stopping multiple PS cycles. See, "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna" and "Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paticca Samuppāda."

16. If one can get rid of that drinking habit (*gati*), one would have removed that *bhava*. Then it is unlikely that one will be born (*jāti*) in that intoxicated state.

- The "trigger level" needed to generate a birth will be higher if the *bhava* (or habit) is not strong. Someone who has not had an alcoholic drink may be reluctant to have one.
- When one has an ingrained habit of drinking (strong *bhava*), all that is needed could be the sight of a bottle of alcohol.

Good Habits Lead to Good *Bhava*

17. All the above is valid for "good *bhava*" or "good habits," too. To cultivate that *bhava*, one needs to be engaged in as many PS cycles as possible. The more the cycle gets repeated, the stronger each step becomes (the neural connections in the brain for that habit will strengthen, in term of modern science; see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View").

- It is easy to see from the above discussion why it is essential to instill good habits in children and also to break any bad habits that they start developing. It is much easier to stop forming a *bhava* or habit (*gati*) at early stages; once the habit takes hold, it becomes harder to remove. And that is true for adults too.

Also, see, "How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti," …….

3.4.6 Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna

October 25, 2018; revised November 4, 2019; December 5, 2019

Introduction

1. The difference between *taṇhā* and *upādāna* is subtle, and it is critical to understand that difference. It is the key to understanding how one can get rid of bad *gati* and also cultivate good *gati*. That is the way to *Nibbāna*.

- That understanding is also critically important to get the basic idea behind the *Satipaṭṭhāna* (and *Ānāpāna*) *bhāvanā*.

2. *Satipaṭṭhāna* (and *Ānāpāna*) *bhāvanā* are about being mindful and catching new BAD thoughts that arise in one's mind. One should stop such thoughts immediately. If the thought is a good one (say about a Dhamma concept), then one should stay on it.

- The English word "thought" is too simplified. It includes *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*, each of which is complex; see, "Mental Aggregates" and "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."
- *Saṅkhāra* is especially crucial since *kammic* energy for future *vipāka* is created by the three types of *saṅkhāra*: *mano saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*; see, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."
- Therefore, we will stay with those Pāli words.

Mano saṅkhāra Arise Automatically Due to *Gati*

3. If we get interested in sight, sound, etc., *mano saṅkhāra* **automatically** arise in a mind due to a sensory input, **based on our *gati***.

- **We don't experience those initial *mano saṅkhāra*, and we only experience when it comes to the next stage called *vacī saṅkhāra* ("talking to oneself").**

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- That is an important point. Even if a single word is not spoken, *vacī saṅkhāra* accumulate if one is "thinking to oneself," about that object. If one gets more interested, one may speak out, and that is still a *vacī saṅkhāra*; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra." Both types of *vacī saṅkhāra* involve *vitakka* and *vicāra cetasika*.
- If the interest builds up, one may take bodily action. Such bodily actions are initiated by *kāya saṅkhāra.*
- All three types of *saṅkhāra* arise in mind.
- The strength of *kammic* energy created increases in the following order: *mano*, *vacī*, *kāya saṅkhāra.*

4. As we discussed many times, we get "attached" to something AUTOMATICALLY based on our *gati*. Then *mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically according to *gati*. That will happen as long as we have *taṇhā* (either via *kāma rāga* or *paṭigha*; *avijjā* is present in both cases). We automatically get attracted; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- As pointed out in that post, the term "*taṇhā*" means getting fused or attached ("*thán*" meaning "place" + "*hā*" meaning getting welded or attached (ඇලීම in Sinhala).
- That initial attachment arises AUTOMATIC based on our *gati*. We don't have direct control over it.
- **In order to change *mano saṅkhāra,* we need to change our *gati* over time.**

Importance of *Vacī Saṅkhāra*

5. If the attachment is strong enough, the mind will now start thinking about it consciously, i.e., *vacī saṅkhāra* arise, and we become aware of these *vacī saṅkhāra*.

- As soon as we become aware of this "attachment" to something, we CAN BE mindful, think about its consequences, and move away from it. Therefore, we can stop such thoughts at the *vacī saṅkhāra* stage; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."
- However, our minds like to enjoy such *vacī saṅkhāra*. It is easy to do and is very tempting. Many people get their sexual satisfaction from just "daydreaming" about either an event in the past or sexual encounters that might take place in the future.

6. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Na Santi Sutta (SN 1.34)," the Buddha defined "*kāma"* to be this "daydreaming" or "generating more and more thoughts about it": "*Na te kāmā yāni citrāni loke, **Saṅkapparāgo purisassa kāmo**...*"

Translated: "World's pretty things are not *kāma,* **a person creates his/her *kāma* by thinking about those pretty things (*rāga saṅkappa*)**..."

- That is a critical point.
- Furthermore, we "daydream" about not just sex, but in other sense pleasures too. See, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex."
- Even if one did not physically do anything, one could accumulate a lot of bad *kamma* just by generating such *vacī saṅkhāra*.
- The world is full of beautiful things, tasteful foods, sweet smells, etc., but seeing, tasting, smelling them is not NECESSARILY *kāma*. For example, the Buddha accepted delicious foods, but never generated *mano/vacī saṅkhāra* about them. He had removed all *gati*.

Vacī Saṅkhāra Responsible for *Upādāna*

7. Anyone who is not yet an *Ānāgāmi* is likely to automatically generate such *mano saṅkhāra*. Then that leads to generating *vacī saṅkhāra* or "*kāma saṅkappa*" at some level.

- **If we "go with the flow" and go along enjoying this "daydreaming" or generating *vacī saṅkhāra*, that is what is called "*upādāna*."**

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- *Upādāna* means "pulling it closer (in one's mind)" ("*upa*" + "*ādāna*," where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull"). [***ādāna*** : （nt.）， taking up； grasping.]

8. So, we do not have control over the "*taṇhā*" or "initial attachment" step. It happens with *mano saṅkhāra* that arise due to our *gati*.

- And those *gati* cannot be removed just by abstaining from experiencing such sensory events.
- First, we need to reduce our *gati* to attach to that kind of sensory inputs. Stopping those *vacī saṅkhāra* as soon as we becomes aware of them is the way to reduce bad *gati*. Those *vacī saṅkhāra* are really "nutrients" or "food/water" for cultivating of those *gati*.
- If we keep the bad habit of generating *vacī saṅkhāra*, then that *gati* will only get stronger with time. It is essential to stop giving such "mental food" for those bad *gati*.

Killing Bad Habits by Stopping *Vacī Saṅkhāra*

9. The Buddha explained it this way: Human cannot live more than seven days without food AND water. We will die.

- But if we stop taking solid food, but takes in just water, we can live for several weeks.
- However, during that time, one may be tempted to take in some food. That will break the process and the clock re-starts.

10. That is the analogy for killing a habit. One can kill the habit (or the addiction) in a relatively short time by doing the following. Stops *kāya saṅkhāra* (actual act, which is like solid food) and *vacī saṅkhāra* (thinking/talking about it, which is like water).

- But if we stop doing the activities (*kāya saṅkhāra*), but keep generating *vacī saṅkhāra*, then it may NEVER be removed entirely.
- So, the analogy is not that good. ***Vacī saṅkhāra* are almost as bad as *kāya saṅkhāra,*** i.e., *vacī saṅkhāra* are like "snacks" (more than just water in that analogy).
- The more times we break that discipline, the longer it takes to break that habit or *gati*. That is why we need to be mindful of our thoughts, speech, and actions all the time. That is the key to *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.

11. For example, one can break the addiction to drugs in a shorter time (say a month) if he has the discipline to stop taking it AND also stop thinking about it.

- If he stops taking the drug but goes on enjoying thinking about it (*vacī saṅkhāra*), it will not work. He may go on without using drugs for months and months, but one day, he may lose the resolve and go back to drugs.
- That happens to a lot of people addicted to different things like alcohol, smoking, or even over-eating. They may temporarily stop those activities, but months later they break it. **That is because they had not stopped generating *vacī saṅkhāra* or engaging in *upādāna* for that actively.**

Breaking the *Taṇhā* to *Upādāna* Step

12. The following chart illustrates the processes involved.

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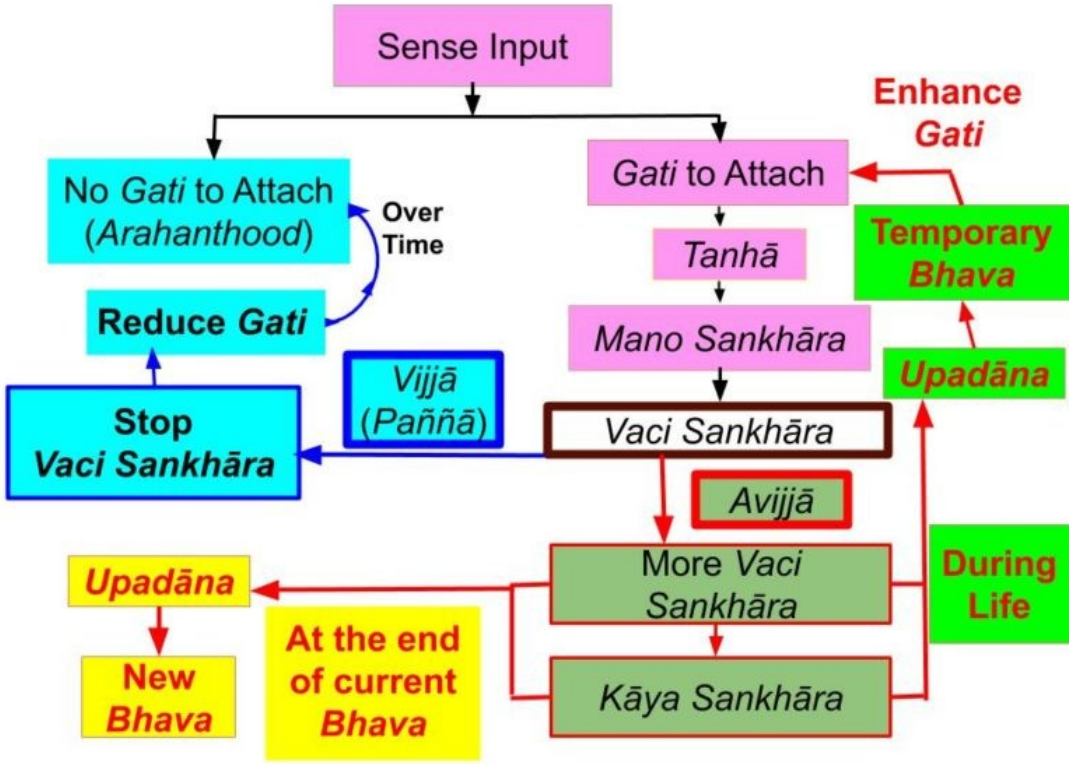

Chart of Taṇhā and Upādāna

For a pdf file for printing: "WebLink: PDF File: Taṇhā and Upādāna."

- **As we can see, the key is to stop generating *vacī saṅkhāra*. As soon as we become aware of "bad thoughts" we need to stop them. Then, over time, that "bad *gati*" will reduce in strength and eventually disappear.**
- Therefore, by being mindful and acting with *paññā* (wisdom, which is *vijjā* or the opposite of *avijjā*), one can reduce *upādāna* and gradually get rid of bad *gati*.
- **We can also see that, in addition to contributing to bad *gati*, it is those *vacī saṅkhāra* that make one grasp a new "bad *bhava*" at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.**

Basis of *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpāna* Bhāvanā

13. That is the basis of the *Satipaṭṭhāna* (and *Ānāpāna*) *bhāvanā;* see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?" and "Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."

- If we are mindful, we can immediately become aware of a "bad thought" at the *vacī saṅkhāra* stage. Thereby, we CAN stop the *upādāna* step, i.e., we can decide not to "pull it closer."
- For example, if we see an attractive person, we may automatically start looking at him/her. But once we become aware of it, we can look away, and start thinking about something else.
- In another extreme example, we may get angry with someone and may start saying something harsh. But as soon as we realize that we are going back to our "bad old habit", we can even stop in the mid-sentence. If we realize our mistake even after saying something bad, we NEED TO apologize for our harsh speech. That may be difficult to do in the beginning, but that is the only way to get rid of such bad habits.

14. When we start controlling the CRITICAL *upādāna* step, our *gati* will slowly change. Then, with time, the first step of "*taṇhā*" will reduce, and eventually go away.

- That is the basis of *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditations.

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Taṇhā to *Upādāna* to Bad *Gati*

15. As we have discussed before, a poison bottle sitting on a table will not do us any harm. It can kill someone only if he/she takes it and drinks.

- It is the same with *upādāna*. There could be many "pleasing thing" out there in the world. But if we understand the *anicca* nature (that those things will only lead to suffering at the end), then our minds will not crave for them. That will not *upādāna*.
- In an example, we know that some flies who attracted to light get burned. They don't know that even if the shiny light looks attractive, it can kill them. In the same way, a fish sees only the bait. It does not see the hook.
- We don't touch a hot stove that is glowing red, because we know that it can burn us.
- But most of us don't realize that sense pleasures will eventually lead only to suffering. Of course, one needs to take care of the extreme sense-pleasures first. As I always say, it is a step-by-step process; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

16. Gradually controlling *upādāna* is the way to reduce bad *gati*, cultivate good *gati*, and eventually get rid *taṇhā*.

- Removal of *taṇhā* is the same as removing *anusaya*.
- To be more effective in this, one must also reduce *avijjā* by learning Dhamma, and specifically by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature).

Cultivating Good *Gati* via *Vacī Saṅkhāra*

17. Of course, it works in the reverse too. We can cultivate "good *gati*" by constantly thinking about related things.

- For example, if a Dhamma concept comes to the mind, we should continue with it. **Then it will become a habit to think about Dhamma concepts.**
- Nowadays, when I get up, the first thing that comes to my mind is a Dhamma concept or a problem that I had been thinking about the previous day.

Summary

18. Finally, there are two things one must do to make progress on the Path.

- One is to reduce *avijjā* by learning Dhamma.
- The other is to reduce *upādāna* by controlling *vacī saṅkhāra* as we discussed above.
- If we do both, the progress will be much faster.

3.4.7 Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma

November 14, 2018; revised November 16, 2018 (#3 and #6)

Difference Between *Akusala* and *Pāpa Kamma*

1. While *akusala kamma* are "immoral deeds", *pāpa kamma* are "**highly** immoral deeds." **However, there is a huge difference.**

- In some English translations that I have seen, both *pāpa kamma* and *akusala kamma* are translated as, "bad deeds."

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- It is critical to understand that if one has not removed the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, it is POSSIBLE for one to commit *pāpa kamma*.

2. As we have discussed before, *moha* is the stronger version of *avijjā*. If one has *moha*, then one also has *lobha* and *dosa*, which are stronger versions of *rāga* (*kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga*) and *paṭigha*; see, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccandha, Kāmarāga" and "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijjā."

- We know that *akusal-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles start with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," and NOT "*moha paccayā saṅkhāra*."
- Before one starts focusing on understanding *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles, one must have reduced *moha* to *avijjā* level.

3. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (starting with *avijjā*) describes processes that lead to births in the *sugati* or "good realms" (human realm and above), as well as births in *dugati* or "bad realms" or *apāyā* (the four lowest realms).

- One does need to apply *Paṭicca Samuppāda* to determine births done with *pāpa kamma,* but it is not even necessary: they INVARIABLY lead to births in the *apāyā*.
- Put it in another way, *pāpa kamma* done with those **highly potent *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*** ALWAYS lead to births in the *apāyā*.
- The bottom line is that one is **capable** of doing *pāpa kamma* (does not mean one will always do) as long as one has one or more the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. When one gets rid of all those *micchā diṭṭhi,* one does not have *moha* anymore; it is reduced to *avijjā*.

Sutta Descriptions – What Are *Pāpa Kamma*?

4. *Pāpa kamma* are described in several *suttā*, but let us focus on the WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Pāpadhamma Sutta (AN 4.207). I will just provide the translation to save space.

"*Bhikkhus*, who is a **highly immoral person (*pāpo*)**? **One who is engaged in the destruction of life or initiates, encourages, praises, helps destruction of life (in a habitual way)** is a highly immoral person destined to be born in the *apāyā*…."

- The rest of the *sutta* lists six MORE deeds in the same way: **Taking what is not given, sexual misconduct, immoral speech, Intoxication (drinking, taking drugs, etc), and *micchā diṭṭhi*.**
- For example, the full description of the last one is: **One who has *micchā diṭṭhi* or initiates, encourages, praises, encourages others to have such views (in a habitual way).**
- It is important to note that just one action does not make one a "*pāpo*" or a "highly immoral person." There is a second related *sutta*: "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiya Pāpadhamma Sutta (AN 4.208)."

(By the way, I just realized that I have been writing *micchā diṭṭhi* as *micchā diṭṭhi* in many posts. I will try to make the correction in existing posts. It is not a big error, but it is always good to follow the *Tipiṭaka* words as they are written).

5. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Duccarita Vipāka Sutta (AN 8.40)" is another *sutta* that state eight immoral actions that could make one born in the *apāyā*. "*Duccarita*" means "highly immoral character" so a "***duccarita puggala***" means the same as "***pāpo***" or "a highly immoral person."

Here is the translation of that *sutta*.

(1) "*Bhikkhus*, the **destruction of life**, **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated**, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and to the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the *vipāka*, one will also have a short life span.

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(2) "**Taking what is not given**, **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated**, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and to the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the *vipāka*, one is likely to face loss of wealth.

(3) "**Sexual misconduct**, **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated**, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and to the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the *vipāka*, one will also be exposed to enmity and rivalry.

(4) "**False speech (per Dhamma, not strictly lying)**, **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated**, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and to the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the *vipāka*, one will also be exposed to false accusations.

(5) "**Divisive speech**, **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated**, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and to the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the *vipāka*, one will also be exposed to being separated from one's loved ones.

(6) "**Harsh speech**, **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated**, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and to the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the *vipāka*, one will also be exposed to disagreeable sounds.

(7) "**Idle chatter**, **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated**, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and to the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the *vipāka*, one will also be exposed to others distrusting one's words.

(8) "**Intoxication (drinking, taking drugs, etc)**, **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated**, is conducive to rebirths in hell, to the animal realm, and to the sphere of hungry ghosts; when one is born as a human after paying off most of the *vipāka*, one will also be exposed mental problems."

- There are many more *suttā* that discuss *pāpa kamma* and their consequences being rebirth in the *apāyā,* for example, AN 10.211 through AN 10. 220.

6. There is also a set of *suttā* (AN 10.211 through AN 10. 220) that state that *dasa akusala* (taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views or *micchā diṭṭhi*) lead to rebirth in the *apāyā.*

- Therefore, ***pāpa kamma* are the same as *dasa akusala* done with *micchā diṭṭhi*.** That means having *micchā diṭṭhi* makes one's mind "covered", i.e., one has *moha*.
- It is important to note that some of *dasa akusala* can be done without *micchā diṭṭhi,* and those are done with just *avijjā*.

Description of *Pāpa Kamma*

7. Those immoral actions in #4 through #6 above are basically all *pāpa kamma*.

- It is important to note the emphasize on the phrase, " **repeatedly pursued, developed, and cultivated."**
- For example, those who habitually go fishing and hunting would belong to this category. Also see #14 below.
- Another way to say that is to say "cultivating (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra*." One does such an action because it becomes one's *gati*, i.e., it becomes a habit and it contributes to one's character.
- These are essentially the same as the descriptions in #4 above.

8. I want to emphasize that all of the following four actions contribute in each of the above listed immoral actions in #4 through #6 above (If done on a regular basis):

- Doing it.

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- Assisting another person to do it.
- Ordering (or instructing) another person to do it.
- Praising someone who is doing it.

9. **When one has *moha*, one is capable of doing *pāpa kamma* without any remorse**. That means one is not even close to being released from the *apāyā*.

- **This is a very simple fact that can save a lot of wasted time for many people.** It is absolutely a waste of time to even try to understand *Paṭicca Samuppāda* if one still has any of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, some of which are commonly held; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- I know I am going to make many people unhappy by making these statements. But it is better to learn the truth as soon as possible. **We all have been trapped in this suffering-filled rebirth process for an unimaginable time, simply because we have not been able to understand this key point.**

Nature's Laws, Not Buddha's Rules

10. These are not rules made up by the Buddha. Reducing *moha* to *avijjā* level means one is not totally ignorant of the wider world of 31 realms. That REQUIRES an understanding of the laws of *kamma*, which in turn REQUIRES an understanding of the wider view of the Buddha (existence of 31 realms) AND a belief in the rebirth process.

- That is because without that wider world view, it is not possible for laws of *kamma* to be effective: If there is no rebirth process, there are many things that cannot be explained; see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"."
- Nothing happens without causes and conditions. Explanation of what happens around us REQUIRES the wider world view. Only a Buddha with a perfectly purified mind can discover these hidden laws of Nature.
- Many people, especially in the Western world, have a hard time believing the above. They think Buddha is just "a better philosopher" who just came up with his own "world view." However, if one can spend time examining Buddha Dhamma — including *Abhidhamma* — it will become clear.

11. Buddha Dhamma is self-consistent. The ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are not made up by the Buddha. They really go against the nature of this world: *kamma* (actions) have consequences (*vipāka*); there is a rebirth process; there is a *para loka* where *gandhabbas* live; there are instantaneous births in realms that we do not see, etc.

- Just because those are not amenable to our crude senses, that does not mean they are not true. In fact, as science makes progress, more and more teachings of the Buddha are being confirmed; see, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

Sorting Out the Priorities

12. As I have discussed before, making progress is a step-by-step process. Before one can start on the Noble Eightfold Path, one must complete the mundane eightfold path where one gets rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

- A critical aspect of attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage is the comprehension of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, how root causes lead to their effects where conditions (*paccayā*) play a key role.

13. These days, many people just start by trying to understand deep *suttā* that REQUIRE an understanding of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* and *Tilakkhaṇa.*

- However, many of them (including many *bhikkhus*) do not believe in rebirth, or that the concepts of *para loka* and *gandhabba* are valid. They erroneously believe that *gandhabba* is a *Mahayāna* concept,

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but neither them or *Mahāyānists* understand what is meant by *antarabhava*; see, "Mental Body – Gandhabba."

- Getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage CANNOT be done by just reading a few posts. One has to make a real effort to understand the key concepts involved, and live a moral life.

14. Making progress on the Path requires working on two fronts:
    - One needs to understand the key basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma like *dasa akusala* and *micchā diṭṭhi,* before tackling *Tilakkhaṇa* and *Paṭicca Samuppāda.*
    - One needs to live a moral life and "the level of morality" will automatically increase as one's understanding gets deeper and deeper.
    - Therefore, those two aspects go hand-in-hand. One cannot just focus on one aspect. Both are necessary.
15. It is also a good idea to understand some key details of how laws of *kamma* work.
    - Just because one kills some insects when doing yard work does not contribute significantly at all. The intention plays a key role as discussed in: "What is Intention in Kamma?."
    - Furthermore, killing a human is much more significant than killing many, many animals because a human life is much more difficult to get; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

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3.5 Sorting out Some Key Pali Terms (Taṇhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)

- Kāma Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā
- Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance
- Lobha, Raga and Kamaccanda, Kamaraga
- Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā
- What is Avijjā (Ignorance)?
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Indriya and Āyatana – Big Difference
- Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paṭicca Samuppāda
- Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)
- Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra
- Panca Indriya and Panca Bala – Five Faculties and Five Powers
- Kāmaccandha and Icca – Being Blinded by Cravings

3.5.1 Kama Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā

Revised November 9, 2019

Kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava taṇhā are three incorrectly translated key Pāli words.

Taṇhā is Not Craving

1. *Taṇhā* is "getting attached to things in this world" via greed, hate, and ignorance. Most times, it is incorrectly translated as "craving."

- The word *taṇhā* comes from "*thān*" + "*hā*," where "thān" rhymes like in "thatch" and means "a place; "hā" means getting attached or fused; see, "Taṇhā – How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance." Note that "*tan*" in *taṇhā* is pronounced like in "thunder."

2. We attach to things because of the ignorance that they can provide lasting happiness; this attachment first manifests in greed. But when someone or something gets in the way, we generate hate; then we attach via hate.

- For example, a teenager wants a car, and his desire builds up with time. He is firmly attached to that idea of getting a car. If a parent refuses, then he may generate anger and even hate towards the parent. Now he is attached to two places (to the vehicle via desire and the the parent via anger.)

Kāma Taṇhā

3. In *kāma loka*, all five physical sense faculties are present. Getting attach to anything via the five senses is ***kāma taṇhā***.

- Furthermore, attachment arising from the desire to enjoy taste, smell, and body touch are exclusively restricted to the *kāma loka*. Those three require a "solid body" as we can imagine.
- In the *rūpa lokas*, living beings do not have "solid bodies." Yet, they can see and hear without having physical eyes or ears.

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- Therefore, in the *rūpa lokas*, *taṇhā* arise only due to sight and sound. Thus an *Anāgāmī*, who will be born in a *rūpa loka* has some *rūpa taṇhā* and *sadda taṇhā* because he/she may like to see a Buddha statue or listen to a discourse.

Bhava Taṇhā

4. ***Bhava taṇhā*** arises from attachment to "any existence." Thus *bhava taṇhā* is present in *kāma loka*, *rūpa loka*, and *arūpa loka*, i.e., all 31 realms.

- Even in the *kāma loka*, there may be people who do not enjoy the "*kāma*" or sense pleasures; but they still want to live a quiet, peaceful life. They mostly have *bhava taṇhā*. They may like to be in a secluded place, cultivating *jhāna*; that is their desired "*bhava*." If they develop *jhānā*, they will be born in *rūpa loka* or *arūpa loka* due to their new "*gati*."
- There are other subtle forms of "*bhava*" too. Some like to become famous, earn a title, to get a high-profile job or a responsibility, etc. These are not associated with sensual pleasures and are also due to *bhava taṇhā*.

Vibhava Taṇhā

5. ***Vibhava taṇhā*** arises from the wrong view of materialism (*ucceda diṭṭhi* in the time of the Buddha; *ucceda* pronounced "*uchchêda*"). One believes that one ceases to exist at death. One believes that the mind is a byproduct of the body (brain). And thus, when the body dies, that is the end of story. Thus one believes that one needs to just enjoy the pleasures of this life before dying.

- Therefore one believes that one needs to enjoy the pleasures of this life before dying. Such a person would narmally have as *kāma taṇhā* well.
- It is easy to have *vibhava taṇhā* in modern society. That is especially true if one has not heard about the Buddha's message about a more complex world with 31 realms and a rebirth process. Our human sensory faculties cannot access such "hidden" aspects of this world. One believes only what one sees.
- It takes an effort to verify that indeed the more comprehensive world view is needed to EXPLAIN all that we can experience; see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"."
- Many immoral acts are done with *ucceda diṭṭhi* (or materialism or nihilism) because one believes that everything in this world is for one's enjoyment.
- Even though it is evident that animals cry with pain when being killed, that is not of any consequences in their minds. The logic is that If this birth is the one and the last, there is no possibility that one could face the same fate in the future.

6. The connection of *ucceda* (or *uccheda*) *diṭṭhi* to *vibhava taṇhā* is made in Section 3.2.4 *Ucchedavada* in the *WebLink: Suttacentral: Brahmajala Sutta*.

- It is an excellent idea to contemplate the fact that there is a difference between cutting vegetables and killing animals for food. An animal is a living being and feels pain.
- Then how is an animal different from us? The difference is only at the intellectual level. We have higher intelligence only because we have been fortunate to get this temporary human life because of a previous good deed.
- In the next birth, we could be born an animal; it depends on the types of *kamma* that we have accumulated. It takes time to go through such an analysis, and to convince oneself of the ability of the Buddha Dhamma to provide "good explanations." Many people do not take the needed time to do such an investigation.

Connection to Magga Phala

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7. Let us see how each type of *taṇhā* decreases as one progresses on the Path.

- When one starts on the Path and makes an effort to understand the message of the Buddha, one starts losing all three types of *taṇhā* gradually. With time one can feel that change and the resulting *nirāmisa sukha* that comes from it. It may take a few days, months, or even a year to see a significant difference depending on the individual.
- *Vibhava taṇhā* is removed at *Sotāpanna* stage. It is essential to realize that one is bound to have *vibhava taṇhā* if one does not believe in the rebirth process.
- *Kāma taṇhā* leads to various levels of attachment that are removed step-by-step in the four stages of Nibbāna. *Kāmaccandha* removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage. *Kāma rāga* reduced at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage. See the next post, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccandha, Kāmarāga."
- As long as one is reborn anywhere in the 31 realms, one has *bhava taṇhā*. Thus, *bhava taṇhā* is eliminated only at the *Arahant* stage.

Connection to *Āsava*/*Anusaya*

8. Finally, two relevant points:

- It is important to note that these three "tendencies to bind" (*kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava taṇhā*) arise due to *kāmasava, bhavāsava*, and *vibhavāsava* . *Tanhā* occurs due to *āsava*: One gets "attached" because one has deeply- embedded cravings for worldly things.
- Sometimes *vibhavasava* is split into two: *diṭṭhasava* (*diṭṭhi āsava*) and *avijjāsava* (*avijjā āsava*). That is because *vibhavāsava* arises due to wrong views and ignorance.
- *Āsava*/*Anusaya* discussed in detail at, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

Next, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccandha, Kāmarāga", …….

3.5.2 Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance

Revised October 31, 2015; October 7, 2017; August 24, 2019

In the previous post, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways," we discussed how feelings arise in two ways, and one type of feelings occur due to our own volition, i.e., due to *taṇhā*.

What is *Taṇhā*?

1. In the post, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction," we discussed the origin of the term "*taṇhā.*" It means getting fused or strongly attached. The word *taṇhā* comes from "*thán*" meaning "place" + "*hā*" meaning getting fused/welded or attached (ඇලීම in Sinhala). Note that "*tan*" in *taṇhā* pronounced like in "thunder."

- Here we will see how that happens according to the natural process of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

What Is in the World?

2. *Cha Chakka Sutta* describes how we experience the world. But in standard translations, the real meaning does not come out; see, for example: "WebLink: suttacentral: Cha Chakka Sutta (MN 148)", where one can also find translations in several languages.

We get to know ANYTHING about the external world via ONLY six ways:

- We see *vaṇṇa rūpa* (visual things) with our eyes.
- *Sadda rūpa* (sounds) heard with our ears.

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- We smell *gandha rūpa* (odors) with our nose.
- *Rasa rūpa* (food) tasted with our tongue.
- We touch *phoṭṭhabba rūpa* (touchable things) with our bodies.
- Finally, we contemplate or think about *dhammā* (memories, concepts) with our minds.

That is what the Buddha called "*sabba*" or ALL. **Our whole world is what we experience with our six senses.** Take a moment and contemplate this. Is there anything else "in this world" other than those six listed above?

3. It is essential to realize that these INITIAL sense inputs come to us via *kamma vipāka*. **Then based on whether we have *āsava*/*anusaya* (or corresponding *gati* or habits), WE MAY act with *avijjā* to pursue that sensory input.**

- Our greedy, hateful, or ignorant thoughts arise when we make contact with the outside world with one or more of these six senses. *Kamma vipāka* lead to sensory inputs. But not all sense inputs lead to acting with *avijjā*. (**Please take time to think and contemplate on these ideas as you go along. It is critical to get these ideas to proceed further**).
- That critical fact becomes apparent when we do not think along the lines of an "established self" or "no-self." There is no "person" who has *avijjā* all the time. *Avijjā* arises due to āsava/anusaya depending on the sense input; see, "'Self' and 'no-self': A Simple Analysis."

How Do We Get Attached?

4. How we get "bonded" to something that we experience? Let us take, for example, someone listening to a new song. In this case, the sound (*sadda*) impinging on the ear (*sota*) leads to sound consciousness. Several things happen in a fraction of a second. This VERY FAST sequence is:

(i). "*Sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ*," where, *sota* is ear; *sadde* is sound (song), *uppajjati* means gives rise to, *sota viññāṇa* is hearing consciousness, and *paṭicca* here means just the fact that sound makes contact with the ears, and NOT "pati + icca" or "willingly getting bonded. Thus,

- "Due to the sound of the song received by the ear, gives rise to sound consciousness."
- The mind does not generate any *saṅkhāra* in assessing that sound. It just RECEIVES the sound signal.

We need to have a liking for something to be interested in it. Every day, we see a million pictures, sounds, etc., **but we remember only a selected number, and these are the ones that lead to *taṇhā***. "Getting interested" step is next:

(ii). "*Tiṇṇaṃ san gati phasso*";

Here, we need to spend a bit of time explaining the terms: "*san*" means defilements or fuel for *sansāric* journey (see, "What is "San"?"), and "*gati*" (pronounced "gathi") are *sansāric* habits (see, "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas"); thus "*san gati*" means *sansāric* habits; "*phassa*" means contact, and "*tiṇṇaṃ*" (pronounced "thinnan") means three. Please go back and read those two links if you do not remember those terms.

- In summary: Those three things (sound, ear, and sound consciousness) lead the mind to make contact with one's *sansāric* habits. **If the sensory input matches with his "*gati*" or "likings,"** he will **instantly be attached.** Within a split second of hearing a few lines of the song, the teenager is "hooked"; his mind becomes absorbed in it.
- It is really at this step that the teenager becomes interested in the song. Then he gets attached to it (via "*pati* + *icca*") BECAUSE it matches his *gati*.

Then comes the next line:

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(iii). "*Samphassa jā vedanā*" (this comes from "*san phassa jā vedanā*"; it rhymes as "*samphassa*") means this "contact with *san gati*" leads to feelings.

- As long as one has matching "*gati*," the corresponding feelings arise automatically. We cannot stop it, at least in the initial *cittā* or thoughts. But we can certainly stop progressing further and uttering bad speech or doing immoral acts.
- That is why it is essential to get rid of bad "*gati.*" *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* describes how one becomes a "*sampajanno*" by figuring out how to get rid of bad "*gati*"; see, "Kayanupassana – The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)."
- The way to getting rid of such "bad *gati*" is to be fully aware of our speech and actions and stop such unsuitable speech or actions. That is what *Kāyānupassanā* is.

That is a VERY IMPORTANT step. The resulting feeling depends on whether someone will get attached to the subject matter via greed or hate. If it is greed (or liking) as in the case of the teenager listening to a song he likes, he gets a *sukha vedanā* (happy feeling). On the other hand, if it was a heavy metal song, and if his grandfather hears it, the grandfather may instantly form a *dukha vedanā* (unhappy feeling). That is if he has a dislike for heavy metal songs (different *gati* than the teenager). That is the reason that different people feel differently about the same "event" (a picture, sound, smell, taste, touch, or a thought about something).

Attachment (*Taṇhā*) Leads to Existences (*Bhava*)

Let us further analyze the above example:

The teenage could be walking a noisy street, but if he likes the song, he may not even hear any other sound. He will get "attached" to the song and be absorbed in it. Even after the song, he thinks about it in many ways. He may want to find the identity of the singer, may wish to see whether the singer has more albums, how he is going to tell his friends about this, etc. That is the "*sansāric* wheeling" process, see, "Nibbana – Stopping of the sansāric Vehicle," where we discussed how one becomes an *Ariya* by taking the wheels off of the *sansāric* vehicle (*riya*).

Now the teenager is attached (i.e., forms *taṇhā*):

(iv). "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhava, …*"

The song became his existence or "*bhava*" (i.e., total awareness, existence) while he was listening. He does not just listen, enjoy it while it lasts and moves onto something else. RATHER, he wants to hear it again, maybe hear more songs like that too. That is *taṇhā*. Because of that, he starts craving for it again and again, and also crave songs similar to that. Maybe he would form a liking for anything associated with the song: its composer, singer, and may join the singer's fan club. His mind spends a lot of time "wheeling around" or "thinking about" things associated with the song; temporarily, his existence or "*bhava*" becomes that song.

(v). Now let us go back to (i) of the sequence:

"*Sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sota viññāṇaṃ,*" or "Due to the sound of the song received by the ear, gives rise to sound consciousness."

- That is just the ear receiving the sound. The teenage may hear many other sounds on the road. The next step is a critical one for him. Would he get interested in that song?
- "*Tiṇṇaṃ san gati phasso.*" Out of all the sounds that come in through the ears, he will be attached only to the one that matches his "*gati.*"

Thus we get attracted to something due to our "old habits" (see, "Habits and Goals"), which are even likely to be habits formed over many lives (see, "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas").

(vi). Now at the step #iv above, the sequence ends with further strengthening "his tendency (*gati*)" to listen to this type of music; that is *taṇhā*. **That is a crucial point**. If we have an ingrained liking for something, we

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will get attached it. Furthermore, repeated attachments will strengthen such an affection or habit or "*gati.*" That is the law of attraction (see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)"). Thus it becomes a vicious circle. That is why it is hard to break habits (good or bad).

Summary

5. Please spend some time contemplating the above material. It is best if you can analyze your situations and see how *taṇhā* arises via greed (likes) and hate (dislikes). I will discuss more cases before moving on to discuss *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in detail. It is VERY IMPORTANT to understand these fundamental ideas.

- In the earlier post, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Overview," we pointed out that *Arahant* experiences suffering only due to *kamma vipāka.* An *Arahant* does not generate sorrow or happiness via the mechanism discussed in this post; he/she will not have any "immoral or sense craving" *gati*. In this case, "*samphassa jā vedanā*" does not lead to *sukha* or *dukha vedanā.*
- We, on the other hand, generate "self-induced" suffering and happiness via this mechanism. Any happiness generated will not be not long-lasting. This mechanism is, for example, the leading cause for many "sleepless nights" or even depression. Let us discuss this next.

Next, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Sex", ……..

3.5.3 Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccandha, Kāmarāga

Revised April 28, 2018; November 9, 2019

There are various names for greed in Pāli. Each has a different meaning and the differences are significant. Let us look at the two terms "*lobha*" and "*rāga*" first.

What is *Lobha*?

1. ***Lobha*** is the stronger term of the two. The word *lobha* comes from "*lo*" + "*bha*" where "lo" implies "strong attraction" (like that of an ant to honey) "*bha*" is for "*bhava*" (existence). One is firmly attached to this world with *lobha*.

- *Lobha* is the extreme form of greed. One can do highly-immoral deeds or "*pāpa kamma*" with *lobha*. Such *pāpa kamma* could make one destined to the *apāyā*. See, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."
- When someone has *lobha*, it is exhibited in two ways:
  i. One wishes that all the "riches" should come to oneself and not to others (one may be already "rich", but wants more for oneself).
  ii. One is not willing to donate even a little bit to the needy and does not share with even the family. It is said that no matter how much one has, some people want more. However, even poor people can have *lobha*, especially for the things others have.

2. It is hard to quantify these, but the idea is that "*lobha*" is the manifestation of the overbearing attachment one has to worldly things.

- *Lobha* is one of 52 *cetasika* (mental factors).
- *Abhijjā* (extreme greed) is the same as *lobha*.

Rāga is a Weaker Form of *Lobha*

3. ***Rāga*** arises also because one believes there are pleasures to be had in staying in *saṃsāra* (rebirth process). But one would NOT do highly-immoral things with just *rāga*. Here "*rā*" means "giving priority" or

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"enjoying" a sensory experience. And "*ga*" means to touch or bind. One would like to keep enjoying that pleasure.

- When one is born rich (or acquires wealth), and enjoys life with sense pleasures, that is not *lobha*, that is just *rāga*. Such a person is not doing harm to the others. However, that *rāga* COULD have *lobha* too.
- With *lobha*, one could do things highly immoral deeds (even if one is rich). If one is willing to kill, steal, lie, etc. to gain something one desires, then those are "*apāyagāmī*" *kamma*. One does not necessarily have to carry out these actions or speech. Just thinking about it and making *abhisaṅkhāra* (planning or even enjoying such thoughts) itself is *lobha*. Thus even the poorest person can have *lobha*.

What is *Kāma* and *Kāma Rāga*?

4. Pleasing things in this world are NOT *kāma.* Attaching to such things and generating conscious thoughts about them (*saṅkappa*) is *kāma.* In other words, *kāma* means attachment to the sense pleasure available in the *kāma loka,* i.e., those available for the gratification of the five senses.

- Then giving priority to *kāma* is *kāma rāga.*
- When one has ***kāma rāga***, one likes to enjoy sense pleasures, but not at the expense of others. Thus when husband and wife engage in sexual activity, that is due to *kāma rāga*.
- Even the *devas* in *deva loka* have *kāma rāga.* They like to enjoy sensory pleasures, but they don't crave for what others have. Thus, they do not have *lobha*.
- Also, see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha" for more details.

Blinded by *Kāma* Is *Kāmaccandha*

5. Then there is *kāmacchanda* which is stronger than *kāma rāga*. It is like *lobha* but focused on *kāma*.

- ***Kāmaccandha*** is the highest level of that attachment. Here one is willing to do abhorrent acts (killing, raping, etc) to satisfy one's desires.
- When one has developed *kāma* to the *kāmacchanda* level, one becomes unaware of the bad consequences of one's actions. ***Kāmaccandha* comes from *kāma* + *icca* + *andha,* or "being blinded by sense attractions."** Here, "*icca*" is liking and "*andha*" is blind. [***andha*** :[adj.] 1. blind; 2. foolish.]
- It is said that "one loses one's mind" when blinded by attachment to sense pleasures, i.e., one cannot think rationally when one has *kāmacchanda.*
- Thus, one needs to be mindful not to let one's *kāma rāga* develop into *kāmacchanda*, which is one of the five hindrances that "cover the mind."
- Inappropriate sexual activity (affairs outside marriage and rape) are done with *kāmacchanda,* i.e. when one becomes blind with *kāma.*
- *Kāmaccandha* is pronounced "kāmachchandha."

Connection to Stages of *Magga Phala*

6. It is also helpful to see how these different levels of greed are removed at various stages of *Nibbāna*. This will give a better sense of differentiation.

- A *Sotāpanna* has permanently removed *kāmacchanda* and also does not have the worst level of *lobha*. Thus he/she will not engage in "*apāyagāmī*" acts to gain sense pleasures. A *Sotāpanna* has not given up *kāma rāga*.
- A *Sakadāgāmī* also has *kāma rāga to a lesser extent*; this is why he could be reborn in the *kāma loka* for one more time.

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- An Anāgāmī has removed *kāma rāga*; he will not return to any of the 11 eleven *kāma loka* realms, including the human and *deva* realms, and will be reborn in the *suddhāvāsa* in the *rūpa loka*, and will attain *Nibbāna* there.
- However, an *Anāgāmī* may still enjoy (but not attach to) sense pleasures, i.e., still has *kāma;* see #3 of, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta" . This is a subtle point, but the point is that an *Anāgāmī* would still have the "four greed-based *citta* without wrong views", and that is *kāma*. Those four *akusala cittā* are prevented from arising only for an *Arahant*.

7. Finally, some given up the desire to enjoy pleasures in *kāma loka*, but like the *jhānic* pleasures. They are born in ***rūpa loka*** and ***arūpa loka*** and have ***rūpa rāga*** and ***arūpa rāga***.

- *Rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga* are removed only at the *Arahant* stage, as discussed in "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

Next, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijjā", ……..

3.5.4 Lobha, Dosa, Moha Versus Rāga, Paṭigha, Avijjā

Revised January 2, 2019; revised November 8, 2019

Lobha, *Dosa*, and *Moha*

1. *Lobha* is extreme greed; see, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccandha, Kāmarāga." One is willing to do any immoral act to get what one wants. One can become blind by greed, i.e. *kāmachandha* can arise.

- *Dosa* (or *dvesha*) is the ANGER that arises that arises based on initial *lobha*. Here, dvesha comes from "*devana*" + "*vesha*" — දෙවන වේශය — or second manifestation of *lobha*. We get angry when someone else is in the way of getting what one wants.

2. One acts with *lobha* or *dosa* because one has *moha*. *Moha* comes from "*muva*" + "*hā*" which symbolizes a vessel with its mouth closed. Thus one cannot see what is inside. In the same way, one acts with *moha* because one is unaware that such immoral acts will have horrible consequences. One's mind is blocked dark (cannot "see" clearly).

- When one has not removed the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, one could act with *moha*. The 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are discussed in "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- In the *pañcanīvaraṇa*, *lobha* and *dosa* are listed as *abhijjā* [*abhijjhā*] and *vyāpāda* represent *lobha* and *dosa*. Those are synonymous terms for *lobha* and *dosa;* see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

Pāpa Kamma Done With *Lobha*, *Dosa*, and *Moha*

3. **Actions carried out with *lobha, dosa*, and *moha* are called *pāpa kamma*.** They are strong versions of *akusala kamma*. Such *pāpa kamma* make one eligible to be born in the lower four worlds.

- Actions done with *dosa* are the worst with *niraya* (hell) as the possible destination, and *lobha* is cause for rebirth in the *preta* (*peta*) *loka* of hungry ghosts. Acts done with both *lobha* and *dosa* have all three "*san*" (since moha is always there), and thus lead to rebirth in the animal or "*tirisan*" ("*tiri*"+"*san*" or all three "*san*") realm.
- As one engages in moral actions and gets rid of one's tendency ("*gathi*") to do immoral actions, one starts "cooling down" and one's likelihood of being born in the lower four realms to diminish.

Rāga, *Paṭigha*, *Avijjā*

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4. However, *Lobha, dosa, moha* **reduce** to *rāga, paṭigha, avijjā* levels when one attains the ***Sotāpanna*** stage. All *pañcanīvaraṇa* permanently removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- Of course, one is now able to "see" the real nature of the world (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) to some extent (one is not blind), and thus *moha* is reduced to *avijjā* level.
- As explained in the previous post, *rāga* is the craving for sense pleasures. Of course, there are different levels here too, but in general, this level of greed makes one eligible only for birth in the human and *deva* worlds. *Paṭigha* is a lower level of hate, more like "friction." One may get annoyed when someone and even say something in return, but will never do anything "horrible" that makes one eligible to be born in the lower four realms.

Kāma Rāga is One Type of *Rāga*

5. At the next level of *Nibbāna* of the ***Sakadāgāmī*** level, *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are both reduced to the extent that one will not be reborn in the human level, but only *deva* or higher realms.

- *Kāma rāga* is the *rāga* or craving for sense pleasures in the *kāma loka*. There are two levels of *kāma rāga*: *vatthu kāma* (craving for OWNING objects that provide sense pleasures) and *keles* or *klesha kāma* (craving for sense pleasures is there, but not necessary to "OWN THEM"). A *Sakadāgāmī* has lost the *vatthu kāma*, but still has *keles* (or *klesha*) *kāma*, i.e., he/she still craves for sense pleasures, but has no desire to "own them." For example, a *Sakadāgāmī* may still like to live in a beautiful house with comforts, but the desire to "own the house" is not there.
- Above the human realm, (in *deva* and *brahma* realms), beings have very subtle bodies. They are not "solid" bodies like ours that are subjected to decay or diseases. Thus they never get sick or visibly old (but of course death is inevitable to anyone anywhere in the 31 realms). That is why a *Sakadāgāmī* is said to be healthy forever (after human life).

Kāma Rāga is Removed at the *Anāgāmi* stage

6. When one attains the ***Anāgāmī*** stage, both *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* will no longer be present. Thus one will not even be offended by harsh words/acts and will not retaliate. An *Anāgāmī* will never be born anywhere in the *kāma loka* including the *deva* worlds; they are reborn only in *brahma* realms.

- While a *Sotāpanna* may still have some tendency to give priority to sense pleasures at certain times, all such habits are reduced at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage.

7. For an *Anāgāmī*, only *rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga* will be present. That means a desire for *jhānic* pleasures in the *rūpa* and *arūpa* loka (the four *rūpa jhānā* and four *arūpa jhānā*). And he/she still has *avijjā* left to a certain extent together with ***māna*** **(some level of pride) and *uddhacca* (some degree of sense of superiority).**

- All these disappear at the ***Arahant*** stage. An *Arahant* is free from even a trace of defilement. Therefore, an *Arahant* will never be reborn in "this world" of *kāma loka*, *rūpa loka*, or *arūpa loka* (anywhere in the 31 realms).
- That is why it is not productive to meditate trying to get rid of the sense of "self" before the *Sotāpanna* stage. Many people incorrectly interpret *anatta* as "no self." But the feeling of "me" is removed only at the Arahant stage, after the *Anāgāmī* stage. As long as ***māna*** and ***uddhacca*** are there, the sense of "me" is still there.

Key to Getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage

8. To get to the *Sotāpanna* stage, one needs to realize the "three characteristics of nature." One is the true meaning of ***anicca*** (that there is no point in hurting others to achieve temporary sense pleasures.) The second is that one will be subjected to much suffering (***dukkha***) without realizing the *anicca* nature. The third is that

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until one has that mindset, one is truly helpless in this round of rebirths (***anatta***). Until one comprehends them, it is POSSIBLE for any of the following to happen in the rebirth process:

- One could act with extreme greed (***lobha***) to the extent of a hungry ghost (*peta*). Thus, one could get such a birth.
- Act with extreme hate (***dosa***) in the heat of the moment, and could even kill a human. That can lead to a rebirth in the *niraya* (hell).
- One may not realize the unfruitfulness of depending on others. That includes cheating/stealing (without trying to make an honest living for oneself.) Thus, a birth in the *asura* realm is possible.
- It is even possible to cultivate "animal *gati*." Those include having sex with young children or being able to kill/hurt others for one's pleasure, etc. In this case, both ***lobha*** and ***dosa*** could be present. Thus one is not released from the animal realm.
- Those are the four lower realms. Thus one will be truly helpless (*anatta*) unless one removes such bad habits ("*gati*"). Until then *dukkha* (suffering) is going to be there in the long-term, if not in this lifetime. Those are the true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

3.5.5 What is Avijjā (Ignorance)?

1. People engage in immoral actions because they highly value the sense pleasures, and are unaware of a better type of happiness called *nirāmisa sukha*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sikha?."

Therefore, they are willing to do even immoral things in order to gain sense pleasures. They do not realize two drawbacks associated with such actions:

- If they hurt others in trying to get what they want, they will have to pay for the consequences with very high interest (law of kamma); these are the immoral acts that could lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms)
- Whatever enjoyment one gets from such sense pleasures are temporary.

These facts come out naturally from the true nature of the world that include the non-stop rebirth process that involves 31 realms and the law of kamma and the causal principle of *paṭicca samuppāda*. It is not possible for anyone to realize these facts by oneself. One has to learn those from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha.

2. What is *avijjā*? It is basically the ignorance of those two facts, even though there is a whole framework of a "world view" behind them. The key ingredients of this "wider world view" are:

- "This world" is much more complex than what is readily observed with our five physical senses, i.e., there are 31 realms instead of the just the two (human realm and the animal realm) that are apparent to us; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- That the true nature of existence in any of the 31 realms is *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."
- That most suffering is encountered in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*).
- And this perpetual birth/rebirth process has no beginning (see, "Infinity – How Big Is It?") and the only way to stop it is to attain the Arahant stage of Nibbāna.
- But by reaching the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna, one can be assured that rebirth in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms) is permanently stopped; see, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than Any King, Emperor, or Billionaire."

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3. The definition of *avijjā* is not understanding the Four Noble Truths. But to understand the Four Noble Truths one needs to see the "true nature of the world", the three characteristics of this world: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

4. In brief, *anicca, dukkha, anatta* mean:

- There is NOTHING in this world that can be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run (*anicca*); thus, after much struggle we only end up with suffering (*dukkha*); thus, all these struggles are in vain and one is helpless (*anatta*).
- The above three characteristics are not just for the human realm: One cannot find any panacea by seeking a better rebirth (even though the realms at and above human realm have less suffering), i.e., none of the 31 realms can provide any lasting happiness, and we are truly helpless (*anatta*).
- In particular, if one does IMMORAL things (killing, stealing, etc) in seeking this illusory happiness, the more one gets trapped in lower realms filled with suffering.
- Unfortunately, the true meanings of *anicca* and *anatta* have been wrongly interpreted as "impermanence" and "no-self"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations," and the follow up posts on the correct interpretations.

5. For anyone willing to dig deeper: *anicca, dikkha, anatta*, are manifestations of the impermanence nature "of this world" as described in many ways:

- In *Abhidhamma*, it is explained how this world is "mind based", and how both the mind and the material phenomena CHANGE with incredible speed.
- This "change" is not random, but is dictated by "cause and effect" or *paṭicca samuppāda*.
- These and others relevant material is discussed at different sections on the site.
- However, it is NOT necessary to learn all those details to achieve some "cooling down" or 'niveema" or even various stages of Nibbāna. One can grasp the concepts of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* via meditation or contemplation on one's own life experiences.

6. When one does not comprehend this "big picture", one makes bad decisions.

- For example, a fish does not see the string or the hook, only sees the worm, and gets into trouble. If it saw the whole picture, with the string and the hook, it may realize that there is something wrong and would not try to grab the worm.
- Just like the fish in the above example, we only see the pleasures to be had in this human life, but do not realize that because of this "apparent pleasures" we are grabbing hold of a world that also include unbearable suffering in the lowest four realms, not to mention the hidden suffering in this life.
- Only a Buddha can see this "bigger picture" and he has shown us not only that bigger picture, but also the reasons why we should believe in that bigger picture. In this website, I hope to provide this evidence in a systematic way.

7. That complex world view **(everything changing moment-to-moment everywhere in those 31 realms)** can be grasped only by a Buddha with a highly-purified mind.Other than a Buddha, a normal human being (no matter how intelligent) is incapable of seeing that whole world view; see, "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem."

- Thus *avijjā* cannot be dispelled by "book knowledge." One needs to comprehend the "true nature of this complex world."
- Even when we are told about it, it is not easy to grasp it, because our minds have been covered with defilements that have been accumulating from an untraceable beginning; see, "Key to Calming the Mind."

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8. Another important factor that keeps many people "in the dark" or "in ignorance"is the wrong impression that Buddha Dhamma is a pessimistic world view. With the pure Dhamma hidden for over a thousand years, several important facts about the Four Noble Truths got distorted:

- When the Buddha said "this world" is filled with suffering he meant the wider world of 31 realms. Also, he did not say, there is suffering ALL THE TIME or in all the realms of existence. In higher realms (realms 6-31), there is actually much more happiness than suffering. Even in the human realm (the 5th realm), there is more happiness than suffering for many people. That is why it is hard for many people to get motivated to examine the message of the Buddha.
- Yet most beings spend most of the time in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*). This is why, ON AVERAGE, the suffering in the *saṃsāra* (cycle of rebirths; see, "Evidence for Rebirth") is much higher compared to any kind of happiness that can be experienced in any realm.
- Together with the wider "world view", the concept of an unimaginably long rebirth process got lost; see, "Sansāric Time Scale." The fact that it is not possible to trace a beginning to this rebirth process is not widely known. In the scale of the *sansāric* time scale, this lifetime of a hundred or so years is negligible. Thus whatever "accomplishment" one achieves, it has a very short duration in the *sansāric* time scale.
- Also, Buddha was just the messenger who conveyed these dismaying FACTS about nature. He discovered the nature's laws, which clearly illustrate that it is not possible to find any LONG-LASTING happiness ANYWHERE in these 31 realms. But he also pointed out how to find a better and permanent kind of happiness.

9. The most important fact that has been lost for hundreds of years is that there is a happiness of a better quality that also is PERMANENT. This is the Nibbānic bliss or the *nirāmisa sukha*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness," "How to Taste Nibbāna," and "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?." And one can start experiencing this nirāmisa sukha even before attaining the Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna; see, "Key to Calming the Mind." For more details, see, "Nirāmisa Sukha."

- Not knowing any of those (and related facts) is *avijjā* (ignorance). If one does not know about those facts, then how can one find a solution to the problem of suffering? Also, since only a Buddha can discover these laws, without hearing the message from another person (or a website!), there is no way anyone can learn all this by oneself, no matter how intelligent one is.

10. The Buddha compared *avijjā* to darkness. One cannot remove darkness forcefully. The ONLY WAY to get rid of darkness is to bring in a light. In the same way, the Buddha explained, ignorance can be removed only via cultivating wisdom.

- No matter what else one does, one will not get rid of ignorance; one has to cultivate wisdom by learning Dhamma. First, one cultivates wisdom to distinguish moral from immoral, and then comprehend the true nature of the world, i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta;* see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart," and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma."

Next, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways", ……

3.5.6 Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways

Revised September 4, 2016; Revised February 9, 2017; October 17, 2017; November 5, 2018; May 5, 2020 (Same at Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways @ Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa)

Introduction

1. The word *vedanā* comes from ("*vé*" + "*danā*") which means "දැනෙනවා" in Sinhala. That means to "become aware." When an *ārammaṇa* comes to the mind (via any of the six senses,) we become aware of it.

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***Vedanā* can arise in two ways**:

1. One type of vedanā is a consequence of a previous *kamma* or previous defiled action, i.e., a ***kamma vipāka***. That *kamma* could have been done many lives ago.
2. For example, when one gets a "pleasant feeling" while eating a piece of cake offered by the friend, that is a *vipāka vedanā*. Then, if we start thinking about how to eat that cake in the future, with such thinking, we generate "pleasant feelings" about such future experiences. Those are "mind-made" or *samphassa-jā-vedanā* associated with greedy thoughts.

Further details on the two types of *vedanā* can be found at, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa-jā-Vedanā" in a Sensory Event." But let us discuss them briefly below.

Vedanā Arising from *Kamma Vipāka*

2. *Vedanā* (feelings) due to *kamma vipāka* are **three kinds** : *Sukha vedanā* (pleasant or joyful feeling), *dukha vedanā* (unpleasant or painful feeling), and *adhukkhamasukha* (without being painful or joyful, just neutral. The word adukkhamasukha is a combination of adukkhama and asukha.)

- **Those three types of *vedanā* are felt only by the body (*kāya*). All *vedanā* initially coming through other five sense faculties are neutral.**
- *Kamma vipāka* leading to *sukha vedanā* and *dukha vedanā* happen to everyone, including *Arahants*. While everyone can live mindfully (taking necessary precautions) to avoid some of such *dukha vedanā*, others are too strong to be able to avoid.
- For example, the Buddha himself had physical ailments later in his life as *kamma vipāka*. Moggallana *Thero* was beaten to death because of a bad *kamma* that he did many lives before.

3. However, *kamma vipāka* are not certain to happen. Some can be reduced in power (see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation.") Many *vipāka* can be reduced in strength with time if one starts acting with mindfulness.

- Many can be avoided by preventing conditions for them to arise. That means acting with *yoniso manasikāra* or just common sense. For example, going out at night in a bad neighborhood is providing fertile ground for past bad *kamma vipāka* to appear. Many *kamma vipāka* CANNOT take place unless the conditions are right. See, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā."
- We all have done innumerable *kamma* (both good and bad) in past lives. If we act with common sense, we can suppress bad *kamma vipāka* and make conditions for good *vipāka* to arise.
- Also see the discussion on *kamma bīja* in, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- Now let us look at the second type of *vedanā*.

Vedanā Arising from *saṅkhāra* ("*Samphassa-jā-vedanā*")

4. These are the *vedanā* (feelings) that we generate on our own. These are the *vedanā* that do not arise in an *Arahant*.

- Based on *vipāka vedanā*, we may generate more types of "mind-made" *vedanā* called *somanassa* and *domanassa vedanā* as we discuss below.
- In #2 above, we saw that *vipāka vedanā* are felt only by the body (*kāya*.)
- Some of the *vedanā* coming through the other senses feel as "pleasant" or "unpleasant" NOT because of *kamma vipāka*, but due to another reason. Those are associated with each realm and are "*kāma guṇa*." See, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)." For example, all humans taste sugar to be sweet. But some people get addicted to eating sweets full of sugar. That second category is "mind-made."

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- We may generate "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" starting with initial *vedanā* due to both mentioned above. But most *samphassa-jā-vedanā* have *kāma guṇa* as the cause.

Some Examples of *Samphassa-ja-Vēdanā*

5. These *samphassa-jā-vedanā* arise due to attachment via greed or hate, at that moment (i.e., due to one's *gati*); see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

These are the *vedanā* (feelings) that *Arahants* do not feel. Since they do not have any "bad *gati,*" they do not commit any *(abhi)saṅkhāra*, an *Arahant* avoids any kind of feeling arising from *saṅkhāra*. The easiest way to explain this kind of *vedanā* is to give some examples:

- Three people are walking down the street. One has an ultra-right political bias (A), the second has an ultra-left preference (B), and the third is an *Arahant* who does not have special feelings for anyone (C). They all see a famous politician hated by the political right coming their way. It is a given that the sight of the politician causes A to have displeasure and B to have a pleasurable feeling. On the other hand, sight does not cause the *Arahant* to generate any pleasure or displeasure. **Even though all three see and identify the person**, they produce different types of feelings. *It is essential to realize that the feelings were created in A and B by themselves.*
- Two friends go looking for treasure and find a gem. Both are overjoyed. It seems quite valuable and one person kills the other so that he can get all the money. Yet when he tries to sell the "gem," he finds out that it was not that valuable. His joy turns to sorrow in an instant. *Nothing had changed in the object. It was the same piece of colored rock. What has changed was the perception of it.*
- What could happen if an *Arahant* found the same gem lying on the road? (He would not have gone looking for one.) He might think of donating it to a worthy cause.

Another Example of Samphassa-jā-Vedanā

6. A loving couple had lived for many years without any problems and were happy to be together. However, the husband slaps his wife during an argument (this is a *kamma vipāka*). The physical pain from the slap itself did not last more than a few minutes. But for how long the wife would suffer mentally? Those feelings arise due to *saṅkhāra*, i.e., sadness and hate. Even the husband, who did not feel any physical pain, would suffer for days if he really loved his wife. *In both cases, the real mental pain was associated with the attachment to each other.* The wife could have dropped something on her foot and would have suffered about the same amount of physical pain. But she would not have had any lingering mental pain associated with that.

- In all the above cases, the initial sense contact was due to a *kamma vipāka*. **No *kamma* energy was generated at that instant.** However, based on that initial contact, we tend to pursue it with our mind and thus may **start generating *kamma* automatically. See, "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."**

Samphassa-jā-Vedanā Arise Due to Taṇhā

7. Thus it is clear that in all the above examples, the "extra" happiness or suffering (other than due to *kamma vipāka*) arose from **within one's own mind**. And *taṇhā* (attachment via greed or hate) was the cause of it. See, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- When we generate such "mind-made *vedanā,*" we also do *kamma* (via *abhisaṅkhāra*) that will bring more suffering in the future.
- The Buddha pointed out that when he described *dukkha* in the *Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta.* See, "Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta."

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8. Thus all these feelings arise due to *taṇhā*, some form of attachment: greed (craving, liking) or hate (dislike); all these are due to *mano/vacī/kāya saṅkhāra*. The feelings (or rather, the perceptions that give rise to feelings) reside INSIDE oneself. It does not come from outside. We use external things to CAUSE happiness or suffering by our own volition.

- There is no inherent suffering or happiness in ANYTHING external; the sense contact with an external thing CAUSES pain or happiness depending on our *gati* and *āsavā*. An *Arahant*, who has removed all *āsavā*, will be free of such emotional responses.

Connection to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

9. It is also clear how the accumulation of *saṅkhāra* via *Paṭicca Samuppāda* leads to such varied feelings: If we attach to something with a "like" or a "dislike," we generate a mindset accordingly. That is *Paṭicca Samuppāda (pati + icca* leading to *sama + uppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction").

- If we attached to something with "greed", we act with that "greedy mindset." We will be happy if we get what we wanted. If we got "attached" to something with anger, we would have an "angry mindset" and would be happy if we remove whatever caused that anger.
- In either case, the strength of the feeling is also proportional to the strength of the "like" or "dislike": ***Sama uppāda* or *Samuppāda* means both in quality and quantity**; the higher the strength of "pati + ichcha", the higher the strength in "*sama + uppāda*".
- This is how we form habits ("*gati*") too. A teenager drinking alcohol with a bunch of friends gets attached to that setting and looks forward to having the same experience again. The more he repeats that activity, the more he gets "bonded", and thus forms a drinking habit. See, "Habits and Goals" and "Saṃsāric Habits and Āsavā."

The sequel to this post is at, "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa."

A deeper discussion on *vedanā* at: "Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?," "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?," and "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."

3.5.7 Indriya and Āyatana – Big Difference

May 7, 2016; revised December 4, 2017

1.We have lived in this world of 31 realms forever, because we like to enjoy sense contacts. By understanding how we actually experience these sense contacts, we will be able to see their true nature.

- In English language, we speak about the five physical senses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body. We also talk about the mind that is supposed to "reside" in the physical brain, which is supposed to process signals from the five senses and generate "consciousness" or awareness of the external world.
- Above is the conventionally and scientifically accepted theory, especially in the Western World, but mostly in the Eastern World as well.
- In Buddha Dhamma, it is important to realize that our sense faculties have two aspects: physical and mental.

2. Thus there are two versions of sense faculties in Buddha Dhamma: "*indriya*" and "*āyatana*."

- The physical sense faculties are referred to as *indriya*.
- But those *indriya* CAN BE used as *āyatana* depending on the situation. We will discuss the difference.
- Furthermore, we will also discuss how we literally "create our own future" by using our sense faculties as not merely as *indriya* but as *āyatana*.

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3. The five physical senses or the "*indriya*" are simply "physical instruments" mounted on our physical bodies to extract information (vision, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches) from the external physical world.

- In addition, per Buddha Dhamma, there is another *indriya* (*manindriya*) to receive *dhamma* (concepts, *gathi*, and *bhava* are synonyms) from the external world. This "*mana indriya*" or *manindriya* is located inside the brain, and has not yet been identified by science.
- This has been is discussed in detail in, "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

4. Now let us see how these *indriya* can become *āyatana.* In simplest terms, *indriya* become *āyatana* when we deliberately use the *indriya* to accumulate *abhisaṅkhāra*.

- Another way to state the difference is to say that when *kamma vipāka* brings us sense inputs, the sense faculties act as *indriya.* Following that we MAY deliberately use sense faculties to generate new *kamma;* then they work as *āyatana*.
- Let us consider some examples to illustrate the difference.

5. When we just happen to see a nice house (say, while walking), our eyes were used as *cakkhu indriya*. But if we like that house and stop and keep looking at it (while making an attachment for it), then we are using our eyes as *cakkayatana*.

- If we eat something to quench the hunger, and experience the taste of it, then we are using the tongue as *jivha indriya*. **But if we form an attachment to it** (and thinking about making some more to enjoy the taste again later), then the tongue is used as *jivhayatana*.
- When we walk to the bathroom to take a shower (which is something we need to do to stay clean) that involves using the body as *kāya indriya*. But hitting (or walking to hit) another person involves using the body as an *āyatana* (*kayatana).*
- A teacher speaking to students is using the body as *kāya indriya* (does not involve *abhisaṅkhāra*), but telling a lie or a gossip involves *kayatana* (does involve *abhisaṅkhāra*).
- When we are using the mind to remember a forgotten address, we are using the *mana indriya* (or *manindriya*). But when fantasizing about a sexual encounter, that involves *mana āyatana* (or *manayatana*).

6. Another simple way to look at this distinction is to consider the *cakkhu indriya* as a totally mechanical device (just like a camera) that just helps to get the image to the brain.

- *Cakkhayatana* could come into play when that information is sent by the brain to the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* and is processed by the *hadaya vatthu* (mind). Based on the personal character (*gati*) of the person, that person **may** generate greed or hate towards that visual. Then *cakkayatana* (and possibly more other *āyatana*) may be used to take further actions.
- The *cakkhayatana* never arises in an *Arahant*, because there is no *anusaya or āsava* (defilements) remaining that can trigger greed or hate, i.e., there are no *kāma gati*, *rāga gati*, *dosa gati*, *moha gati,* etc left.
- The same kind of analysis can be done on any other sense faculty.

7. Now we can also look at this from a different angle and see that while *indriya* can be considered as PHYSICAL devices that help "extract sense signals" from the outside world, ***āyatana* are MENTAL**.

- The six *āyatana* **(the six are collectively called *"salāyatana"*)** may be created at a given moment depending on the situation and also depending on the *gathi* of the particular person.
- In the "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda," *saḷāyatana* arise via, "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*." When we trace steps backwards, we see that *nāma rūpa* arise via "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*." Going further back, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa", "avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." Thus *saḷāyatana* arise as a series of mental actions starting with *avijjā*.

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- When one of the six *indriya* brings in a sense input, that sense input MAY induce greed or hate due to *avijjā* and through the above series of *paṭicca samuppāda* steps to CREATE one or more of the *saḷāyatana* to arise.

8. Thus our *indriya* do not change from moment-to-moment, but *āyatana* do.

- For example, our eyes (*cakkhu indriya*) may not change significantly for years; of course an accident can instantly change them or they can degrade with old age.
- But *cakkayatana* change from moment-to-moment. We can be instantly attracted to an eye-pleasing object.

9. In another example, suppose an alcoholic is walking around inside an airport waiting for a flight. If he sees a bar, he may decide to stop and take a good look at it, think about for a minute and just go in to have a drink.

- The initial sense input (seeing the bar with *cakkhu indriya*), triggered his deeply-ingrained craving (*āsava, anusaya*) for a drink to come to the mind. Then acting with *avijjā*, at least two of the six *āyatana* arose in his mind: thinking about having a drink (*manayatana*), walking inside and ordering a drink (*kāyātana*).
- Many other people saw the same bar, totally disregarded it and kept walking. The sense input from the *cakkhu indriya* did not lead to the arising of any of the *saḷāyatana* for them.
- This is why even in a normal human, the sense faculties do not work as *āyatana* all the time.

10. If we live in this world, we have to use the sense faculties in order to live; here we use them as *indriya*.

- But when we use them as *āyatana*, we are in a sense making future *bhava* (especially if those actions are strong).

11. Now we can also figure out what is really meant by the "*indriya bhāvanā*." It simply means making sure that the *indriya* do not become *āyatana*.

- Of course, we need to focus on the most egregious acts first. For example, when one sees an eye-catching object in a shop, stopping there and thinking about how nice it would be to be able to take it home is making *āyatana*. But that is hard to avoid for a normal human who has not yet attained a *magga phala*.
- However, if the attraction to the object becomes strong, that could lead to *āyatana* other than the *cakkayatana* come into play: one may decide to steal it. This is of course far too dangerous. As soon as that mindset comes to play, one has to think about the consequences and forcefully stop it.
- Thus "*indriya bhāvanā*" is nothing but special application of the *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*. In fact, "*indriya bhāvanā*" is to be practiced not in a "sitting down" meditation session, but while one is doing normal day-to-day activities.

12. Thus only *Arahants* use their sense faculties as *indriya* ALL THE TIME. They do not form attachments to body touches, tastes, odors, sounds (music), pictures, or any type of concepts (thoughts).

- Even a normal human does not use eyes as *āyatana* all the time. We may see numerous things even during a short walk. Most of the things we see we just ignore, because they don't interest us. This is another way of saying that those things don't trigger any *anusaya* or *āsava* in us or we don't have the *gati* to form a liking for them.

13. Finally, it must be noted that there are other types of *indriya* that come into play in different contexts.

- For example, "*pañca indriya*" in 37 Factors of Enlightenment refer to very different types of *indriya*: *sati, samādhi, paññā, viriya* and *saddhā*; see, "37 Factors of Enlightenment" and "Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment."
- There are five *indriya* in "*pañca indriya*," whereas there are six *indriya* in reference to sense faculties.

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These mind-made pleasures experienced with *āyatana* are called *assāda (or āsvāda* in Sinhala). For an in-depth analysis, see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."

3.5.8 Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paṭicca Samuppāda

July 2, 2016; Revised July 5, 2016

The existence of anything in this world (i.e., a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)) can be explained in a step-wise process with three "steps": (i) there must be root causes, (ii) there must be suitable conditions, and (iii) whatever that arises due to those two steps will have characteristics (*gathi*) that can traced back to those causes and conditions.

- The title is pronounced as :

  Weblink: Listen to the Title being pronounced

1. Nothing happens without causes in Buddha Dhamma. This is why there CANNOT be a beginning to the rebirth process. That is a logical impossibility, and is THE main argument against creation by a "Super Being" or a Creator.

- CAUSE AND EFFECT is the backbone of science. In order for a scientific theory to be accepted, that theory HAS TO have explanatory power to describe HOW a given effect takes place.

2. It may be hard to fathom initially, but there are only 6 primary causes (roots) that causes anything and everything in this world to arise: *lobha, dosa, moha* (three immoral roots or *hetu*), and *alobha, adosa, amoha* (three moral roots).

- The word "*hetu*" comes from the Sinhala words, "*hayen ethu*" which means "wrapped with six." Thus all causes are ultimately due to one more of the six roots mentioned above.
- Also, "*phala*" in Pāli and Sinhala ("*pala*") means "harvest" or the "result."
- Thus anything and everything in this world arises due to those six root causes.

3. The three immoral roots mainly give rise to the four lowest realms (*apāyā*) and the three moral roots mainly give rise to the other 27 realms.

- When one cultivates the three moral roots, one stays away from the *apāyā* and be able to be born in the higher 24 realms. Furthermore, one also cleanses one's mind so that one can begin to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (the true nature of the world); see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."
- However, in most cases, we can see only the "immediate causes." For example, a wet floor is the immediate cause for someone to slip and fall. But if one was mindful (aware) of the wet floor, the fall could have been avoided.

4. Such immediate causes (that derive from those six) are easier to see or to deduce. The causes for a tree to come to life are embedded in a seed. When the seed is planted that causes a tree (or a plant) to grow.

- What causes an explosion from a bomb is in the explosive material in the bomb. There will not be an explosion unless the bomb has potent explosive material in it.
- How those are connected to the six root causes is a bit more involved, and needs a good knowledge of *Abhidhamma* to fully explain.

5. Now, let us analyze how causes lead to corresponding effects. Just because there are causes, corresponding effects do not necessarily appear. There must be appropriate CONDITIONS present to bring out the effects.

- A seed has embedded in it the causes to bring about a full-grown tree. But if that seed is in a cool, dry place, no tree will come to life because of it.

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- But if the seed is planted in a good soil with exposure to sunlight, it can germinate and grow to be a healthy tree.
- The bomb will not explode unless it is triggered but a spark. If it is laying somewhere for many, many years, the explosives may degrade and lose their explosive power.

6. This is called "*paccuppanna*" or "*pacca*" + "*uppanna*," where "*pacca*" is for "*paccaya*" or conditions. "*Uppanna*" means to come to life or birth.

- **Anything in this world (i.e., a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)) is a *paccuppanna***, i.e, is born when suitable conditions become available. But, of course, the root causes MUST also be there.
- Thus even if there is a field out there with good soil and sunlight, nothing will grow unless some seeds are planted.
- Thus *paccuppanna* means "conditional arising." This term "conditional arising" is used today INCORRECTLY as the translation of *paṭicca samuppāda*. As we will see below, *paṭicca samuppāda* also describe the nature of things that arise due to *paccuppanna.*

7. You can put this "theory" to test by considering anything in this world.

- Any given living being is born due to a *kammic* energy that was created in the past. And that *kammic* energy was created by a good act with moral roots or a bad act with immoral roots.
- Even non-living things (vegetation, mountains, rivers, etc) are also there due to causes and conditions. The analyses are a bit deeper and we will discuss some in the future.

8. The last step (in the three-step process that we started off with) says, whatever that arises due to those two preceding steps will have corresponding characteristics (*gathi*). This is nothing but *paṭicca samuppāda;* see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."

- In the example that we discussed above, a given seed will not give to rise to any tree or a plant. A rice seed will give rise to a rice plant. An apple seed will not give rise to a rice plant but an apple tree, etc.
- The same is true for living beings. A chicken will be born of a chicken egg, not a turtle. Note that the other two conditions are satisfied here too: there was a being with "chicken *saṅkhāra*" who came into that egg as a *gandhabba,* and that egg needs to be incubated correctly to be hatched and for that hatchling to come out.

9. Actually, the steps *paccuppanna* and *paṭicca samuppāda* are not in a time sequence, but related. The necessary conditions (*paccaya*) in *paccuppanna* are analyzed in detail in the *paṭicca samuppāda* steps.

- When an animal (say a dog) is born, the conditions that led to that birth can be traced in the "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda" cycle.
- First, "*bhava paccayā jathi*" step says, that dog was born due to a "dog *bhava*." The step, "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" says that "dog *bhava*" arose due to a human grasping it at the dying (*cuti-paṭisandhi*) moment; the step, "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" says that grasping was done due to craving for it, and so on.
- Note above that the human did not really crave to be a dog. Rather he/she enjoyed acts that are normally done by dog. And that process started off with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," where due to ignorance of their consequences, he was cultivating "dog *saṅkhāra*": For example, thinking, speaking, and doing things that are done by dogs, for example, having indiscriminate sex (sometimes with even family members).

10. We will discuss this more depth in future posts, but I hope the main ideas can be grasped from the above description.

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3.5.9 Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)

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Wrong Views About the World

1. *Diṭṭhi* means dogmatic belief in something(s) in the sense of "this alone is true, and everything else is false regardless of the facts." **Even though *micchā diṭṭhi*** (pronounced michchā diṭṭhi) **is the correct term** ("*diṭṭhi*" means "views" and "*micchā*" is "wrong"), in Pāli literature "*diṭṭhi*" is used frequently instead of "*micchā diṭṭhi*"; **the immoral *cetasika* is *diṭṭhi*.**

- In the Buddha's time, 62 such dogmatic views that were the topics of frequent discussions. They are in the *Brahmajala Sutta* DN 1.
- The *diṭṭhāsava* (*āsava* for the 62 wrong views) is eliminated by *diṭṭhi vissuddhi*, i.e., cleansing of the wrong views at the *Sotāpanna* stage.

2. **Some of these dogmatic views that the Buddha had to deal with frequently were the following.** There is a self, there is no-self, reincarnation, no reincarnation, things exist, things do not exist, there are no laws of *kamma*, there are laws of *kamma*, AND they are deterministic.

- The Buddha refuted those all. Unfortunately, some of those wrong views are back in most versions of "Buddhism" today, most importantly the "no-self" (*anātma* in sanskrit) concept.
- We have discussed some (the first four items were presented in several posts, for example, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream," and "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta"), and we will discuss others in detail in the future.

Having Wrong Views Is an *Akusala Kamma*

3. *Diṭṭhi* (or *micchā diṭṭhi*) is also one of the ten immoral actions or *dasa akusala*. *Micchā diṭṭhi* arises in mind, i.e., it is an *akusala* done by the mind. It also leads to corrupt speech and deeds. See, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

- You can see that such thoughts arise due to dogmatic beliefs, i.e., when one is not willing to even consider the possibility that one could be wrong and to critically examine the evidence. For example, some people refuse to even examine the existing evidence for rebirth with an open mind and that is *diṭṭhi*.
- And one needs to know the "big picture of the 31 realms", concepts of *kamma, anicca, dukkha, anatta*, etc., to make a decision on rebirth; it is not enough to just to look at the accounts or evidence for rebirth as presented in, "Evidence for Rebirth."

Three Levels of *Micchā Diṭṭhi*

4. **There are three layers in which *micchā diṭṭhi* is established and accumulates bad *kamma*:**

- Suppose one kills one's parents with the *diṭṭhi* that a parent is not a unique person, and that such *kamma* does not have consequences. That is the coarse level. It can be compared to a fire that burns down a house.
- The second level is when one vehemently defends such a wrong view in a debate and do not even consider the facts presented by the other side. One may genuinely believe in that position, BUT that is because one is not aware of the "bigger picture" on existence. The problem is that "not knowing the facts" is not an excuse. One could jump off of a building, not knowing how gravity operates but will suffer injury/death. This middle level is analogous to a fire that ignites when the match stick strikes a hard surface.

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- The third level is the *anusaya* level, where these views lay dormant as *āsavā* (*diṭṭhi āsava*). This subtler level is analogous to a box of matches that has the potential to start a fire.

Two Levels of *Sammā Diṭṭhi*

5. Someone is said to have ***micchā diṭṭhi*** when one has wrong views at any of the three levels in #4 above. On the other hand, *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, can be two kinds:

- One knows that bad *kamma* (actions) have adverse consequences and can lead to bad rebirths. One wants to live a moral life and strive for a "good rebirth." That is "**mundane or conventional *Sammā Diṭṭhi***." Thus these are still defiled views (have "*kilesa*" in them) since they lead to extending *saṃsāra*, and one has not yet eliminated the possibility of a future rebirth in the *apāyā* (four lower realms).
- But when one comprehends to "true nature of this world," one realizes that there can be no lasting happiness anywhere in the 31 realms of existence. This *Sammā Diṭṭhi* is realized when one truly comprehends *anicca*; see, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" is so Important?."
- That is the "**transcendental or *lokuttara Sammā Diṭṭhi***" that leads to *Nibbāna*; it is free of defilements or "*kilesa*" (or "*keles*" in Sinhala). This view becomes complete at the *Arahant* Stage. *Kilesa* are discussed in, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika."

Mundane or Conventional *Sammā Diṭṭhi*

6. Thus **conventional *Sammā Diṭṭhi*** means the view to "do good things." One understands *kamma* and knows the consequences of evil deeds; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

- As we discussed in "Foundation of Dhamma," "doing good things" is better. Still, most of those things are done with the wrong intention of achieving something in return (good rebirth, winning a lottery, pass an examination, etc.). This kind of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* will perpetuate the *saṃsāric* journey, **but is a required first stage to comprehend *anicca*.**
- The danger in stopping at the conventional *sammā diṭṭhi* is that we do not know what one will do in a future life (say another human birth.) One could be born under circumstances where one is not exposed to Buddha Dhamma, may associate with wrong people, and may commit *kamma* that will lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms). The other danger is that we do not know what kind of kamma we have done in previous lives, and we may already have some bad *kamma* seeds that could lead to a birth in the *apāyā*.

Transcendental or *Lokuttara Sammā Diṭṭhi*

7. By ***lokuttara Sammā Diṭṭhi*** is meant the true understanding of the nature of "this world" of 31 realms and the round of rebirths.

- For example, that "there is a self" and "there is no-self" are both incorrect, and things (both animate and inanimate) exist if the conditions for their existence are present (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*).
- Even though one partially comprehends *Sammā Diṭṭhi* at the *Sotāpanna* stage, the understanding becomes complete only at the *Arahant* stage.

8. If one cultivates the "*lokuttara*" *Sammā Diṭṭhi* and becomes a *Sotāpanna*, then one will be free from rebirths in the *apāyā*.

- The four greed-based immoral thoughts that arise due to wrong views ("*diṭṭhi sahagatha lobha citta*") do not arise In a *Sotāpanna*, do not occur. See, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmī Citta."

Next, "How do we Decide which View is Diṭṭhi (Wrong View)?"

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3.5.10 Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra

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Pronunciation of Pāli words like *vacī, vitakka*, and *vicāra* can be found in "Pāli Glossary – (L-Z)."

Conscious Thoughts Are Also *Vacī Saṅkhāra*

1. Many people believe that only speech involves *vacī saṅkhāra*. However, *vacī saṅkhāra* are defined as "*vitakka vicārā vacī saṅkhāra*," which means "*vacī saṅkhāra are vitakka and vicārā*." This is in, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūḷavedalla Sutta (MN 44)."

- In the following, we will see that *vacī saṅkhāra* are our conscious, deliberate thoughts in addition to speech.
- Furthermore, this post explains how our minds initiate all our actions and speech via *javana citta*.

2. *Vitakka* is the *cetasika* that points the mind to a given thought object (*ārammaṇa*). *Vicāra cetasika* keeps the mind engaged on that thought object, i.e., generating new thoughts about it. *Abhidhamma* gives the following analogy. A bee flying to a certain flower is like *vitakka* (going to a new *ārammaṇa*) and then buzzing around that nectar is like *vicāra* (engaging with that *ārammaṇa*.)

- Similarly, when we focus the mind on a certain object, and then keep the mind there, we generate many thoughts about that object. These are conscious, deliberate thoughts, and not *mano saṅkhāra* that arise automatically.
- For example, if we start thinking about an enemy, we could be spending a many minutes or even hours thinking bad thoughts (*vacī saṅkhāra*) about that person. **We do most of that in our minds, just talking to ourselves. But we may also get some of those thoughts out as actual words.**

Savitakka/Savicāra Are Present in "Good Thoughts"

3. However, ***vitakka*** and ***vicāra*** involve defiled thoughts or at least thoughts about getting things done to live this life.

- When one generates thoughts that specifically do not involve ***kāma rāga* or other *akusala*** — but the opposites (***nekkhamma/kusala***) — those are called ***savitakka*** and ***savicāra***.
- That is how one gets into *jhāna*: By eliminating (or suppressing) ***vitakka/vicāra*** and cultivating ***savitakka/savicāra***.
- This is clearly seen in any *sutta* that describes *jhāna*. For example, in "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)": "*..So kho ahaṃ, ānanda,* ***vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ*** *vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharāmi.*" When one is a *jhāna*, ***vitakka/vicāra*** with ***kāma rāga/akusala*** are absent, and only ***savitakka/savicāra*** will be present.
- In the above verse, "***vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi***" means *kāma rāga/akusala* are absent in the mind while in *jhāna*.

Mano Saṅkhāra Arise Automatically Per Our *Gati*

4. In contrast, when we first thought about that person in the example of #2 above, only *mano saṅkhāra* were AUTOMATICALLY generated according to our *gati*. We don't have any control over *mano saṅkhāra* other than by changing our *gati* over time.

- This is a key point to grasp, and is discussed in detail in the posts, "How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?" and "Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda" as well as other posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.

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- My goal in this post is to point out this critical difference between *mano* and *vacī saṅkhāra.* Our non-automatic, conscious thoughts — as well as speech — involve *vacī saṅkhāra*.

Kāya Saṅkhāra Direct Bodily Actions

5. *Kāya saṅkhāra* involves *kamma* done with bodily actions. So, one can come to the wrong conclusion that speech also is *kāya saṅkhāra*, since body parts (tongue, lips, and associated facial muscles) are moved during the speech.

- I automatically came to that wrong conclusion when I first analyzed these terms, without contemplating deeply on them. The key is that speech originates via types of *rūpa* that are different from that *rūpa* that lead to other bodily movements (like walking or moving arms).
- To understand this, one needs to know how our body parts move according to our thoughts.

6. Our physical body parts are really mechanical parts. There is no "life" in them unless a *gandhabba* controls that body. *Gandhabba* is an important concept in Buddha Dhamma. It has been neglected simply because it is not discussed in the infamous Visuddhimagga and other literature by Buddhaghosa, who single-handedly distorted. Buddha Dhamma; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline."

- The concept of *Gandhabba* is an essential element in Buddha Dhamma; see, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipitaka."
- Without the concept of *Gandhabba,* it is not possible to explain the difference between *bhava* and *jāti*: "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein," and not believing it a *micchā diṭṭhi*: "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- *Tirokudda sutta* is a famous *sutta* that describes the *gandhabba* as "*tirokudda*"; see, "Antarabhava and Gandhabba" and posts referred to there.

Gandhabba (Mental Body) Controls the Physical Body

7. Let us briefly discuss how the mind of the *gandhabba* controls a physical body. The physical body comprises 32 body parts, just like a robot is made out of its various parts. What gives life to this physical body is the *gandhabba*, a very fine body smaller than an atom in modern science.

- Even though the *gandhabba* is negligibly small in "weight," it has this fine body that spreads over the physical body like a fine mesh; it is more like an energy field. A fine nervous system is associated with the *gandhabba* that overlaps the physical nervous system consisting of billions of nerve cells.
- *Gandhabba* also has the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) and five *pasāda rūpa* (that receive signals from the five physical senses via the brain) located close to the physical heart; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body" for details.

The Role of the Brain

8. How can such a negligibly small *gandhabba* move a heavy physical body? *Gandhabba* is more like a signal source that gives appropriate commands. The brain (which is a very sophisticated computer) that translates those commands into actual signals given to the physical nervous system.

- **The energy to move those body parts comes from the food that we eat.**
- The post, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," and other related posts that in more detail. But let us discuss the concept using an example, without getting into those details.

9. When someone decides to move his arm, it is actually the mind that resides in the *gandhabba* that makes that decision that makes that decision (and generates corresponding *vacī saṅkhāra*). Then that signal goes to the brain, and the brain converts that "mental signal" into chemical signals. They, in turn, transmit through the nervous system to the muscles in the arm and move the arm.

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- The energy produced by the digestion of our food goes into energizing the brain and moving body parts.
- So, the *gandhabba* uses a negligible fraction of the energy that is needed to move body parts. That is similar to keep the brain functioning. This can be compared to the tiny amount of energy spent by a computer in controlling a fighter jet. Jet fuel provides energy to move the heavy jet. In the same way, the food we eat provides the energy to move our physical bodies.
- We generate that small energy in our thoughts — via *javana citta* — as we discuss below.

Kāya and *Vacī Viññatti Rūpa*

10. The commands from the *gandhabba* are signals or tiny amounts of energy, and these come in two varieties: *kāya viññatti rūpa* and *vacī viññatti rūpa*. These are two of the 28 types of *rūpa* in *Abhidhamma*.

- The *kāya viññatti rūpa* control bodily movements, and *vacī viññatti rūpa* control speech.
- *Javana citta* generate these "*rūpa*" or "energy signals." Again, more information can be found in the *Abhidhamma* section.

11. Speech — done with *vacī viññatti rūpa* — is different from moving body parts. Speech involves complex muscle movements that are not yet understood by science. Moving body parts — done with *kāya viññatti rūpa* — is simpler.

- What is behind *vacī viññatti rūpa* are *vitakka* and *vicāra cetasika* that are in those *javana citta* responsible for speech. However, when we just "talk to ourselves," the *javana citta* responsible are weaker than those responsible for actual speech. But those two *cetasika* are in both types of *javana citta*.
- Those *javana citta* that are responsible for physical action (like raising an arm or walking) involve *kāya viññatti rūpa,* and the *javana citta* that generate those are even stronger.
- Therefore, both *vacī saṅkhāra* (whether talking to oneself or actually speaking) and *kāya saṅkhāra* (bodily actions) involve *javana citta*. All *kamma* that can be controlled directly by us are done via *javana citta*; see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."

Votthapana Citta – Decision to Take Action

12. The initial decision to generate *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra* actually happens at the *votthapana citta*, which comes just before the seven *javana citta* in a *citta vīthi*, which has 17 *citta* in total; see, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs," and other related posts in the *Abhidhamma* section.

- That "initial reaction" to a sense input comes AUTOMATICALLY in the *votthapana citta*, and the nature of that reaction depends on one's *gati*. Thus, the AUTOMATIC *mano saṅkhāra* are generated in that *votthapana citta*.

13. If you are not familiar with *Abhidhamma*, don't be discouraged by these details. This post provides undeniable evidence that *vacī saṅkhāra* controls not only during speech but also while "talking to oneself."

- But for those who are familiar with *Abhidhamma*, the relationship between terminology and concepts could become much clearer with this discussion.

Kammaṭṭhāna (Meditation Recital) Can Be Silent

14. **Now, let us take a couple of examples to illustrate this without** *Abhidhamma*. When one is doing a *kammaṭṭhāna* (i.e., meditation recital), one could either say the phrase(s) out loud or one could recite in one's head. **Both involve *vacī saṅkhāra*.**

- A *kammaṭṭhāna* can be done in either of those two ways, and both involve *vacī saṅkhāra*.

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- Furthermore, the more one understands the concepts behind the meditation phrase's concepts, the more powerful those *javana citta* will be, and thus more effective the meditation session becomes.
- When one is starting on meditation, it is better to say the phrases out loud because it is easier to keep the mind on that topic. When one gets better at it, one could just recite it internally, without getting the words out.
- This is an example of a *puññābhi saṅkhāra* (meritorious deed) that involves *vacī saṅkhāra.*

Need to Be Careful With Silent *Vacī Saṅkhāra*

15. Now let us consider an *apuññabhi saṅkhāra* (immoral deed) that involves *vacī saṅkhāra,* where one starts generating bad thoughts about an enemy or a person that one dislikes. One could be generating a lot of such *vacī saṅkhāra* internally, without saying a single word. However, when the feelings get strong, the words may just come out because the *javana* power of those *javana citta* could become uncontrollable.

- Even though the *javana* power involved in "silent *vacī saṅkhāra*" are less than those involved in speech, one could be generating much more of those "silent *vacī saṅkhāra*" and thus could be generating more k*amma vipāka*.
- Just like in the earlier example, the "power" behind those *javana citta* with *vacī saṅkhāra* will be higher when the degree of hate associated with that person is higher. That is why it is harder to control oneself, when one is dealing with a person that one really hates.

Sammā Saṅkappa Involve *Vacī Saṅkhāra*

16. In the Noble Eightfold Path, *Sammā Saṅkappa* deals with only one component of *vacī saṅkhāra*, those conscious thoughts without speech. Getting rid of all *vacī saṅkhāra* involve both *Sammā Saṅkappa* and *Sammā Vācā.*

- *"Saṅkappa"* in Pāli or "*sankappana*" in Sinhala means conscious thoughts that involve "*san*" or things that contribute to the *sansāric* journey (rebirth process). Here "*sankappanā*" comes from "*san*" + "*kappana*," where "*kappanā*" means conscious thoughts. When one keeps thinking about something, those thoughts are called "*sankappanā*."
- Of course, "*san*" is a key Pāli term in Buddha Dhamma; see the subsection posts, "San." *Sammā* means to get rid of, as discussed in the same section.
- Therefore, S*ammā Saṅkappa* or *Sammā sankappanā* means removing bad conscious and deliberate thoughts, and cultivating moral thoughts.
- *Sammā vācā* involves stopping immoral speech and generating moral speech.

17. The main point to be extracted from this discussion is that one needs to be very careful about generating hateful (or greedy) conscious thoughts for long times. When one becomes aware of such thoughts, one CAN stop them. This is the basis of both *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā.*

- We always think conscious thoughts (*vacī saṅkhāra* of the first kind) before acting on them, either via speech (*vacī saṅkhāra* of the second kind) or via bodily actions (*kāya saṅkhāra*)!
- This is discussed in detail in, "How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?," "Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda," "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life," as well as other posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.
- Experiencing pleasing sense objects (called *kāma guna*) is not *kāma*. Generating *vacī saṅkhāra* (or *kāma sankappanā*) about them is *kāma*; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha."

Further details at "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra"

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3.5.11 Kāmaccandha and Icca – Being Blinded by Cravings

November 29, 2018

1. *Kāmaccandha* is a Pāli word which has roots in the key word "*icca*" (pronounced "ichcha"),

- There is no need to look for Sanskrit roots to find meanings hidden in Pāli words, and this is a good example.
- *Kāmaccandha* is one of the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*); see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

2. *Kāmaccandha* ("*kāma*"+"*icca*"+ "*andha*") means the POSSIBILITY to be blinded by sense desires. We will analyze it below. First let me explain the pronunciation of the key words "*icca*" and "*anicca*."

- The Pāli word that is spelled in English as "*icca*" is pronounced as "ichcha", and has the meaning of liking/craving.
- "*Na*" + "*icca*" is "*anicca*," which basically means "(in the long term) it is not possible to get what one craves, likes, or wants."
- "*Na*" + "*icca*" is "*anicca*," just like "*na*" + "*āgāmī*" is "*Anāgāmī*." [***āgāmī*** : （adj.）, coming; one who comes.]

Such "combined words" are very common in Pāli. I will just show two examples from the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*:

- "*yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*" is "*yam pi iccham na labhati tam pi dukkham*." Here "strong craving" is expressed by adding an extra "h" to go from icca to iccha.

In the present case, "*Kāma*"+"*icca*"+ "*andha*" becomes *Kāmaccandha.*

- That is similar to "*ayamantimā jāti*" in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* coming from *"ayam antima jāti.*"

Here is an audio recording on how these words are pronounced:

WebLink: audio pronounciation of kāmacchanda Download

3. Now let us look at the meaning of the other components of the word *kāmacchanda.*

- Here "*kāma*" conventionally means indulging in sense pleasures that belong to the *kāma loka*: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body; "*andha*" means blind.
- If the attraction for something becomes so strong that one's mind may become "blind to rational thought." Mind can lose any control over what is sensible and what is not sensible (or immoral). *Kāmaccandha* means "blinded by cravings for sense pleasures."
- Anyone who has not comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* (for which removal of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* is a pre-condition), would have *kāmacchanda.*
- However, one with *kāmacchanda* MAY not commit any immoral action, unless the temptation becomes "high."

4. When a strong sense input comes, one could be blinded about the possible consequences and may do something immoral.

- For example, if one gets an opportunity to rob or even kill someone without getting caught, that could become very tempting.
- We have heard about situations where well-know people who are considered to be "highly moral" are charged with rape or taking large bribes.

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5. This possibility of generating *kāmacchanda* is removed when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. *Kāmaccandha* will be reduced to *kāma rāga* for a *Sotāpanna*.

- Having *kāma rāga* means one still has cravings for sense pleasures, but WILL NOT do anything immoral to get such sense pleasures.
- For example, a *Sotāpanna* could a happily married person taking care of a family and engaging in sexual activities with the spouse. He/she may like to enjoy other sense pleasures too.
- *Kāma rāga* is removed only at the *Anāgāmi* stage of *Nibbāna*.

6. Now, let us analyze the word "*kāma*" in a bit more detail. The true meaning of "*kāma*" comes from the WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63):

"*Saṅkapparāgo purisassa kāmo*,
Netekāmā yāni citrāni loke;
Saṅkapparāgo purisassa kāmo,
Tiṭṭhanti citrāni tatheva loke;
Athettha dhīrā vinayanti chandanti."

- *Kāma* is defined as "*saṅkappa rāga* about sense pleasing material things (*citrāni loke*)." And "*saṅkappa*" means "generating conscious thoughts."
- For example, *Sammā Saṅkappa* in the Noble Eightfold Path is about "contemplating on fruitful Dhamma concepts with the *Nibbāna* as the goal."
- ***Vacī saṅkhāra* include BOTH *saṅkappa* (conscious thoughts) and *vācā* (speech)**; they both depend on the *cetasika* (mental factors) of *vitakka* and *vicāra* that arise in the mind based on one's mindset, see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

7. The above explanation provides us with a way to start reducing *kāmacchanda* even before one gets rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.

- It is important to note that "*kāma*" is not just engaging in activities to fulfill sense pleasures; "*kāma*" **includes indulging in conscious thoughts** about the five sense faculties that belong to the *kāma loka*: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body.
- **Most times, people enjoy just thinking about sense pleasures, for example, sex or food.**
- Every time one engages in generating conscious thoughts about sense pleasures, one's *kāmacchanda* will increase. By cutting down on such "day dreaming", one could reduce one's *kāmacchanda*.
- However, it will be permanently reduced to the *kāma rāga* level only at the *Sotāpanna* stage.

8. Even when one has *kāmacchanda,* one may be able to SUPPRESS it temporarily by focusing the mind on a neutral object, for example, on breath or a *kasina* object.

- That is how ancient yogis, and even some people today are able to get cultivate *jhānā* by engaging in breath or *kasina* meditations.
- Furthermore, one would need to be abstaining from *akusala kamma*.

9. This is why in any *sutta* that describes *jhāna* has the following verse: "*..bhikkhu* ***vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*** *savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ* ***paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ*** *upasampajja viharati..*"

- That means even to get to the first *jhāna*, one would need to be **abstaining from *akusala kamma*** (***vivicca akusalehi dhammehi***) and ***kāma saṅkappa*** (***vivicceva kāmehi***).
- Therefore, it is clear from the above discussion that even a *Sotāpanna* is not guaranteed to be able to attain *jhānā*.

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- *Jhānā* are different from *magga phala*. We all have cultivated *jhānā* in our deep past. It is easier to get to *jhānā* for those who have practiced *jhānā* in recent lives.
- However, one needs to attain a *magga phala* just once.

10. One can get an idea about that by considering the fact that such "sense pleasing things" are not there in *brahma loka*.

- A *rūpa loka brahma* (i.e., a *rūpāvacara brahma*) has a very fine body and does not have a nose to smell, a tongue to taste, or a solid enough body to feel touch. It can only see and hear.
- Since a *brahma* cannot taste, smell or touch, a *brahma* does not engage in those sense pleasures that are available in the *kāma loka* like tasting food, smelling nice aroma, or engage in sex sex. *Brahmā* are unisex. However, even a human female who cultivated *jhānā* and is born as a *brahma* is said to be have "*purisa gatī*" as a brahma: WebLink: suttacentral: Bahdhātuka Sutta (MN 115). That term "*purisa*" is not used in the sense of "male" (*Atthapurisa puggalā* include women who have comprehended the Four Noble Truths, i.e., belong to the *Saṅgha*).
- ***Kāmaccandha* involves only those sense pleasures that are available only in *kāma loka*.**

11. *Jhānic* pleasures are cultivated by at least suppressing *kāma rāga*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

- That involves subsiding the "heating of the mind" due to *kāma rāga.*
- We don't realize it, but our minds are heated and agitated by the desire for sense pleasures. However, the desire for sense pleasures cannot be removed by sheer will power, and becomes possible normally after the *Sotāpanna* stage; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

12. "*Tāpa*" (pronounced "thāpa") means heat; when we get really stressful we feel a "fire" in the heart. When it gets really bad, people say, "I could feel my heart burn" when they hear an extremely poignant news.

- In the case of getting angry, we can definitely feel this "fire" within; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna."
- Even though we do not realize it, even engaging in *kāma saṅkappa* ("day dreaming about sense pleasures") — let alone engaging in them — leads to a "highly perturbed state of mind."
- And "*ātāpī*" is to remove that "fire" from the heart and the stress from the mind, and calm the mind. This is the "cooling down", "*niveema*," "*nivana*" or early stages of *Nibbāna*.

13. This is actually what is meant by the verse, "*ātāpī sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam*" in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*.

- It basically means: "get rid of the fire or heat in the mind by being aware of *kilesa* or defilements and by removing **extreme greed (*abhijjhā*)** that leads to a **depressed mind (*domanassa*)** through discipline (*vineyya*)."
- We will discuss this in detail later, but here is the summary: When one gets angry, that is *domanassa*. When one has strong sense desires that is *abhijjhā.*
- When one can at least suppress *abhijjhā* and *domanassa,* one's mind automatically gets to *samādhi.*

14. These are just basic principles. Furthermore, one cannot get rid of *abhijjhā domanassa* quickly just by sheer will power.

- One needs to learn pure Dhamma and understand the basic principles of WHY a mind gets heated, excited, and becomes vulnerable to doing more *akusala kamma*.
- First thing to realize is that one's actions (*kamma*) are going to have consequences (*vipāka*), if not in this life in future lives.
- And that is not possible without rebirth. This is why rebirth is a built-in foundation of Buddha Dhamma.

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3.6 The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)

- Five Aggregates – Introduction
- Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha
- Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa
- Memory Records – Critical Part of Five Aggregates
- Pañca Upādānakkhandhā – Introduction
- Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa
  - Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa – Introduction
  - Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections
  - "Me" and "Mine" – The Root Cause of Suffering
  - Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Diṭṭhi
  - Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – "Me and Mine" View
  - Atta – Two Very Different Meanings

The following provides a sample of posts on *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa:*

Rūpa: "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)", "Rūpa (Material Form)" and "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka"

Vedanā: "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways, "Vedanā and Samphassa-Jā-Vedanā – More Than Just Feelings," and "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

Saññā: "Saññā – What It Really Means," and "Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra."

Saṅkhāra: "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means" and "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

Viññāṇa: "Viññāṇa (Defiled Consciousness)" and "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means" "Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter," "Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

- "Saññā (Perception)"
- "Vedanā (Feelings)"

Deeper Analysis:

- Panñakkhandha or Five Aggregates – A Misinterpreted Concept
- Pancaupadanakkhandha – It is All Mental

3.6.1 Five Aggregates – Introduction

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Introduction

1. Five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) represent ANY given living-being. In a series of posts, I will try to explain this concept by addressing the following points.

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- Most people today, including many scientists, believe that a "person" exists as long as the physical body exists. We are born (due to no apparent reason,) then we live our lives, and when we die, that is the end of the story. Enjoy life while it lasts! **That is the "materialist view."**
- Then there are people belonging to various religions who believe the following. At the end of this life, one will either go to hell or merge with the Creator (in heaven) for an eternity. For them, there is something in us in addition to the physical body. That is the "soul" that either goes to hell or heaven. **We can call this the "soul theory" for simplicity.** In Hinduism, it is a little bit different, but primarily the same result. They believe that the "mental body" or the "*ātman*" goes through many "re-incarnations," but the ultimate destiny is to merge with "*Mahā Brahma*" and to exist there forever.
- Those are straightforward concepts to grasp. But they do not have a solid "scientific" or logical foundation. Neither "theory" explains how each of us came to existence. **The Buddha's explanation is very different and based on the Principle of Causality, which is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.** However, it takes a real effort to understand fully.
- This is going to be another way that I will try to explain Buddha Dhamma. It could be simpler than my previous approaches. Of course, they are all self-consistent. The most recent series of posts based on a bit deeper analysis is at "Origin of Life."

Mind and Matter – Where Is the Connection?

2. How consciousness arises is THE critical issue that no one else but a Buddha can provide a logical and self-consistent answer. Materialists are focusing on the brain as the origin of thoughts or consciousness. However, that is a futile effort since inert matter (atoms and molecules) can NEVER give rise to "mental phenomena" like pain, joy, jealousy, greed. That should be self-evident!

- The proponents of an "unchanging soul" BELIEVE (without any evidence or a proof-of-principle) that consciousness (and thoughts) arise in a "mental body" and that mental body (soul or *ātman*) detaches from the physical body at death and goes to hell or heaven.
- The Buddha said that there is a "mental body" (*gandhabba*) that detaches from the physical body, but that mental body is not an unchanging entity like a "soul" or an "*ātman*." Furthermore, that mental body can take many different forms based on the existence in one of the 31 realms of existence. For example, the mental-body of a human is very different from that of an animal, a *Deva*, or a *Brahma*. There is no unchanging "soul" or an "*ātman*." **That should be very clear since, at *Parinibbāna* of an *Arahant*, no trace of that *Arahant* left in "this world of 31 realms."** There was NOTHING of the essence, to begin with!

The Irrelevant Issue of a "No-Self" in Buddha Dhamma

3. So, it should be quite clear that the idea of a permanent "self" is absent in Buddha's teachings. **However, the Buddha taught that it is also not correct to say a "self" does not exist for an average human.** In other words, a "self" exists until one fully comprehends that the root cause of *saṃsāric* suffering is the perception (*saññā*) of a "self" or "me." See, "An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation."

- An average human has both the wrong *diṭṭhi* of a "me" and also the *saññā* (perception) of a "me." It is better to use the word "me" than "self" because that is precisely how the Buddha explained it.
- The wrong *diṭṭhi* of a "me" goes away at the *Sotāpanna* stage. The false perception of a "me" (or the sense of "me") goes away only at the *Arahant* stage. More information on *diṭṭhi* and *saññā* at, "Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)," "Saññā – What It Really Means," and "Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra." Of course, more relevant posts can be found by using the "Search" box on the top right.

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- At the end of the "Origin of Life" series, it was shown that, "Origin of Life – One Creates One's Own Future Lives." Any person creates his/her own future lives! In the present series of posts, I will try to show the same with this simpler analysis.

A Living-Being – Body and Mind

4. Each living-being (whether we see them or not) has a body and a mind. Some of the "bodies" in other realms are so subtle that we cannot see them. Nevertheless, a living-being has at least a "trace of matter."

- Furthermore, our mind is not working at all times. While we are in a deep sleep, we are "totally out of this world." It is as if we did not exist during that time. That is especially true if one becomes unconscious. That is a critical point to understand.
- We need to realize is that we do not have either an "unchanging body" or "an unchanging mind." Even during a lifetime, both those change moment-to-moment. The physical body (part of *rūpa*) is different from *rūpakkhandha* and we will discuss that in the next post.

Rūpa Versus *Rūpakkhandha*

5. The Buddha included all types of matter that one has encountered at any time in one huge "collection" or "aggregate." **That is the "*rūpa* aggregate" or "*rūpa khandha*" or "*rūpakkhandha*."**

- That means what is in the *rūpakkhandha* are not real (physical) *rūpa*. **Whatever observed becomes just a mental imprint or a memory**, moments after observed. I will discuss this in detail in the next post.
- The Buddha divided the mind or "mental aspects" into four categories: *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. These entities arise and fade away, but a record of them exists (going back to an untraceable beginning.) **Those "collections" or 'aggregates" are *vedanākkhandha*, *saññākkhandha*, *saṅkhārakkhandha*, and *viññāṇakkhandha*.**

The Five Aggregates Describe any "Living-Being"

6. As we will see, a living-being together with his/her all experiences can be described entirely in terms of those five aggregates. The Buddha showed that those five entities arise and fade away in a manner fully explained in terms of causes and their effect. There is no hidden "soul" or an "*ātman*."

- **However, at any given time, there is a "person" with a set of *gati* (habits/character) responsible for the actions done at that time. It is not an automated process. That is why we cannot say that there is no 'self' up to the *Arahant* stage. There is a "self" doing things on his/her own. Of course, only until seeing the futility of such "doings" or "(*abhi*)*saṅkhāra*."**
- That last bullet point is what we need to understand. We will discuss that systematically, this time with a little bit different approach.

One Type of Consciousness (*Vipāka Viññāṇa*) Arises With an *Ārammaṇa*

7. We tend to think of the mind as our own. **But in reality, our consciousness arises based on two conditions.**

- **First,** we must be awake, and a sensory event must trigger one of the six senses. If someone is unconscious, no matter how loud we talk, he will not hear. No matter how hard we shake him, he will not feel, etc.

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- **Second,** one of our six senses must be stimulated by an external sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, or a memory. The first five come through our five physical senses, and the sixth are the thoughts that come to our mind directly.
- **An "external trigger" that initiates a new consciousness is called an *ārammaṇa*.** Such an *ārammaṇa* comes to the mind via one of the five physical sensory-inputs or directly to the mind. Then one of the six consciousness (*viññāṇa*) arise. **These are *vipāka viññāṇa*.** They just come in due to prior *kamma*, as *kamma vipāka*.
- These types of ***vipāka viññāṇa* arise via, for example, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjāti cakkhu viññāṇaṃ.*"** See, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa."

Second Type of Consciousness (*Kamma Viññāṇa*) May Arise Based on an *Ārammaṇa*

8. If that external "thought object" or "*ārammaṇa*" is of interest, then we start generating CONSCIOUS THOUGHTS about that *ārammaṇa*.

- At this point, **our consciousness switches to a new type called a *kamma viññāṇa*.** That is because this new consciousness is more than just "consciousness" or "awareness." Now we are interested in pursuing what we have seen, heard, etc. and to "accomplish something more."
- For example, a friend may offer a piece of cake, and the taste of that cake is a *vipāka viññāṇa*. But if we generate a craving for that cake, we may want to taste it again in the future. We may start thinking about how to either buy it or make it, and ask the friend about those two possibilities. That future expectation is in the new type of *kamma viññāṇa* generated via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."
- In other words, now we have gone beyond "just experiencing the taste of the cake" or the "*vipāka viññāṇa.*" Now we have a future expectation to taste it again with a "*kamma viññāṇa*" generated via our conscious thoughts (*vacī saṅkhāra.*)
- Stated in another way, **we have initiated a *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa.*" That *viññāṇa* is a *kamma viññāṇa*.**

A Living-Being – Body With a Mind Interacting With the External World

9. What we discussed above in summary form is what our lives are all about. We have a physical body with a mind. The physical body gets sensory inputs from the external world. Then we think about them and pursue some sensory inputs that we like and try to avoid those we do not like.

- In that process, we create new *kamma* that leads to the arising of a new body when the current body dies.
- Of course, the types of bodies that arise in future lives depend on the types of *kamma* that we do, based on those sensory experiences. If one kills another person to acquire that person's wealth, then one will be reborn in a bad realm (*apāyā.*) If one generates compassionate thoughts about hungry people and offer them food, one may be reborn in a good realm.
- That is how the rebirth process continues.

Summary

10. We have laid the framework to look at the conscious life and the rebirth process from a viewpoint based on the five aggregates or *pañcakkhandha*.

- In this analysis, the whole world is divided into just five categories. One is the *rūpa* aggregate, the "collection of MEMORIES of all *rūpa*" or the *rūpakkhandha*. That includes memories of all "material

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objects," including our physical bodies and all external objects that one has seen in all previous lives. We will discuss that in the next post.

- The other four aggregates or "heaps" or "collections" of four types of mental entities: *vedanā* (feelings), *saññā* (perception), *saṅkhāra* (thoughts), and *viññāṇa* (*vipāka viññāṇa* or *kamma viññāṇa*.)
- We will discuss each category in detail in future posts.
- I am re-writing the sub-section on the "Five Aggregates" and will be replacing the old posts there. Of course, now I have many recent related posts to provide more information.

3.6.2 Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha

Revised October 20, 2018; September 18, 2019; re-written April 24, 2020

Introduction

1. Difference Between *rūpa* and *rūpakkhandha* is necessary to understand. **Translation of *rūpakkhandha* as "form aggregate," gives the wrong impression that it is a collection of "solid objects."**

- Instead of memorizing Pāli words, **we need to understand what is meant by such Pāli words and use the Pāli words when there is ambiguity.** Many key Pāli words do not have equivalent English words.

What Is a *Rūpa*?

2. Before we understand the difference between a "*rūpa*" and "*rūpakkhandha*," we need to understand what the Buddha meant by a "*rūpa*." The Pāli word "*rūpa*" customarily translated as "form."

- The definition of a *rūpa* is in many places in the *Tipiṭaka*, for example, SN 22.56 and SN 22.57. In simple terms, " A *rūpa* consists of the four great elements, or is derived from the four great elements."
- A *rūpa* made of the four great elements is not necessarily a solid object like a tree (those are *vaṇṇa rūpa*.) Types of energy are included in the *rūpa* category. **All sensory inputs to the five physical senses are *rūpa*.**

3. Therefore, we can see that light, sound, odors, taste, and touch are all associated with *rūpa*. It is only within the past 100 years or so that scientists admitted that matter and energy are the same.

- In modern-day terms, *rūpa* are either "solid matter" (human bodies, trees, houses, etc.) OR "energy" (light, sound, heat, etc.). With Einstein's formula of E = mc^2, modern science acknowledged that matter and energy are intrinsically the same.
- In terms of Buddha Dhamma, all those *rūpa* are ***collections*** of *suddhāṭṭhaka*, the "smallest unit of *rūpa."* We usually call visible objects "matter." And invisible energy forms (like heat, sound) "energy." Both types consist of *suddhāṭṭhaka*. A *suddhāṭṭhaka* is the smallest unit of energy/matter in Buddha Dhamma. It is unimaginably tiny, billions of times smaller than an atom, or even an electron, in modern science.
- The 28 types of *rūpa* are listed in "Rūpa (Material Form) – Table." As we can see, especially the ten types of *rūpa* on the right-hand side of the Table are not what we usually think of as "matter."

Khandha Means a "Collection" or an "Aggregate"

4. Before we discuss *rūpakkhandha*, it also helps to understand what is meant by a "*khandha."* In Pāli (and Sinhala), it means a "heap" or a "pile." In Sinhala, a hill or a "pile of things" is called a "*kanda*" (කන්ද). So, aggregate is not a bad translation for *khandha* (ඛන්ධ in Sinhala for the Pāli word).

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- A heap or an aggregate of *rūpa* is a *rūpa khandha*. It rhymes as "*rūpa**kk**handha."* We have seen this in kind of combination of words (*sandhi*) in Pāli terms like *Dhammacakka**pp**avattana Sutta,* which is *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta.*
- Another example is *dhamma**ss**avana.* "*Dhamma savana*" rhymes as *dhamma**ss**avana.* "*Dhamma savana*" is listening to *dhamma* (discourse)."

Rūpakkhandha is all Mental

5. **It is essential to realize that *rūpakkhandha* is all mental.** It is NOT a "collection of material things" as the term "form aggregate" may imply. Towards the end of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28)," Ven. Sāriputta explains *rūpakkhandha.*

- Just the presence of an object, a sound, odor, taste, or touch is not enough to be included in *rūpakkhandha.* For example, if X is sitting in a pitch dark room, X will not see anything there, even though there may be many objects in the room. If X shines a flashlight on a chair, then X will be able to see the chair. **If the image of the chair registers in the mind of X, then it becomes a part of the *rūpakkhandha* for X.**
- Let us take another example. Two people, X and Y, are in a room reading books, and X is fully absorbed in reading, but Y has not much interest in his book. Y hears a dog barking and that sound registers in his mind, i.e., the "dog bark" becomes a part of his *rūpakkhandha.* However, even though that sound would have reached X's ears too, his attention was entirely focused on the book, and he did not hear the "dog bark." Thus, the "dog bark" is NOT a part of X's *rūpakkhandha.*
- Now it should be quite clear that each person has his/her *rūpakkhandha.*

Rūpakkhandha is Unimaginably Huge!

6. **Let us look in a bit more detail to see that these *rūpakkhandha* are "mental impressions" of *rūpa* and NOT the *rūpa* that are out there.**

- Another critical point is that when we experience a *rūpa*, that present moment is quickly gone. Most of *rūpakkhandha* is what one has already experienced. **In fact, everything that we have experienced in all our past rebirths are in the *rūpakkhandha*!**
- Those *rūpā* that one has seen in the past are one's *atīta rūpā,* including anything that one ever saw (including in previous births). Obviously, these cannot be physical *rūpā.* They are just memories of a *rūpa* that existed in the past. For example, one may remember a tree in the backyard when one was a child. That tree is no longer there, but one can still "see" that tree in one's mind. Same for one's dead parents or grandparents who may be no longer alive.
- Any *rūpa* about the future or an *anāgata rūpa* (for example, a sketch of the type of house one is thinking about building) can change with time. **That does not even involve a real *rūpa*.**
- Any *rūpa* that one sees at present (*paccuppanna rūpa*) goes to the category of *atīta rūpa* in a split second. Even if we never see that object again, that memory will be there.

More Types of *Rūpa* in *Rūpakkhandha*

7. Internal (*ajjhatta*) *rūpa* are those that are part of oneself: all body parts, including the ones inside the body. External (*bahiddha*) *rūpa* are, of course, anything outside of one's body. Coarse (*oḷārika*) *rūpa* are what we call "solid matter," and fine (*sukuma*) *rūpa* are "energy" (heat, sound, etc.).

- There are *rūpa* that one dislikes (*hīna*), and there are others that one likes (*paṇīta*).
- Some *rūpa* are located far (*dūre*), and some are located near (*santike*).
- Therefore, we see that there could be some overlaps between these categories.

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- Many of these in the *rūpakkhandha* we have not even seen. For example, we have a mental impression of our hearts, but we have not seen our hearts. We may not have seen some landmarks like the Chinese Great Wall, but only pictures of them. Yet, we do have mental impressions of those.
- Altogether there are 11 types included in *rūpakkhandha.* The WebLink: suttacentral: Khandha sutta (SN 22.48) (among many other *suttā*) summarizes what is included in *rūpakkhandha.* "*Yaṃ kiñci, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ* (*atita, anāgata, paccuppanna*) *ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā,* ***ayaṃ vuccati rūpakkhandho***."

Difference Between *Rūpa* and *Rūpakkhandha*

8. Now we can see the main difference between *rūpa* and *rūpakkhandha*.

- A ***rūpa*** is either of the following two kinds. A solid object that one sees with one's eyes or touches with one's body (a person, a person's body or a body part, a tree, a planet, star, etc.) Those are what we usually call "solid objects." Then there are other sensory inputs coming through the other three sense doors (smells, tastes, or sounds).
- ***Rūpakkhandha*** are MENTAL IMPRESSIONS of all external *rūpā* that one has EXPERIENCED. They are NOT tangible or have any energy in them. One's *rūpakkhandha* is INFINITE. It has **records of ALL one has seen in ALL past lives going back and back in time without "an actual beginning."**
- That is why those with *iddhi* (supernormal) powers can recall events that took place billions of years ago. The Buddha, of course, recalled how he received first "*niyata vivarana*" or confirmation that he will become a Buddha trillions of years ago, from Buddha Deepankara. We will discuss that in upcoming posts.

9. Let us take another example to visualize this difference between actual *rūpa* and *rūpakkhandha*.

- The twin towers in New York destroyed in the 2001 terrorist attack.
- If one had seen those twin towers in New York, one could still recall them in one's mind. Those physical structures are not there anymore, but they are in one's *rūpakkhandha*!
- But the actual *rūpa* that were there in New York are no longer there.

Rūpakkhandha Is Personal

10. Since we have seen very different things in our lives (and in past lives), our *rūpakkhandha* are very different. Each has his/her *rūpakkhandha*.

- We can also see that each has his/her *vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha*, and *viññāṇakkhandha*.
- All of them can be analyzed in the same way.
- We will discuss the other four "*khandhā*" or "aggregates" in the next post.

3.6.3 Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha

May 1, 2020

Introduction – What Is *Rūpupādānakkhandha*?

1. In the previous post, "Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha," we discussed the difference between *rūpa* and *rūpakkhandha.*

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- In simple terms, ***rūpa* are the "visuals, sounds, odors, tastes, and touches due to solid bodies."** Note that *rūpa* is a generic term. It indicates any such *rūpa* existing anywhere and does not pertain to any given person.
- On the other hand, ***Rūpakkhandha* has one's "mental impressions" of ALL such rūpa that we have experienced (including in previous lives), experiencing now, and hope to experience in the future**. Thus, *rūpakkhandha* is specific to a given person. Each person has his/her *rūpakkhandha.*
- The word *rūpa upādānakkhandha* or *rūpupādānakkhandha* comes from a combination of three words: *rūpa, upādāna*, and *khandha*. **Therefore, *rūpa upādānakkhandha* is part of *rūpakkhandha* that we crave (i.e., would like to experience again.)**
- By the way, *rūpakkhandha* and *rūpupādānakkhandha* are conventionally translated as, "form aggregate" and "clinging form aggregate."

Meanings of *Upādāna* and *Taṇhā*

2. *Taṇhā* means "attaching to things in this world" with greed, hate, and ignorance. Most times, *taṇhā* is incorrectly translated as "craving."

- The word *taṇhā* comes from "*thán*" + "*hā,"* where "thán" rhymes like in "thatch" and means "a place and "*hā*" means getting attached or fused. **That can happen not only with greed but also with anger and ignorance.** see, "Taṇhā – How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance." Note that "*tan*" in *taṇhā* pronounced like in "thunder." **There are three types of *taṇhā.*** *Vibhava taṇhā is removed at the Sotāpanna stage* and *kāma taṇhā* removed at the *Anāgāmi* stage. *Bhava taṇhā* is eliminated only at the *Arahant* stage. See, "Kāma Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā."
- *Upādāna* ("*upa*" + "*ādāna*" where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull") means "pull and keep close." One tries to pull and keep close only things that one desires. See, "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna." This post will take some time to digest. But it will help one clearly understand both those terms and the difference between them.
- **There are four types of *upādāna.*** Those are *diṭṭhupādāna* (wrong views,) *sīlabbatupādāna* (rituals,) *kāmupādāna* (for sensual pleasures,) and *attavādupādāna* (sense of "me" or "mine.") The first two removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage, third at the *Anāgāmi*, and the fourth at the *Arahant* stage of *Nibbāna*. Note the combination of words. For example, *diṭṭhupādāna* is a combination of *diṭṭhi* and *upādāna.*

Upādāna – To "Keep Close"

3. Therefore, *upādāna* means things or memories that we tend to "keep close" (in mind.) Our way of thinking, speaking, and doing things is dictated by different types of *upādāna.*

- **Therefore, *rūpupādānakkhandha* means those mental impressions of "visuals, sounds, odors, tastes, and touches due to solid bodies" that we like and would like to experience again.** In other words, those are the experiences we desire or crave for. That is a small fraction of one's *rūpakkhandha.* A given person has no interest in most of the *rūpakkhandha*.
- The Pāli word that describes "desire" is *icca*. Sometimes the word "*iccha*" with the emphasis on the last "*cha*'" sound is used to mean a "strong desire." As we will see in a few posts, this connection will help us clarify the First Noble Truth on suffering in another way.
- As an aside, you may want to refresh the memory on the fact that Pāli words are written/pronounced differently compared to "standard English." See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1."

Upādāna Is Different from *Taṇhā*

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4. When an *ārammaṇa* (thought object) comes to our mind, we may FIRST instinctively "attach" to it. Then it is at the *upādāna* stage that we keep on thinking, speaking, and doing things with the expectations. Those future expectations are either to enjoy something or to avoid things that one does not like. **It is at that second stage that we accumulate new *kamma*,** as explained in "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna." That leads to "*bhava*" formation, which in turn, will lead to future rebirth (*jāti.*)

- What I mentioned above are four steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*: "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*," "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*," "*upādāna paccayā bhava,*" and "*bhava paccayā jāti.*" See details at "Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- It is critical to realize that those things that we do to acquire new *kamma* are done with *saṅkhāra.* Furthermore, we do saṅkhāra both at "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" AND "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna.*" That is discussed in detail with the help of a graphic in the post, "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna."
- Most *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles start NOT with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," but with "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*," as explained in that post.

What We Normally Call "Form" Is Also in *Rūpakkhandha*

5. We normally assign the word "form" or "*rūpa*" to things we see, including our bodies as well as all external objects and living beings. As I explained above, sounds, odors, tastes, and body touches also arise due to "*rūpa.*" As we discussed in #7 of the previous post, "Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha," the 11 types of *rūpa* included in the *rūpakkhandha* include *paccuppanna rūpa* or any *rūpa* that is being experienced at any given moment.

- One important *rūpa* that one experiences most of the day is one's own body (*ajjhatta rūpa.*)
- Therefore, one's physical body (more correctly mental impression of it) is part of *rūpakkhandha.*
- Even though we perceive that these are existing "things," they have momentary existence in a deeper sense. I will give a quick example. A fly lives only a few days (let us say six days.) That fly would age and die in six days. If we see that fly in three days, it would have aged, and its body would be different from that we saw six days ago. When we keep reducing the "time interval," we realize that even a moment later, it is not the same fly.
- The same argument holds for our bodies too. It changes over our lifetime, and that is the cumulative effect of momentary changes. That is why the Buddha said that you could not touch the same person twice! (If anyone remembers the *sutta*, please let me know: lal@puredhamma.net.)
- As we will see in future posts, "*dhammā*" experienced by the mind is also a form of *rūpa* in Buddha Dhamma. That last category is "*anidassanaṃ, appaṭighaṃ*" or "cannot be seen or touched."

We Do Not Attach to "Physical Objects" but to Our "Mental Impressions" or "*Rūpakkhandha*"

6. A given object, whether it is inert or living, is NOT the CAUSE for attachment (*taṇhā* and *upādāna.*) Rather, it is the "way that we perceive that object" based on our *gati*, that we attach.

- Think about a person that you don't like. As you know, there are many other people, including his/her spouse, children, friends, etc. who may like that person. The reason that you don't like that person is based on your *gati*. By the way, both you and that person may be considered "good citizens" by most other neutral observers.
- Suppose a guest coming to dinner brings a bottle of alcohol (say, whiskey.) The husband may be happy to see it, but the wife (who may be trying to discourage the husband from having too many drinks) could be irritated. Now, if the guest brought a video game for their child, the child would be delighted. But both

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parents may become somewhat unhappy thinking that the child may spend too much time playing video games.

- These are the things that we need to contemplate while doing insight mediation (*Vipassanā*.) That is the best way to understand key concepts in Buddha Dhamma, like *Paṭicca Samuppāda.* We need to apply what we learn in practical situations.
- Therefore, it is not an external *rūpa* that makes us attach (*taṇhā*.) It is our *gati* (which are related to our *anusaya*) that make us attach to CERTAIN TYPES of *rūpa*. The following example illustrates how the same *rūpa* may or may not lead to *taṇhā* even in a given person.

Rūpakkhandha to *Rūpa Upādānakkhandha* – Instant Change

7. The following is said to have happened many years ago in Sri Lanka. A mother had to go overseas when her son was less than a year old. She had been overseas for many years and came back. She had not even seen any pictures of the boy, who was now a teenager.

- When she came home, she learned that the boy was visiting a neighbor, and she started walking there. On the way, a teenager playing with some friends on the road bumped into her. She became irritated and admonished the boy.
- But then another person on the street said, "Don't you recognize your son? Well. How can you? You have been away all this time". Hearing that, she asked, "Oh, is that my son?" and immediately ran back to hug him.
- He was "just another teenager" until she came to know that he was her son. But the moment she realized that it was her son, the whole situation changed. His figure was not another "*rūpa*" in her "*rūpakkhandha*." Now, he became a part of her *rūpa upādānakkhandha* or *rūpupādānakkhandha.*

Summary

8. I hope you can get further clarification on the difference between "*rūpa*," "*rūpakkhandha*," and "*rūpupādānakkhandha"* from the above discussion. You may want to review the previous two posts as well: "Five Aggregates – Introduction" and "Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha,"

- Just like the concept of *anicca*, this again is a fundamental concept to understand, so please try to read through slowly at a quiet time and grasp the concepts. As the Buddha said, "at the end, what matters is understanding a concept, not memorizing words."
- When I first grasped this concept, it was like turning the lights on in a previously dark area that I did not even know existed! That is a good example of what the Buddha meant by "*aloko udapādi. "*
- We need to realize that *rūpakkhandha* does not arise by itself. All five *khandha* or aggregates rise together.
- Each person has his/her *rūpakkhandha* or the way he/she perceives the material *rūpa* in the world. That *rūpakkhandha* has associated with it the other four *khandhā* (*vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*) and thus comprise the *pañcakkhandha*. And *pañca upādānakkhandha,* or what one has cravings for, is a small part of that.
- We will discuss that in the next post.

3.6.4 Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa

May 7, 2020; revised May 8, 2020

Introduction

1. Five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) is a critical concept to understand. In the previous three posts, we discussed how the mind makes a "mental imprint" of a *rūpa*, whether it is due to sight, sound, smell, taste,

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touch, or a *dhammā*. See, "Five Aggregates – Introduction," "Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha," and "Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha."

- Therefore, it is critical to understand that what is registered in the mind is not a *rūpa* but the "mental imprint" of it. That single imprint is part of *rūpakkhandha*. **However, the mind sees not just a single "snapshot," but the whole *rūpakkhandha*.** We will clarify that point in #9 below.
- Furthermore, based on that *rūpakkhandha*, the mind generates *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. **Those also involve "aggregates" or "collections," as we will discuss below.**
- We NEVER experience a single imprint of a *rūpa* or a single *citta* with *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. The mind ALWAYS deals with all five AGGREGATES. That is a critical issue to understand. Please ask questions if not clear.

The Role of an *Ārammaṇa*

2. The mind becomes active only after getting an *ārammaṇa*. An *ārammaṇa* is an external *rūpa* (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, *dhammā*) that comes to one of the six senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.)

- A signal representing that external *rūpa* is "captured" by the sense door (say the eyes) and sent to the brain. The brain processes it and passes it to the mind. That is discussed a bit more in #5 below. **The critical point is that the mind receives a "mental imprint" of that external *rūpa*.** That "mental imprint" or the "signal" or the "image" registers in the MIND.
- The four mental parameters arise with the "image" or the "imprint" of the external *rūpa.* Therefore, the "mental imprint" is also in the "*vipāka viññāṇa*." That is what we "see," "hear," etc. (*cakkhu viññāṇa, sota viññāṇa,* etc.) We will discuss a second type of "*kamma viññāṇa*" below.
- From the above discussion, it is clear that it is not possible to separate such "mental parameters." It is not possible to separate awareness (*vedanā*) from recognition (*saññā*,) or both those from the overall cognition (*viññāṇa*) and many kinds of "plans" or 'possible actions" (*saṅkhāra*) that arise in mind.
- The word *ārammaṇa* is explained in detail in "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."

Mental Components of *Pañcakkhandha* (Five Aggregates)

3. Before we start discussing the four mental "aggregates," it is a good idea to review the core entities: *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. They arise in a MIND when an external "thought-object" or an *ārammaṇa* comes to one of the six senses.

- When an external *rūpa* (sight, sound, etc.) comes to a "sense door" (eyes, ears, etc.), **we become aware of it. That is *vedanā*.** A pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feeling accompanies *vedanā.*
- At the same time, we recognize what it is. Whether it is one's mother or a tree, a dog bark or voice of the mother, etc., that **recognition of the "thought-object" is *saññā*.**
- Based on the recognition of the "thought-object" to the *ārammaṇa*, we generate our response or reaction to that *ārammaṇa*. **Those responses/reactions are *saṅkhāra*.** The initial "reaction' is automatic and generates *vedanā* and *saññā* (*citta/mano saṅkhāra.*) That means we immediately feel and recognize that *rūpa*. But if we start consciously creating more thoughts, those arise with two more *cetasika* called *vitakka* and *vicāra.* Such thoughts involve *vacī saṅkhāra*. If we then take bodily actions, those require *kāya saṅkhāra*. Therefore, we think, speak, and act with the three types of *saṅkhāra*.
- **The overall "state-of-the-mind' is *viññāṇa*.** It is much more than just "consciousness." *Viññāṇa* is complicated but falls into two broad categories. *Vipāka viññāṇa* is the overall sensory experience due to an *ārammaṇa* (that *viññāṇa* may be called consciousness.) If we start generating plans on what we saw,

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heard, etc., then that becomes a *kamma viññāṇa* with future expectations. **That *kamma viññāṇa* is much more than "consciousness."**

What We Experience Is the Cumulative Effect of Many *Citta*

4. Therefore, those four entities arise together within a split-second, in the first *citta*.

- But the contents of *citta* keep changing as they arise in rapidly. *Cittā* (plural) always occur in packets (*citta vīthi,*), and many of those arise in rapid succession.
- By the time we become aware of the *ārammaṇa*, the initial *citta* has evolved, and millions of *citta* may have run through the mind. That is how those parameters get "bundled up" and experienced as "aggregates" or "*khandha*."
- Let us briefly go through that process step-by-step.

Creation of a "Mental Imprint" in the Mind

5. The mind must first re-create an image or an imprint of the *rūpa* that triggers the whole process. Let us first clarify how the mind first re-creates an image or an imprint of the *rūpa* that triggers the entire process of generating *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*.

- When an *ārammaṇa* comes to one of the five physical sense faculties, the brain prepares an imprint of the corresponding *rūpa*. For example, when looking at a tree, the eyes capture an image of that tree. That image then goes to the brain, where it is processed. At that point, there is not even an "image" like a photograph. It is just a "signal" created by the brain. Even scientists do not know what kind of "signal" or "information" the brain generates or exactly how we "see" a tree.
- Similar processes happen with the other sensory inputs. A sound comes to the ear as a "pressure wave" in air. The eardrum vibrates accordingly, and that vibration is somehow "converted" to a sound. That "sound" is heard only by the mind!
- Yes. Eyes cannot see, and ears cannot hear, etc. The brain cannot see, hear either. It is the MIND that experiences all six sensory inputs. Sense faculties and the brain work together to convert those external signals to a form that can be "felt" by the mind. ***Kammic* energy controls all that.**

The Critical Role of the *Hadaya Vatthu*

6. If you start thinking about it, you will realize how complicated that process is where an external *rūpa* can lead to "thoughts" with "feelings." That is the "hard problem of consciousness" that scientists and philosophers are trying to solve. See, "WebLink: wiki: Hard Problem of Consciousness."

- The bottom line is that it happens only in a *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind.) Only *kammic* energy can create a *hadaya vatthu* and the associated *pasāda rūpa*. Details at "Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya."
- **When those signals generated by the brain are transmitted to the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind,), it can interpret those signals as visuals, sounds, etc.**
- That is the solution to the "hard problem of consciousness." *Abhidhamma* describes the solution in great detail.
- Think about that for a while. When we see a tree, there is no trace of a "picture of a tree" inside the brain! The mind creates that picture, and it goes into *rūpakkhandha*. That is another way to see the difference between *rūpa* (a tree in the front yard) and *rūpakkhandha* (the mental imprint of that tree in mind.)

All Five "Mental Impressions" Arise Together!

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7. The registration of that "mental imprint of a *rūpa*" in mind automatically leads to the arising of four mental parameters (*nāma dhamma*) in mind. Those are *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa.*

- **Therefore all five parameters ("mental imprint of a *rūpa*" and *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa*) arise together!**
- Now let us discuss how the evolution of these into "collections" or "aggregates" or "*khandha*" within a split-second.

Those Five "Mental Impressions" Quickly Evolve into Five Aggregates

8. The *citta* arises and evolves in nine stages during its lifetime of less than a billionth of a second. See, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)." It is not necessary to know the details. I am trying to provide the "baseline picture." Those who are interested can look into the details in that post.

- First, only *mano saṅkhāra* arises. The Buddha defined *mano saṅkhāra* as "*vedanā* and *saññā*," so *saṅkhāra* in this first *citta* has only *vedanā* and *saññā* and no other *cetasika* (mental factors.)
- However, if the *ārammaṇa* is of interest (depending on one's *gati*,), the mind starts adding more "*cetasika*." Among the first are *vitakka* and *vicāra*. That starts the "deliberation process" in mind about various aspects of that *ārammaṇa*. Now, we are at the *vacī saṅkhāra* stage, and based on one's *gati* (and the specific *ārammaṇa*) more *cetasika* (good or bad) may be added in.
- Therefore, by the time we become aware of the *ārammaṇa*, the mind is at the initial stages of *vacī saṅkhāra*. We may speak out at this stage if we become interested in the *ārammaṇa*. By the way, by this time, *viññāṇa* has changed to a *kamma viññāṇa*, because, now one is doing "*vacī kamma*."
- If we become even more interested in the *ārammaṇa*, we may start doing things physically with *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- As an example, think about what happens when someone is mugged while walking on the street. In an instant, he would recognize what is happening, who is attacking and may try to fight back. It is always a good idea to analyze a real-life situation to clarify.

All Five Entities Instantly Become Five Aggregates

9. We started this post to consider what happens when a "mental imprint" registers in the mind due to an *ārammaṇa* (i.e., external *rūpa*,) However, not only that "snapshot" but the whole *rūpakkhandha* contributed to the arising of a *citta* with *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. Let us clarify that now.

- Let us consider the first *citta* that arises due to the sight of a tree. As we discussed above, the brain generates a "mental imprint" of that tree and sends it to the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind.) As we discussed in #2 above, the mind recognized what kind of a tree it is (to generate *saññā*) in the very first *citta* that received that "mental imprint" of the tree. For that recognition to happen, it must have compared that image with old "memories" of various types of trees and recognized it as an apple tree, for example.
- **That means mind was not only dealing with that single "picture" sent by the brain but all of the *rūpakkhandha*!** We remember that *rūpakkhandha* includes all past *rūpa* that one has experienced. For an average human, the mind will be able to recollect only those *rūpa* that one has experienced in this life.
- Thus, if one has not seen an apple tree (at least a picture of beforehand,), then one would NOT be able to recognize it as an apple tree. That is just a simple example.
- While this much detail is not necessary, it is good to realize how complicated this process of generating a *citta* is. And that happens in a billionth of a second! That is why the Buddha said that the mind is the fastest entity in the world. See, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

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Let us briefly review the four mental entities that arise in mind together with the "mental impression" of an external *rūpa*. That means the arising of the five aggregates or *pañcakkhandha*!

Vedanā – Registration of the Experience as "Good," 'Bad," or "Neutral"

10. *Vedanā* comes from ("*vé*" + "*danā"*) which means "දැනෙනවා" in Sinhala. That means to "become aware of something" when an *ārammaṇa* (thought object) comes to one of the six sense doors.

- When we sense something, first, we become aware of it. That is *vedanā*.
- If the *ārammaṇa* comes through the **physical body**, that could be a *sukha vedanā, dukkha vedanā*, or *adukkhamasukha vedanā* (meaning pleasant feeling, painful feeling, and neither-painful-nor-pleasant feeling.) **These are the *vipāka vedanā*.**
- An *ārammaṇa* coming through any of the **other five senses** is initially felt as "neutral." However, the mind MAY generate "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" (**incorporating "*san*"**) following that. See #11 below.
- We also need to be aware of "***kāma guṇa.***" For example, humans like certain types of food. Each animal species has its own "favorite foods." Lions and tigers like to eat meat. Cows don't eat meat, and they eat grass. They are a type of *vipāka vedanā* (plural) that come through all six senses and "feel like" *sukha vedanā.* In fact, most "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" have their origins in that type of *vipāka vedanā.* That is discussed in, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)."

Two Types of *Vedanā*

11. Based on *vipāka vedanā*, we MAY generate "mind-made *vedanā*" or "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*." This is where DEFILEMENTS (or "*san*") are incorporated.

- For example, a *sukha vedanā* COULD awaken our *kāma anusaya*. Then we may generate *kāma saṅkappa* (or sensual thoughts.) These are *somanassa vedanā* (pleasant feelings) created by the mind.
- On the other hand, a *dukkha vedanā* COULD trigger *paṭigha anusaya*, leading to *domanassa vedanā* (angry thoughts) generated by the mind. That could happen, for example, if one accidentally cuts his finger while chopping an onion.
- Based on an *adukkhamasukha vedanā* (coming through any of the six senses,) one MAY generate either *somanassa* or *domanassa vedanā* out of ignorance (triggered by *avijjā anusaya*.) For example, one sees his enemy trip and fall, and a *somanassa vedanā* may arise. In the above two cases also *avijjā anusaya* is there.
- Such a **"*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" arises due to *saṅkhāra* generated via *avijjā***, i.e., "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." **They do not occur in an *Arahant*.** In all others, they may arise depending on one's *gati* (or types of *anusaya* left.)
- For details, see, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa-jā-Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

Saññā -Perception/Recognition

12. *Saññā* is, at the very fundamental level, the recognition of an external stimulus. But it is more than that. We not only recognize that a given object is, say, a dog. But some people may be able to categorize it to be a bulldog. Thus *saññā* about a particular object depends on the person and his/her prior experiences.

- The same is true for the other four senses. When we hear a sound, we recognize what it is, say a bird singing. Some may be able to say what type of bird it is; some may not be. Any smell, taste, or touch works the same way. Without *saññā,* we cannot identify things around us, and also cannot communicate with each other meaningfully.
- One of the 31 realms of existence is the "*Asaññā* realm." There, beings have no *saññā* or perception. Thus in principle, those beings are without any awareness. Nothing registers in mind. If anyone has

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attained the 7th *jhāna*, the "*Neva saññā Na'saññā, "*then that person knows what it is like to born in the *Asaññā* realm.

- *Saññā* is described in more detail in, "Saññā – What It Really Means" and "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā. "

Saṅkhāra – Our Response/Reaction to the External Stimulus

13. *Saṅkhāra* are our reaction to a given *ārammaṇa*. Three types of *saṅkhāra* are defined and discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (MN 44)." Let us summarize them now.

- *Citta/mano saṅkhāra* are *saññā* and *vedanā*. Therefore, *citta/mano saṅkhāra* arise with ALL *citta*.
- *Vitakka* and *vicāra* are *vacī saṅkhāra* because *vitakka* and *vicāra* arise before speaking can occur.
- Breathing is *kāya saṅkhāra* since ALL bodily activities **(whether they have kammic consequences or not)** depend on breathing (*assāsa passāsā kāyikā ete dhammā kāyappaṭibaddhā*).
- However, in both *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* what counts for *kamma* generation is what kind of *cetasika* (good or bad) arise during those activities. For example, the act of stealing involves "bad" *kāya saṅkhāra.* Here, the greed *cetasika* is in *kāya saṅkhāra.*

Further details at, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means" "Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)," and "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – What Is "Intention"?"

Viññāṇa – Vipāka Viññāṇa and *Kamma Viññāṇa*

14. At the beginning of experiencing an *ārammaṇa* (external *rūpa*,) there is the only ***vipāka viññāṇa***. Since the *ārammaṇa* may come through any of the six sensory inputs, they can be of six types: *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā*, and *kāya viññāṇa.* They arise via, for example, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjāti cakkhuviññāṇaṃ"* for "eye-consciousness" when seeing a *rūpa rūpa*. See, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa."

- But if we then start generating *vacī or kāya saṅkhāra,* that means we have become interested in that *ārammaṇa*. Then we will be making NEW *kamma* with ***kamma viññāṇa***. That takes place in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* steps, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra; saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa."* See, "Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- Therefore, both those type are in the *viññāṇakkhandha.*

Importance of Comprehending Key Pāli Words

15. Even though this post is a bit long, I hope it includes a lot of critical information that will help clarify the concept of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*.)

- The above descriptions on *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa* are just summaries.
- But I hope one can see that it is idiotic/dangerous to use English translations for *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* as "mental formations" and "consciousness." One will never be able to understand Buddha Dhamma with such interpretations.
- **If one does not understand *saṅkhāra* (especially *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*,), one would NOT be *sandiṭṭhika*. (or be able to "see" how one accumulates defilements or "*san*.")** See, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Paṭhamasandiṭṭhika Sutta* (AN 6.47)" The English translations are not too bad, and one can get a good idea. However, the meaning of "***sandiṭṭhika***"is in the words itself: "*san*" + "*diṭṭhi"* or the "ability to see *"san."*
- There is a subsection on "San" which I highly recommend.

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- Furthermore, the terms "form aggregate" and "five aggregates" should be used with an understanding of what is meant by them.

3.6.5 Memory Records – Critical Part of Five Aggregates

May 13, 2020

The Critical Role of Memories

1. Memory records (*nāmagotta*) are a critical component of the Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*.) Most people would not think of memories as a part of *pañcakkhandhā*. But as we will see below, we cannot live without our memories!

- As we discussed in the previous posts on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)," **each of the past *rūpā* that we have ever experienced** is in the Five Aggregates. *Vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* — that arose with EACH of those *rūpā* in the past — are also in the Five Aggregates. **All of them cumulatively play a critical role in the present moment.**
- Let us take some simple examples to illustrate this. Suppose someone gives you a plate with a couple of pieces of pizza. How do you know that it is food and you can eat it? That it is "pizza"?
- You may think that this is a silly question. It is not. Unless you had prior experience with eating pizza, you would NOT know what it is.

2. Think about leaving for work in the morning. Unless you REMEMBER where you work and how to get there, you will not be able to "go to work."

- You wake up in the morning and need to go to the bathroom. But if you don't remember where the bathroom is, or even what a "bathroom" is, what would you do?
- By the way, this is why babies need diapers. They have no perception (*saññā*) of "going to the bathroom" until their brains develop. They do not have the ability to recall their memory records.
- Our lives will be IMPOSSIBLE to live without our memories!
- You see someone coming toward you. How do you recognize that figure as a "man" or a "woman," let alone that it is your mother?
- More examples in "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

How Our Memory Works Is a "Miracle"

3. We discussed this process to some extent in the previous post, "Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa," You may want to read that post as needed, especially #2 through #9. I am not going to discuss some of that here. It is critical to understand those initial posts to get a good idea before we get to the next post. It is a good idea to print all four posts in this series so far, and have them ready to review.

- **Now we are going to look at exactly where these memories reside and how a mind recalls them so quickly.** As we know, any situation that we considered in #1 and #2 above "is not a big deal."
- When we see a pizza, we know exactly what it is, without having to think. When we leave for work, we do not stop and plan the trip. We just get in the car and drive or walk to the right bus stop/subway, etc. We "know" what a bathroom is and where it is in the house.

Difference Between a Human and a Robot

4. However, a robot CANNOT do any of the above, UNLESS it is pre-programmed in detail. For any robot to do any specific task, a HUMAN needs to think about all possible scenarios and write a "computer code." That is why "artificial intelligence" WILL NEVER materialize. Scientists will be able to make fancy

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robots to do REPETITIVE and COMPLEX tasks. But robots will NEVER be able to THINK. They will not be able to recognize anything that has not been pre-programmed to its computer memory.

- A human can recognize an object INSTANTLY. For example, it can "scan" memories of eating pizza and identify what type of pizza it is, how it would typically taste. And it does that within a split second!
- I highly recommend re-reading the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

Mind – *Hadaya Vatthu* and a Set of *Pasāda Rūpa*

5. That fantastic accomplishment of "instant recognition of things" happens in our minds. The mind is NOT in the brain, even though the brain plays a crucial role in mental phenomena. The mind is associated with the mental body, which is referred to as *manomaya kāya* or *gandhabba* in the *Tipiṭaka*. In essence, that mental body consists of a *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) and a set of *pasāda rūpa*.

- That mental body cannot be seen even with the most sophisticated microscope scientists have today. As we know, they can "see" individual atoms. **But a *gandhabba* is a million times smaller (in weight) than an atom.**
- Yet, that mental body is the essence of a human (or any living-being.) The physical body is just a shell that allows us to taste, smell, and touch.
- That mental body (*gandhabba*) can come out of the physical body in some situations. See, "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya." It can see and hear better outside the physical body, but of course, cannot taste, smell, and touch.
- Furthermore, those who cultivate *jhāna* to the fourth *jhānic* state can then develop *iddhi* powers and bring their *gandhabba* out of the physical body at will. Then they can travel anywhere (including far away *Deva/Brahma* realms) as well, or go through walls and mountains as described in some *suttā*. See "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"
- That mental body or the *gandhabba* has the truly ESSENTIAL parts of a human: *hadaya vatthu* and a set of *pasāda rūpa.*

Only Kammic Energy Can Create a *Gandhabba*

6. *Kammic* energy controls the creation and function of a *hadaya vatthu* and a set of *pasāda rūpa.* WE create them in our *javana cittā*! Each new *bhava* is associated with a *hadaya vatthu* and a set of *pasāda rūpa*. The number of *pasāda rūpa* vary from five for *kāma loka*, two in *rūpa loka,* to none in *arūpa loka*.

- That is why scientists will NEVER be able to CREATE life. It can only manipulate the conditions for an existing *gandhabba* to build a physical body. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- To be more precise, when we do strong *kamma*, **we create energies that are released and will reside in the *kamma bhava*.** Good strong *kamma* create energies that can lead to the creation of "mental bodies" for "good realms." Similarly, strong bad *kamma* make conditions for rebirths in "bad realms."
- Our memories are also in the *kamma bhava.* All energies decay with time. **When "*kammic* energies" in the *kamma bhava* decay, they become just "memory records." The Pāli word for such memory records is "*nāmagotta*."**

Rūpa Loka and "*Nāma Loka*"

7. There are six "*dhātu*" that make up our world of 31 realms: ***pathavī dhātu, āpo dhātu, tejo dhātu, vāyo dhātu, ākāsa dhātu, viññāṇa dhātu***. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Dhātuvibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 140)."

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- All internal (in one's body) and external *rūpa* (not *rūpakkhandha*) are made of *pathavī dhātu, āpo dhātu, tejo dhātu, vāyo dhātu* and they exist in *ākāsa dhātu* (space). Therefore, the physical world (***rūpa loka***) is associated with the first five types of *dhātu.*
- We experience all *rūpa* with the help of our five physical sense faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) and the five *pasāda rūpa*. Experience (arising of thoughts) happens in the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of mind), as mentioned in #6. Of course, the *hadaya vatthu*, and the five *pasāda rūpa* are the essence of the *gandhabba*, our "mental body."

8. *Nāma dhammā* (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) arise in *cittā* (loosely called "thoughts") at the *hadaya vatthu*. See #6, #7 of "Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa."

- An imprint of a *rūpa* (that is in the physical world) arises with *viññāṇa* as we discussed in the previous four posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)," Furthermore, *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa* are experienced as "aggregates" or "collections" or "*khandha*" and NOT as individual entities.
- As soon as that thought passes through a mind, a RECORD of it goes to the ***viññāṇa dhātu***. That *viññāṇa dhātu* is also called the "***nāma loka***." Let us discuss that now.
- **It is essential to note that both the *rūpa loka* and the *nāma loka* exist in "our world of 31 realms."**

Rūpa and "*Nāma*"

9. The mental attributes (*nāma*) and physical attributes (*rūpa*) are DEFINED, for example, in WebLink: suttacentral: 2.3.3. Suttantikadukanikkhepa of *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* of the *Tipiṭaka*:

*Tattha katamaṃ **nāmaṃ**? Vedanākkhandho, saññākkhandho, saṅkhārakkhandho, viññāṇakkhandho, asaṅkhatā ca dhātu—idaṃ vuccati nāmaṃ.*

*Tattha katamaṃ **rūpaṃ**? Cattāro ca mahābhūtā, catunnañca mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya rūpaṃ—idaṃ vuccati rūpaṃ.*

- That means, "*Vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha, viññāṇakkhandha* are "*nāma dhamma.*"
- "The four great elements (*pathavī, āpo, tejo, vāyo*) together with *upādāya rūpa* (those that arise due to *upādāna* for worldly things made of the great elements) belong to *rūpa*.
- **Such *upādāya rūpa* arise in our *javana citta* (or in *kamma viññāṇa*.)** Those are the "subtle *rūpa*" that are seeds for future existences (*bhava.*) They make up the "*kamma bhava.*" **They have energies BELOW the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level.** See, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."
- As we have discussed, *hadaya vatthu* and each *pasāda rūpa* is " an energized *suddhāṭṭhaka.* Therefore, *kammic* energies are unbelievably small, yet they have amazing power.

Kamma Bhava in *Nāma Loka*

10. **A record of ANY experience is captured in the four aggregates of *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa.*** Those are *Vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha, viññāṇakkhandha.* **That memory record in the "*nāma loka*" is "*nāmagotta.*"** However, if that experience involved *kamma* generation, then there will be a *kammic* energy (*kamma bhava*) associated with it.

- Section 1 of the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga* 6 (1. *Suttantabhājanīya*)" defines *kamma bhava*: "*Tattha katamo **kamma bhavo**? **Puññābhisaṅkhāro, apuññābhisaṅkhāro, āneñjābhisaṅkhāro**—ayaṃ vuccati "kamma bhavo". Sabbampi **bhavagāmi kammaṃ** kamma bhavo.*
- That says all *kamma* done with *abhisaṅkhāra* will be in the *kamma bhava*. They can bring *kamma vipāka* until that energy decays naturally, which could take billions of years.

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- Those "***bhavagāmi kammaṃ"*** (meaning strong *kamma* that can sustain the rebirth process) will be there in the *kamma bhava*.

While *Rūpā* Will Decay Over Time, *Nāma* Record (*Nāmagotta*) Does Not Decay

11. While ***rūpā*** in the *rūpa loka* last only finite times, a record of one's experiences permanently remains in the *nāma loka*. **That PERMANENT memory record is "*nāmagotta*."**

- That is stated clearly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Najīrati Sutta (SN 1.76)" as, "***Rūpaṃ jīrati maccānaṃ, nāmagottaṃ na jīrati***" or "**Physical form (bodies of living beings and inert matter) decay and die, memory records (*nāmagotta*) do not decay**."
- Of course, we have a limited ability to RECALL past memories, especially memories from past lives. However, some children can recall their previous life. Those who have cultivated *abhiññā* powers can recall many past lives.

12. Don't be discouraged if you cannot grasp everything in this post. I will expand on some of them in upcoming posts. But it is necessary to read the recommended posts.

- I have spent the past ten years studying Buddha Dhamma. Even these days, I learn new things that make the "big picture" a bit more clear. Once getting some traction, the process will become easier and enjoyable.
- It has been an amazing experience and I hope I can share that with as many people as possible.

3.6.6 Pañca Upādānakkhandhā – Introduction

May 19, 2020

Pañca Upādānakkhandhā – Key Role of Upādāna

Pañca Upādānakkhandhā is normally translated as "five grasping aggregates." That does not explain much.

1. The concept of *Pañca Upādānakkhandhā* plays a critical role in Buddha's teachings. In his first sermon, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11)," the Buddha summarized *dukkha* (or suffering) in a single verse. That is, "*Saṃkhittena* ***pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā***." The translation appears in most English texts as, "in brief, the **five grasping aggregates are suffering**". **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

- That translation does not convey the meaning of the verse until we understand what is meant by "*pañcupādānakkhandhā."*
- It is easy to see that the word "*pañcupādānakkhandhā*" comes from the combination of the three words: *pañca, upādāna*, and *khandhā*. Here, "*pañca khandhā"* means "five aggregates" and "*upādāna"* means "the tendency to keep close." **As you will see, "keeping close" is a better translation than "grasping" used in most translations.**
- Therefore, that verse indicates that suffering in this world arises due to our tendency to "keep close" certain parts of those five "aggregates."
- We have already discussed some features of those "five aggregates." See, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

Upādāna – Keeping Close "in the Mind"

2. *Upādāna* means "pulling something closer" ("*upa*" + "*ādāna,"* where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull").

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- It is critical to realize that *upādāna* happens ONLY in the mind.
- *Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes phenomena that take place in the MIND. We can summarize *Paṭicca Samuppāda* simply as follows. Attaching to an *ārammaṇa* is *taṇhā* (gets "bonded" to it.) That leads to *upādāna* (keep it close in one's mind.) That is the step, "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna.*" Also, see, "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna."
- **Furthermore, we saw that even the *rūpakkhandha* is in the mind.** Many people have the perception that *rūpakkhandha* is "collection of *rūpa*." But we clarified *rūpakkhandha* in the post "Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha."

3. In that post, we also discussed how some parts of *rūpakkhandha* become parts of *rūpa upādānakkhandha* or *rūpupādānakkhandha.*

- Therefore, "*pañcupādānakkhandhā*" means "keeping those five aggregates (*rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha, viññāṇakkhandha*) "close to one's mind." Then, one will be thinking, speaking, and taking actions based on particularly appealing parts of the five aggregates.
- Again, all of *rūpakkhandha,* as well as other four *khandhā* in *pañca khandhā,* are associated with the mind.
- Thus, ALL of *pañcupādānakkhandhā* is associated with the mind. Those are what one thinks about and plan accordingly. A good example is to re-create a past sexual experience and to enjoy that. Another is to create a future expected experience in mind and to enjoy that. Both those activities involve *pañcupādānakkhandhā.*
- As we can see, *pañcakkhandhā* is enormous, infinite. It has all our experiences from a beginning that cannot be discerned. But *pañca upādānakkhandhā* is a very small part of that.

Diṭṭhi and *Taṇhā* – Root Causes of *Upādāna*

4. We tend to keep something close to us if we believe it will be beneficial for us to do so. On the other hand, if we think something will be bad for us and can bring suffering, we would try to avoid it and try to keep it far away.

- For example, if we know there is a bomb inside a beautiful object, we would try to get far away from it, even though it looks appealing.
- Sometimes, we do not see dangers hidden in "things that appear to be appealing."
- An example that I often give is a fish biting a worm on a hook. The fish cannot see the hidden hook or the fisherman holding the pole that is attached to the hook with a string. But we can see all that and we know what will happen to the fish if it bites that tasty bait.
- However, we are unable to see the hidden dangers in sensual pleasures. Only a Buddha can figure out WHY attaching to sensual pleasures is dangerous, even if no immoral actions are involved. The question is, why sense pleasures are bad even if immoral actions (*dasa akusala*) are NOT involved. There are "hidden dangers" in sense pleasures. See, "Kāma Assāda – A Root Cause of Suffering."
- Have you seen ants getting stuck in spilled honey? They start drinking it and get stuck. They don't see the "hidden danger" in a pool of tasty honey either.

Monkey Not Letting Go Even When the Life is in Danger

5. In the above example of the fish biting a "tasty bait" or the ants attracted to honey at least cannot see the "hidden danger." However, look at what happens to the monkey in the following video:

WebLink: youtube: How to Catch a monkey

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- The monkey could have let go of the grains in its fist, take its hand out, and run away when it saw the hunter coming. (**Note;** I have set the video to stop early to show only the relevant portion for our discussion. If you play it again, you can see the whole video. The hunter wanted to find where the monkey's water source was. So, he fed the monkey with salty food and let it go, and followed it.)
- But it would not let go of the grains in its fist. It does not want to let go of its "tasty grains" even while seeing the danger. It is HOPING that it would be able to get the hand out WITH the grains.
- That is why even a *Sotāpanna* has a hard time getting rid of the desire for sensual pleasures, even though he/she can SEE the dangers in them.
- However, a large part of *upādāna* has been removed for a *Sotāpanna*. He/she would NOT engage in any immoral deeds to fulfill sensual desires. For example, he/she would not engage in sexual **misconduct** at any time. The desire for sensual pleasures will keep one bound to the *kāma loka.* But it is only IMMORAL DEEDS (*dasa akusala*) done to gain sensual pleasures that will make one eligible for rebirth in an *apāya*.
- In other words, a *Sotāpanna* has not removed "*kāma upādāna*."
- An *Anāgāmi* has removed "*kāma upādāna*, " but the last one of "*attavāda upādāna*" (perception of a "me") goes away only at the *Arahant* stage. **Thus, the four types of *upādāna* need to be removed in stages.**

Five Aggregates (*Pañcakkhandhā*) Fall into Two Main Categories

6. From our previous posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)," we know that the five aggregates can be separated out into two MAIN categories: past and present.

- There are 11 types of entities in each aggregate. See, "Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha." However, all of them belong to three time-frames: past, present moment, and future. The "present moment" is gone in a split second. The other categories (like internal and external or near and far) belong to each time-frame. Thus, effectively we have two MAIN categories in each aggregate.
- Those two are the "past aggregates" and "future aggregates." Put in another way, **the five aggregates encompass our "memories" and our "future expectations/hopes."**

Pañca Upādānakkhandhā – Reliving Memories and Making Future Plans

7. *Pañcupādānakkhandhā* can be thought of as mainly the following. Significant "events" that happened in the past and also a set of events that we would like to see happen in the future. Put in simple terms, *pañcupādānakkhandhā* or "*upādāna* of *pañcakkhandhā"* means the following two cases.

- **Our tendency to constantly think, speak, and act to re-create past experiences.**
- **In addition, we also do the same to fulfill future plans/hopes.**

Those activities are done via *mano, vacī*, and *kāya* (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra*. We will discuss that in the next post.

Upādāna – Why Is It Easier to Recall Somethings Than Others?

8. From our discussion so far in this series of posts, it is clear that records of ALL our past actions (and speech and thoughts) are "stored permanently" in "*nāma loka*." You may want to refresh memory by reading "Memory Records – Critical Part of Five Aggregates."

- However, we know that it is easier to recall some of the past events than most others. In fact, we cannot recall even some things that happened just yesterday!
- That is because there are events that we tend to "keep close" in our minds. That can happen out of greed, anger, or ignorance. If we eat tasty food, we would like to taste it again. If someone did something

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"bad," we would like to remember that out of anger. We also tend to remember "funny things" of no significance (dirty jokes, for example) out of ignorance.

- In addition to just "a record" or "*nāmagotta*," such "memorable" events leave energy in the "*nāma loka*." Those are *kammic* energies and are in "*kamma bhava*." They originate in *kamma viññāṇa* in *javana citta*. Such events involve *abhisaṅkhāra*.

The Difference Between "*Nāmagotta*" and "*Kamma Bīja*"

9. A record of any and all events go into "*nāmagotta*" as soon as that event is done. But some events involve "good" or "bad" strong *kamma* generated via *abhisaṅkhāra*. As we have noted, there are three types of *abhisaṅkhāra*: *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra, puñña abhisaṅkhāra,* and *āneñja abhisaṅkhāra.*

- Those are the types of ***abhisaṅkhāra*** in the "*avijjā paccayā* ***saṅkhārā***" step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda.* See, "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – What Is "Intention"?."
- We can put it in another way by saying that such actions lead to the formation of *kamma bīja*. They have the potential to bring *kamma vipāka.* Especially strong *kamma vipāka* can lead to rebirth.
- However, if such *kamma bīja* do not get a chance to bring their *vipāka*, their energies run out over long times. At that point, they become just "*nāmagotta*" without any associated energy.
- A *kamma bīja*, on its own, can bring us an *ārammaṇa* to the mind (i.e., bring back the memory of the event) even if we are not trying to recall it.
- **While a *kamma bīja* can bring an *ārammaṇa* to the mind on its own (due to its energy,) a "*nāmagotta*" NEEDS TO BE recalled.** We will discuss that later.
- Furthermore, it is easier to recall those events associated with strong *kamma bīja*. Such events are of importance to us, and thus, it is easy to recall them. *Nāmagotta,* on the other hand, are more difficult to recall. However, there are a handful of people who can do that in amazing detail (see below.)

Proof That All *Nāmagotta* Remain Intact

10. Strong evidence is beginning to emerge that there is indeed a "complete record" of one's past just like a videotape. These studies started with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000's about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onward. Here is a video of her with Diane Sawyer on an ABC News program:

WebLink: youtube: The woman that never forgets - Jill Price First Interview!

- Note that she says she can "see" in her mind what happened on any day from 1974. It is not like she is recalling a "summary" or the gist of what happened. She can actually recall the whole episode in detail. Even the day and date come out effortlessly.
- Note that she can remember ONLY those things SHE had EXPERIENCED. That means just the portion of HER *pañcakkhandhā* from 1974. For example, if she had not watched the TV series "Dallas," she would not be able to say on which day "JR was shot."
- Since then more people have provided similar accounts. See, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- This is why some children can recall their previous life. The ability to recall a previous life means that the memories could NOT have been in the brain, and were 'stored" outside the physical body. See, "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttas for 1500 Years."
- Ancient *yogis* who could get to the *eighth jhāna* could see all past lives in the present eon or *kappa*. But the Buddha could see numerous eons within a short time.

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3.6.7 Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa

In this section, we will look at the relationship between the five aggregates and suffering. Within this discussion, we will be able to clarify the three key Pāli words *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Those terms describe the Three Characteristics of Nature or *Tilakkhaṇa*.

Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa – Introduction

Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections

"Me" and "Mine" – The Root Cause of Suffering

Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Diṭṭhi

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – "Me and Mine" View

Atta – Two Very Different Meanings

3.6.7.1 Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa – Introduction

May 27, 2020

We start a series of posts on the five aggregates and *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta.*)

The Five Aggregates describe any Living Being's "World"

1. The five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*) represent any living being together with its "external world." It is not correct to say that the five aggregates are in one's own "physical body." Everything about a living being, including ALL past experiences and future expectations, is embedded in *pañcakkhandhā.* Furthermore, one's *gati*, *anusaya*, etc., are all in *pañcakkhandhā.* Please read the previous posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- What I summarized in those few posts is the material in many *suttā* in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Khandha Saṃyutta* (SN 22.1 ~ 22.159) in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya.* There are also *suttā* in other parts of the *Tipiṭaka*.
- In those *suttā,* the Buddha describes any given living being in terms of *pañcakkhandhā*: *rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha, viññāṇakkhandha.*
- Those are the five aggregates loosely translated as form, feelings, perceptions, mental formations, and consciousness. As we have discussed, such translations are misleading. It is better to use the Pāli terms and learn their true BROADER meanings. For example, *viññāṇa* can be of two different types of *kamma viññāṇa* and *vipāka viññāṇa.*

Pañca Upādāna Khandhā (Five Clinging Aggregates) Is There Until Becoming an *Arahant*

2. We also discussed what is meant by ***pañca upādāna khandhā*** (loosely translated as "five clinging-aggregates") in the section "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- Until attaining the *Arahant* stage, all living beings have ***pañca upādāna khandhā***. A living *Arahant* has ***pañca khandhā*** but not ***pañca upādāna khandhā***.
- An *Arahant*'s ***pañca khandhā*** will also cease to exist at the death of the physical body. That means an *Arahant* will not be reborn anywhere in the 31 realms.

The Definition of an "Ignorant Living Being" or "*Satta*"

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3. The Buddha explained what is meant by a "*satta*" or a "living being" to Rādha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Satta Sutta (SN 23.2)." "*Rūpe kho, Rādha, yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā, tatra* ***satto****, tatra* ***visatto****,* ***tasmā sattoti vuccati****. Vedanāya ... saññāya ... saṅkhāresu ... viññāṇe yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā, tatra satto, tatra visatto, tasmā sattoti vuccati"*

Translated (just the meaning): "Rādha, when there is desire (*chanda*), *rāga,* and a perception of high value (*nandī*) of material form (*rūpa*), there is clinging (***satto***), strong clinging (***visatto***) for form, and **then an ignorant living-being (*satto*) is spoken of**. Similarly, when there is desire (*chanda*), *rāga,* and a perception of high value (*nandī*) of *vedanā ... saññā ... saṅkhāra ... viññāṇa*, then a living-being is spoken of."

- Other translations at "WebLink: suttacentral: Sentient Beings (SN 23.2)."
- Note that the Pāli word "*satta*" means "clinging" or "attach." **A strong version of clinging is "*visatta*."**
- **In other words, as long as there is *upādāna* for *pañcakkhandhā* (i.e., as long as there is *pañcupādānakkhandhā*) there is an "ignorant living being" or a "*satta*."** That living being has not comprehended the "real nature of this world" or "*yathābhūta ñāṇa*."

Difference Between a "*Satta*" and "*Puthujjano*"

4. **We also need to see the difference between the terms "*satta*" and "*puthujjano*."** The name "*puthujjano*" applies to **a human being** who has not heard and comprehended *yathābhūta ñāṇa.* The term "*satta*" applies to any living being (includes *Devā* and *Brahmā* who have not attained any *magga phala*.)

- I use the term "ignorant person" to differentiate an *Ariya puggala* (Noble Person) who is also a "person," but has started cultivating *yathābhūta ñāṇa.*
- WebLink: suttacentral: *Assāda Sutta* (SN 22.129) defines the word "*puthujjano*" as, "an **ignorant person ("*puthujjano*")** does not truly understand the pleasures, the drawbacks/dangers, and the liberation when it comes to the five aggregates."
- An *Ariya puggala* overcomes the "*satta*" status at eight levels (*Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmi*, etc.)
- Also, a *Bodhisatta* is still a "*satta*," but proceeding towards "*Bodhi*" or the "*Buddhahood*." We remember that a *Bodhisatta* can be born even in some higher animal species, but not in the other three *apāyā*.
- Note that "*satta*" pronounced "saththa".) See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1"and the second part referred to in there.

Overcoming the "*Satta*" Status With the Comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*

5. Using the analyses of the five aggregates and the "five clinging-aggregates," we can get some insights into Buddha's explanation of "suffering inherent in this world of 31 realms." That explanation comes via the understanding of the *Tilakkhaṇa* or *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. We now look at the connection between the five aggregates and *Tilakkhaṇa.*

- The fourth characteristic of *asubha* appears in some *suttā.*
- However, in most *suttā*, only the three characteristics of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* are discussed.
- The essence of those characteristics is that craving for worldly things (*rūpa*) with the perception of a "me" will only perpetuate the rebirth process leading to more suffering. We will discuss that in detail in upcoming posts.

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- However, we can get an idea by just looking at the key concepts that we have learned. Let us briefly discuss *anatta* and *anicca.*

Does "*Anatta*" Mean "No-Self"?

6. The representation of any living being with the five aggregates makes it clear that a permanent "soul" or a "*ātma*" cannot exist.

- As we have discussed, none of those five aggregates has any "essence." They all keep changing, even momentarily. In particular, they all undergo drastic changes when a living being moves from one realm to another. Such transitions have taken place an uncountable times in our deep past. We all have been born in the 26 realms (out of 31 realms, only *Anāgāmī* can be born in the five realms reserved for them.)
- All of us have been born in the highest *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana Brahma* realm as well as in the lowest *niraya* realm.
- If there were an unchanging "core" or "essence" as a soul was there, an *Arahant* would not be able to attain *Parinibbāna*. As we know, there is no trace of an *Arahant* in any of the 31 realms after *Parinibbāna.*
- However, until one reaches the *Arahant* stage, it is also NOT correct to say that a "self" or a "me" does not exist. There is an ever-changing "life-stream" thinking, speaking, and doing things based on the view and perception of a "me" or "self" with a set of ever-changing "*gati.*"
- Starting at the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage, one can begin to "see" that all those actions are based on *Paṭicca Samuppāda.* There is still a "self" with "*gati*" generating "*abhisaṅkhāra*" via "*avijjā.*" But that "*avijjā*" will decrease with higher *magga phala*. "*Sammā Diṭṭhi*" becomes complete, and the perception of a "me" goes away only at the *Arahant* stage.

Does "*Anicca*" Mean "Impermanence"?

7. It is quite common these days to see the Pāli word "*anicca*" translated as "impermanence." We can see the error in such a translation by looking at a simple *sutta.*

- For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Nandikkhaya Sutta* (SN 22.51)," among others, state: "***Aniccaññeva**, bhikkhave, bhikkhu **rūpaṃ aniccanti passati**. Sāssa hoti sammādiṭṭhi.*" or "A *bhikkhu* **who sees *rūpa* (form) as *anicca* has seen the *anicca* nature**. He has *Sammā Diṭṭhi.*"
- Most English translations INCORRECTLY translate that verse as "A *bhikkhu* **who sees form as impermanent has seen the *anicca* nature**. He has *Sammā Diṭṭhi.*"
- **Any reputable scientist knows that NO MATERIAL OBJECT in this world has permanent existence.** See the following Scientific American article: "WebLink: The Only Thing That Remains Constant Is Change." Does that mean those scientists all have "*Sammā Diṭṭhi*" and have attained *Nibbāna*? Of course not. **Therefore, it must be clear that "*anicca*" CANNOT mean just "impermanence."**
- We will discuss the real meanings of *anatta* and *anicca* in detail in this series in future posts.

The Need to examine the *Tipiṭaka* Without Biases

8. We need to be able to resolve such issues by using common sense rather than mechanically repeating such incorrect translations as "the truth." Just because such statements are in "reputable books" or are "the opinions of reputable *bhikkhus*/scholars" does not mean they are compatible with the *Tipiṭaka*. We need to remind ourselves that Devadatta was a *bhikkhu* with *abhiññā* powers. Nagarjuna and Buddhaghosa are considered "scholars" by those who do not even believe in rebirth (and thus have *micchā diṭṭhi.*)

- Their intentions may be good, but one needs to be able to accept errors in one's thinking when clarified with substantial evidence.

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- It is dangerous to teach "wrong Dhamma" which will have corresponding consequences. Ignorance of mundane laws is not an excuse in a court of law. In the same way, ignorance of "the true teachings" is not an excuse, especially when the correct teachings are clear with evidence from the *Tipiṭaka*.
- "Impermanence" is only a small part of the broad meaning of *anicca*. A single English word CANNOT convey the meaning of the word "*anicca*." One needs to understand the meaning of the Pāli word and use that word.

Why Do Living Beings Crave Sensory Pleasures?

9. To "enjoy" sensory pleasures, the following two conditions must be met.

- There must be a "me" or a "self" to "enjoy any pleasure."
- There must be contacts with five types of external *rūpa* via the five physical senses. They are *rūpa rūpa* or "*vaṇṇa rūpa*" (material objects), *sadda rūpa* (sounds), *gandha rūpa* (odors), *rasa rūpa* (tastes), and *phoṭṭhabba* (body touches.) **Furthermore, those *rūpa* must be stable to provide long-lasting pleasures.**

So, the average human makes the very best effort (and undergoes suffering) in seeking out such pleasures.

- **Those struggles only lead to more suffering, since both of the above assumptions are wrong in ultimate reality.**

Both Those Assumptions Are Wrong Per Buddha

10. The Buddha pointed out the following regarding those two features.

- **There is no "me" or an "unchanging self" in ultimate reality. Any living being has a limited lifetime** and subject to unexpected changes during its existence. There is no "core" or "substance" to any existence (like a "soul" or a "*ātma.*") A given life-stream can be a *Brahma*, a *Deva*, or a human in some existences and an animal, a hungry ghost, or a "hell being" in other existences. Where is the "core"?
- **Any type of external *rūpa* in this world also has a limited lifetime.** It will also undergo unexpected changes during its existence. Thus, all those material "things" that we acquire with great effort do not last long. Furthermore, they become a burden since one needs to continually struggle to maintain them in good condition (think of houses, cars, one's own physical body, etc.)

Therefore, both requirements for perceived happiness (an "unchanging self" and "stable external *rūpa*") are illusory.

- **That is one way to state the "previously-unheard Dhamma" ("*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*") that the Buddha taught.**

"Self" and "External *Rūpa*" Have a Common Name – *Saṅkhata*

11. *Saṅkhata* is a key Pāli word. It comes from "*san*" + "*kata*." As with many critically important Pāli words, the root "san" is there. A *saṅkhata* is prepared via "*san*" or our tendency to "accumulate" things that only have a transient existence. **A living being and what it enjoys are both *saṅkhata*.**

- Both arise (the Pāli word for "arise" is "*samudaya*") due to our fruitless actions based on those **two wrong views about nature per #9 and #10 above**. The key Pāli word "*samudaya*" comes from "*san*" + "*udaya*" or "arising due to "*san*." You may want to refresh memory with "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)" and "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots."
- Both types of *saṅkhata* arise (*samudaya*) via the universal process of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, which starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."
- As we have discussed in many posts, the root cause of all suffering is *abhi*(*saṅkhāra*) that arise in our minds due to *avijjā*. **Therefore, one way to explain the origin of suffering is ignorance (*avijjā*) of**

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real nature or *Tilakkhaṇa*. That is the connection between the five aggregates and *Tilakkhaṇa* (and suffering.)

A Buddha Does Not Speculate on Anything

12. A *Sammasambuddha,* like Buddha Gotama, does not teach anything that he had not experienced/verified firsthand.

- Several *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* discuss that. See, for example, the WebLink: suttacentral: *Vīmamsaka Sutta* (MN 47).
- There are many *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* that describe visits by the Buddha and some of his disciples to *Brahma* and *Deva* realms. I have discussed one of those, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)," in the post, "Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."
- There are many aspects in the teachings of the Buddha that are not discernible to an average human (*puthujjano*). Many of these phenomena can be verified by those who make progress on the path. They are also consistent with new findings by modern science. I have discussed some of them in "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"
- Many people do not see the uniqueness of a Buddha. For them, he is just another philosopher. That assumption is wrong. A Buddha does not speculate on anything. But of course, each person needs to verify that. That is why I make an effort at puredhamma.net to show the self-consistency within the *Tipiṭaka* and with many new findings in science.

In upcoming posts, we will continue the discussion on the connection between the five aggregates and *Tilakkhaṇa* (and suffering.)

3.6.7.2 Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections

June 2, 2020

Icca, *Nicca*, *Anicca*

1. We will discuss the critical relationships among *icca*, *nicca,* and *anicca*. That will help us understand the true meaning of *anicca*.

- The pronunciations of those in that order:

  WebLink: mp3: Icca, Nicca, and Anicca
- It is important to note that the Pāli words in the *Tipiṭaka* are NOT written the way they are pronounced. See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."
- Very briefly, the meanings are as follows. ***Icca* means desire**. If we believe that it is possible to fulfill that desire and totally content, that is the perception of ***nicca***. The opposite of *nicca* is ***anicca***.
- Buddha taught us that our world is of *anicca* nature. That means we will never be content with "any existence in this world." We may be able to fulfill some expectations in this life, but all that will have to be given up at death. Then we start all-over in new birth.
- We note that the word "*icca*" plays a key role in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. The word "*Paṭicca*" comes from "*paṭi*" + "*icca*." Future existences in the rebirths process have origins in "attaching to worldly pleasures with desire (*icca*)." See, "Paticca Samuppāda – 'Paṭi+ichcha' + 'Sama+uppāda'."

Icca and *Anicca* Sometimes Written as *Iccha* and *Aniccha*

2. The word "*iccha"* with the emphasis on the last syllable indicates "strong *icca"* or "strong desire." In the same way, "*aniccha"* with the emphasis on the last syllable puts emphasis on the "*anicca* nature."

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- In the Sinhala language, the words *icca, anicca,* and *iccha, aniccha* are written as ඉච්ච, අනිච්ච, and ඉච්ඡ, අනිච්ඡ.
- In the *Tipiṭaka*, mostly *iccha, nicca, anicca* appear. **Note that *iccha* is normally used in Pāli as "*icchā*."** Thus, the "strong version" is used only with *iccha*. But there are a few exceptions. We saw one such exception in "*icca*" in #1; another for "*aniccha*" in #14 below.
- The five words *icca*, *anicca*, *iccha*, *icchā*, and *aniccha* are pronounced:

  WebLink: mp3: Icca, Anicca, Iccha, Icchā, Aniccha

Icchā and *Taṇhā* Closely Related

3. The "WebLink: suttacentral: *Kalahavivādasuttaniddesa*" of the *mahāniddesa* of the *Tipiṭaka* states, "*Icchā vuccati taṇhā*" (see section SC88) or "*Icchā* means *taṇhā.*" That is because *icchā* leads to *taṇhā.*

- When we attach (*taṇhā*) to something due to our liking for it (*icchā*), we tend to keep it close in our minds (*upādāna.*) *Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes how that leads to future suffering. See, "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering."
- The use of many Pāli terms could be confusing to some. It may be helpful to print the relevant posts mentioned and refer to them as needed.

What Do We Desires (*Icchā*)?

4. Our desires belong to two categories. First, we would like to have a healthy and robust body (stay young forever!.) We would also like to have anything that we own or related to us to be similarly long-lasting and not subject to unexpected calamities.

- We have that perception that such desires (*icchā*) for "stability of long-lasting happiness" can be achieved. **That perception is *nicca*.**
- With that perception of a "*nicca* nature," we work hard to acquire "things" that we perceive to provide sensory pleasures.
- While doing our best to achieve such pleasures, knowingly or unknowingly, we engage in activities that lead to future births filled with suffering.

Icchā – A Root Cause of Suffering

5. The Buddha's described the Noble Truth on Suffering in his first discourse, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11)."

- The complete verse in that *sutta* is as follows. "*Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave,* ***dukkhaṃ ariya saccaṃ*—*jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhaṃ, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ***—*saṃkhittena* ***pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā***." **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**
- I have discussed the description in plain bold in the post, "Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta."
- We discussed the verse, "*Saṃkhittena* ***pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā***" in recent posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)." As explained there, the Buddha succinctly attributed future suffering to "*upādāna*" for the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā.*) We learned that "*upādāna*" means "keeping close in one's mind." **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**
- Here, we will discuss how that "*upādāna*" relates to "*icchā*", simply translated as "desire." Then we will discuss the connection to *anicca*, which is often INCORRECTLY translated as "impermanence." That connection is in, "***appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho,yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ***."

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- Let us discuss that verse in two steps.

Appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho

6. That means: "having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering, and, having to separate from those things one likes is suffering."

- One WOULD LIKE to keep the body of a young person (say, 15 to 25 years of age), without getting old or sick, and never die. But we will NEVER get it.
- Even with human birth, **we have to suffer when we get old, when getting sick, and finally when dying.** There is no way to dissociate from those things that we do not like.
- **We have no choice but to associate with those three things that we do not like highlighted above.**
- Worst of all, **we will have rebirths in realms we do not like**. **That will happen until we comprehend anicca nature.**

Yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ – Most Important Verse

7. "*Yampiccam nalabhati tampi dukkhaṃ"* captures the essence of *anicca* nature how it leads to suffering. It provides the key to understanding the Buddha's message and led to the attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage by the five ascetics.

- "*Yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ"* is a shortened version of the verse is "*Yam pi **icchāṃ** na labhati tam pi dukkhaṃ."*
- "*Yam pi **icchāṃ***" means "whatever is **liked or craved** for." "*Na labhati"* means "not getting." "*tam pi dukkhaṃ"* means "that leads to suffering."
- Therefore, that verse simply says: **"If one does not get what one craves or likes, that leads to suffering."**

8. That is a more general statement and applies in any situation. What we discussed in #6 above is summarized in the short verse, "***yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ***."

- We can see that in our daily lives. We like to hang out with people we love, and it is a stress to be with people that we do not like.
- **The more one craves something, and the more suffering one will endure at the end.** That is because we tend to do immoral deeds to "get what we crave." **But *kammic* energies that we generate in such wicked deeds lead to rebirths that we do not like.**
- **Thus, we end up with two types of suffering.** Our expectations are not fulfilled (whatever happiness gained is temporary.) Furthermore, we end up getting unfortunate rebirths.

Icchā Keeps One Bound to "This World"

9. There are many *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* that discuss *icchā*. The "WebLink: suttacentral: *Icchā Sutta* (SN 1.69)" summarizes the importance of *icchā*. One time, a *deva* came to the Buddha and asked:

"*Nassau bajjhatī loko*,	"By what is the world bound?
kissa vinayāya muccati;	By the removal of what one is freed?
Kissassu vippahānena,	What is it that one must abandon
sabbaṃ chindati bandhanan" *ti*.	To cut off all bondage?"

The Buddha replied:

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"***Icchāya bajjhatī loko***,	"By **cravings**, **one is bound to the world**;
icchāvinayāya muccati;	By the removal of desire one is freed
Icchāya vippahānena,	Craving is what one must give up
sabbaṃ chindati bandhanan" ti.	To cut off all bondage."

Our Actions Based on *Iccha* (*Taṇhā*) Lead to Suffering

10. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process describes how our actions based on *icchā* (*taṇhā*) leads to future births and suffering. We have discussed that in detail in two main sections. See, "Paṭicca Samuppāda" and "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'."

- In brief, the Buddha pointed out that our perception of a "*nicca* nature" where we can fulfill our desires is an illusion.
- No matter how much we strive, it is not possible to attain long-lasting happiness in the rebirth process. If one believes that there is no rebirth process, then one may not worry about any such suffering beyond the present life.
- That is why one first needs to get rid of the ten types of wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*) before trying to comprehend the fact that our perception of a *nicca* nature is not correct.
- Thus, the reality of this world is not "*nicca*," but the opposite. That is *anicca.*

Inability to Fulfill *Iccā*/*Icchā* Means *Anicca*/*Aniccha* Nature

11. The inability to get what one desires is the opposite of "*icca"* or "*na icca"* or "*anicca."* That is the same way that "*na āgāmi"* becomes "*Anāgāmi"* ("*na āgāmi"* means "not coming back"; but in the context of *Anāgāmi,* it means "not coming back to *kāma lōka* or the lowest 11 realms. **Both these are examples of Pāli *sandhi* rules (connecting two words).**

- In some *suttā*, like the "*Girimānanda Sutta* (AN 10.60)," we see the word *aniccha*, as we will discuss below. As we mentioned above, *icchā* is a strong version of *icca*, and the words *niccha* and *aniccha* are the corresponding strong versions" of *nicca* and *anicca*.
- Other than in such specific cases, we will stick to the words *nicca* and *anicca*.
- **The intrinsic nature of this world is "*anicca*,"** i.e., we will never get what we crave for, and thus at the end (at least at death), we will leave all this behind and suffer, that is *dukkha*.

Impermanence Is a Significant Part of *Anicca*

12. *Anicca* does NOT mean just "impermanence" is clear in the definition of *anicca* in many *suttā*. For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anicca Sutta (SN 22.12)" states: "*rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, aniccaṃ, vedanā aniccā, saññā aniccā, saṅkhārā aniccā, viññāṇaṃ aniccaṃ*."

- The English translation at Sutta Central "WebLink: suttacentral: 12. Impermanence" is: "form, feeling, perception, choices, and consciousness are impermanent."
- Is it not evident that especially the mental qualities (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā, viññāṇa*) are impermanent? They change even moment-to-moment. That is a BAD translation. Of course, the other translation at Sutta Central and in many other texts is the same.
- **Correct translation** is to say that all five of those entities are of *anicca* nature, i.e., that they cannot be maintained to one's expectations.
- There is no single word in English that can express the meaning of *anicca*. **Impermanence is just one aspect of *anicca* nature.**

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- The Pāli words for permanence and impermanence are *dhuva* and *addhuva*. For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vepullapabbata Sutta (SN 15.20)" says, "*Evaṃ aniccā, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā; evaṃ* ***addhuvā****, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā; evaṃ anassāsikā, bhikkhave, saṅkhārā*" meaning, "*saṅkhārā* are *anicca* and **impermanent**, they should not be taken in ("*na*"+ "*assāsikā.*") By the way, this also shows that "*assāsa*" does NOT mean "breathing in." For details, see, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?"

Gimānanda Sutta – *Anicca* Nature of *Saṅkhāra*

13. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Girimānanda Sutta* (AN 10.60)" the Buddha described the perception of *anicca* nature to Ven. Ānanada as follows. " *Katamā ca Ānanda, anicca saññā? Idha Ānanda, bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā iti paṭisañcikkhati: '****rūpaṃ aniccaṃ, vedanā aniccā, saññā aniccā, saṅkhārā aniccā, viññāṇaṃ aniccan'ti****. Iti imesu* ***pañcasu upādānakkhandhesu aniccānupassī viharati****. Ayaṃ vuccatānanda, aniccasaññā.*

- The parts highlighted in bold say that all five entities "***rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhārā, viññāṇa* are all *aniccā*"** and that "**one lives contemplating the *anicca* nature of the 'five clinging-aggregates' (*pañca upādānakkhandha.*)**"
- The first part is the same that we discussed above. The second part is even more clear. As we know, *pañca upādānakkhandha* is all mental. See, "Pañca Upādānakkhandhā – Introduction."
- There is nothing "permanent" there anyway. What the Buddha meant was to contemplate the "fruitlessness of clinging to one's memories or to future expectations."

14. In a subsequent verse in the *sutta*, the Buddha clarifies that "unfruitfulness" in vivid detail: "*Katamā ca Ānanda, sabbasaṅkhāresu anicchā saññā? Idhānanda, bhikkhu* ***sabba saṅkhāresu aṭṭīyati harāyati jigucchati****. Ayaṃ vuccati ca Ānanda, sabba saṅkhāresu* ***anicchā saññā****.*

- The first highlighted part in bold says, "all *saṅkhāra* make one tired at the end, just like a dog does not get any nutrition by chewing on a bone but only gets tired (***aṭṭīyati.***) One should be ashamed (***harāyati***) of engaging in such fruitless endeavors. One should reject them like feces and urine (***jigucchati***.) Note that the word "*iccha*" is in "*jigucchati*" which comes from "*ji*" +"*gu*" + "*iccha*" or "liking urine and feces."
- I have discussed that verse in detail in "Anicca – The Incessant Distress ("Pīḷana")." Other meanings of *anicca* are discussed at, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- Therefore, the word *anicca* has a much deeper and expansive meaning than just "impermanence." The cause of *anicca* is related to impermanence, but *anicca* means a perception that needs to be cultivated. The above verse provides further aspects associated with the key idea of "inability to maintain anything to one's satisfaction."
- Impermanence is not directly connected to any of the three meanings of *anicca* in that verse.
- At the end of the verse, we see the word ***anicchā*** used to emphasize ***anicca*** nature.

Grasping of *Anicca* Removes *Micchā Diṭṭhi*

15. Grasping of *anicca* characteristic of nature requires getting rid of ALL of one's wrong views.

That is clearly stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Micchaditthipahana *Sutta* (SN 35.165)": "***Cakkhuṃ kho, bhikkhu, aniccato jānato passato micchā diṭṭhi pahīyati****. Rūpe aniccato jānato passato micchā diṭṭhi pahīyati. Cakkhuviññāṇaṃ aniccato jānato passato micchā diṭṭhi pahīyati. Cakkhusamphassaṃ aniccato jānato passato micchā diṭṭhi pahīyati ... pe ...* ***yampidaṃ manosamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā tampi aniccato jānato passato micchādiṭṭhi pahīyati****. Evaṃ kho, bhikkhu, jānato evaṃ passato* ***micchā diṭṭhi pahīyatī****"ti.*

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We can make two critical deductions from this verse.

- First is that whereas only five entities are listed in # 12, this verse enumerates many more related entities, and they all have the *anicca* nature. **Anything and everything in this world have the *anicca* nature.**

16. Then the second part of the verse says the following. **If one comprehends the *anicca* nature of all those entities, then one has removed *micchā diṭṭhi*.** The first level of *micchā diṭṭhi* to be removed is the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi.*

- Ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* include not believing in the rebirth process. See, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage." Therefore, **IF *anicca* means impermanence, THEN** one would have removed all wrong views IF one has understood that everything in this world is impermanent.
- As we discussed in the previous post, any scientist knows that nothing in this world is permanent. See, "Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa – Introduction."
- By that definition of *anicca*, those scientists SHOULD NOT have any of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi.* **That is a contradiction since most scientists do not believe in rebirth.**

Summary

17. Future suffering cannot be stopped until one's cravings for worldly things (*icchā*, *taṇhā*, *upādāna*) are lost.

- Those cravings cannot be removed from one's mind until one realizes the futility and danger (future suffering) associated with such cravings.
- Those cravings may be TEMPORARILY suppressed by engaging in the mundane "breath meditation."
- However, via understanding the true *anicca* nature, one can realize the futility and danger (future suffering) associated with such cravings. A deeper analysis at, "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering."
- That is why comprehending the *anicca* nature is a REQUIREMENT for attaining *Nibbāna*. Furthermore, *anicca* is closely related to *dukkha* and *anatta*, as we will see in future posts.
- As always, anyone is welcome to correct me (with evidence from the *Tipiṭaka.*)

3.6.7.3 "Me" and "Mine" – The Root Cause of Suffering

June 9, 2020

Brief Summary of *Pañcakkhandhā*

1. The five aggregates (*pañcakkhandhā*) is unique to each person. Yours is different from anyone else's.

- *Pañcakkhandhā* includes one's past experiences with *rūpa* in this world and anticipated future experiences with *rūpa* (*rūpakkhandhā.*)
- Those, of course, include mental qualities (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa.*) They are in the four "mental aggregates" or *vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha, viññāṇakkhandha.*
- Thus all five components of *pañcakkhandhā* are, in effect, our past experiences and future expectations. They are unique to each person.

Brief Summary of *Pañcupādānakkhandhā*

2. We have *upādāna* for only a tiny fraction of *pañcakkhandhā.* That part is *pañc**upādāna**kkhandhā.*

- *Pañc**upādāna**kkhandhā* are based on past experiences that we liked. For example, if X saw an attractive person last week, X would remember that person and would have formed a certain set of

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feelings, perceptions, and *saṅkhāra* about that person. Those then lead to possible expectations (asking for a date, for example) and that is part of *viññāṇa upādānakkhandha.*

- It is critical to realize that all these are "mental." They are BASED ON the external world, but they are one's own mental experiences/expectations.
- If another person (Y) saw the same person at the same time, Y's mental impressions would be different from X's. Furthermore, Y may not even remember that person. If so, that event is not even a part of Y's *upādānakkhandha.*
- *Pañc**upādāna**kkhandhā* arise based on the perception of "me" and "mine."
- It is a good idea to read the posts in "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" until the above facts are understood.

Major Components of the Five "Clinging" Aggregates (*Pañcupādānakkkhandhā*)

3. First, we need to see which parts of the five aggregates that we "cling to" (or "keep close" or *upādāna.*) Then we will be able to see how that *upādāna* for the five aggregates CAN LEAD TO suffering.

- Something that we experience during every waking moment is our body and mind. Therefore, the physical body and all mental entities that arise contribute to the feeling of "me" or "mine."
- Then there are parents, a spouse, children. They are precious parts of "me." Then there are relatives, friends, etc.
- Of course, one may own a house, cars, other real estate, businesses, etc.
- Then the list expands to include the neighborhood, city, country, and different things in the world.
- Each person may have his/her order a bit differently, but you get the idea.

Major Components of *Pañcupādānakkkhandhā* Are Centered Around "Me" or "Mine"

4. Think about what you are mostly thinking, speaking, and working on. They all are related to what we mentioned in #3 above. They all involve "me" and "mine."

- Of course, anger towards someone has origins in the view/perception of that person. He/she must have done something opposing "me" or something related to "mine."
- An average human spends a significant portion of time watching useless movies, playing video games, getting drunk, etc. One would say those things are done to "keep me entertained." However, in a deeper sense, it is not that much different from a fish biting into a tasty bait on a hook. One is unable to "see" the bad consequences of such apparently "harmless" actions.
- That last one is a more profound point that cannot be seen until one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- That way of "seeing" (*diṭṭhi*) and perception (*saññā*) arises because one is unaware of the true nature of this world or *yathābhūta ñāṇa*. We can express that in several different ways. Being unaware of the Four Noble Truths, not comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*, not comprehending *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, etc.

Yathābhūta Ñāṇa – Understanding of the Reality About the World

5. All our actions based on greed, anger, and ignorance are based on not having **"*yathābhūta ñāṇa*." In other terms, it means not knowing how and why "good and bad things" happen to us.**

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- "Good and bad things" happen due to corresponding actions (*kamma*.) And *kammā* are done based on *saṅkhāra* (the way we think.) Strong *kamma* (that can bring good and bad outcomes and also future rebirth) happen due to (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra*.
- *Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes the principle of cause-and-effect in Buddha Dhamma.
- However, the results of most *kamma* appear only later, sometimes in future lives. That is why it is hard for many to believe in *kamma/kamma vipāka*. Also, **that is why it is not possible to make progress on the path until one can see the truth of the rebirth process.**
- Until that true nature (*yathābhūta ñāṇa*) is comprehended, **there is a "*satta*" or a "living being" generating *saṅkhāra* based on *avijjā*.**
- Note that "*satta*" is pronounced "saththa."

The Definition of a "Living Being" or "*Satta*"

6. The Buddha explained what is meant by a "*satta*" or a "living being" to Rādha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Satta Sutta (SN 23.2)." "*Rūpe kho, Rādha, yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā, tatra **satto**, tatra **visatto**, **tasmā sattoti vuccati**. Vedanāya ... saññāya ... saṅkhāresu ... viññāṇe yo chando yo rāgo yā nandī yā taṇhā, tatra satto, tatra visatto, tasmā sattoti vuccati"*

Translated (just the meaning): "Rādha, when there is desire (*chanda*), *rāga,* and a perception of high value (*nandī*) of material form (*rūpa*), there is clinging (***satto***), strong clinging (***visatto***) for form, and **then a living-being (satto) is spoken of**. Similarly, when there is desire (*chanda*), *rāga,* and a perception of high value (*nandī*) of *vedanā ... saññā ... saṅkhāra ... viññāṇa*, then a living-being is spoken of."

- Other translations at, "WebLink: suttacentral: Sentient Beings (SN 23.2)."
- Note that the Pāli word "*satta*" means "clinging" or "attach." A strong version of clinging is "*visatta*."
- Therefore, any living-being (whether a *Deva*, *Brahma*, or a human) is a "*satta*" as long as the futility of craving for sense pleasures is not understood. A "*satta*" has the perception of "me" and "mine."

7. **In other words, as long as there is *upādāna* for *pañcakkhandhā* (i.e., as long as there is *pañcupādānakkhandhā*) there is a "living being" or a "*satta*."**

- Also, note that one transcends the "*satta*" status when one becomes an *Ariya puggala*." A *pugggala* has overcome the "*satta*" status at eight levels (*Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmi*, etc.)
- Also, a *Bodhisatta* is still a "*satta*," but proceeding towards "*Bodhi*" or the "*Buddhahood*."
- Note that "*satta*" is pronounced "saththa".) See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1"and the second part referred to in there.
- Now, let us see how what we discussed above ties up with *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

Paṭicca Samuppāda Process Only Depends on *Avijjā*

8. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process does not care WHO is doing (*abhi*) *saṅkhāra*. The results are determined by WHAT KIND of *saṅkhāra* are involved. **That *saṅkhāra* generation is associated with *pañcupādānakkhandhā*** or ones' cravings/desires/expectations (related to *anusaya, āsava, gati*, etc.) Results are according to actions. Doing a particular type of action (*kamma* via *saṅkhāra*) will lead to the fruits (*kamma vipāka*.)

- There is no need to invoke a "me" or a "self" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. But, of course, such (*abhi*) *saṅkhāra* are generated BECAUSE there is a sense of "me" or "self." **The critical step is to realize the fruitlessness of acting with a sense of "me."**

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- Another way to say that is, actions are based on one's *gati* (habits/character.) See, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)."
- Instead, these days, people spend countless hours debating whether there is a "self" or not. **That time would be better spent if one tried to understand WHY acting with the view and perception of a "me" will lead to suffering.**
- There is a perception of a "me" and "mine" until one's defiled *gati* are removed.

9. The ultimate truth is that there is no "self." **That can be seen easily from the fact that an *Arahant* is not reborn after death.** If there was an "unchanging self," that *Arahant* would still have to exist in one of the 31 realms after death.

- However, until one FULLY comprehends that fact (at the *Arahant* stage,) one does not FULLY realize that there is no "self" involved in this whole process. Until then there is the perception of a "me" and "mine."
- **Therefore, there will be a "self" generating (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra* and making conditions for future suffering until the *Arahant* stage.**
- Another way to say that is there will be a ***pañcupādānakkhandhā* associated with any living-being (*satta*.)** An *Arahant* will have ***pañcakkhandhā*** until death but would have no ***upādāna*** left for it. Thus, there is no ***pañcupādānakkhandhā*** for a living *Arahant*.

Saṅkhāra Lead to *Pañca Upādāna Khandhā* (*Pañcupādānakkkhandhā*)

10. There is nothing wrong with recalling past events. The problem arises when we attach to them and start re-creating those events in our minds to generate *abhisaṅkhāra*.

- *Kammā* (which lead to *kamma vipāka*) generated in three ways: *mano kamma, vacī kamma*, and *kāya kamma*. **They are done via *mano saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*.** See, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."
- *Mano kamma* (our spontaneous thoughts) arise automatically according to our *gati*.
- *Vacī kamma* ("talking to ourselves" and speech) arise due to conscious thoughts (done with *vitakka/vicāra*.)
- *Kāya kamma* also arise due to conscious thoughts and have the highest *javana* power because they involve moving bodily actions; see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."
- Many people think "talking to ourselves," or "daydreaming" is not bad because we don't physically do anything. Even though they are less potent than *kāya kamma, vacī kamma* can add up and lead to strong *kamma vipāka,* as we discuss next.

"Thinking to Oneself" Is *Vacī Saṅkhāra*

11. When we "talk to ourselves" (i.e., consciously think about something,) we mostly recall a significant past event. Then we analyze that event with *vitakka/vicāra* and either "re-live" that experience or "make future plans" based on that previous event. *Vitakka/vicāra* means analyzing it in detail and incorporating our desires. That leads to generating more and more *vacī saṅkhāra* on that event; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra." Of course, if we "really get into it," we may do *kāya saṅkhāra* too.

- Also, one could make up a "future event" that one would LIKE TO experience and that also becomes a part of *pañcakkhandha* (this is the "*anāgata*" or "future" component of the 11 components of any of the five aggregates).
- All the above involve "*pañcaupādānakkhandha*" (*pañca upādāna khandha*). In other words, one is now "pulling that event back, close to one's mind" and consciously generating more *vacī* (and possibly *kāya*) *saṅkhāra*.

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- That is why "*upādāna*" is such a critical step in a *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle. The two stages of "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" and "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" really involves many, many *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles running inside them. See, "Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda."

Status of an *Arahant* – Wrong Point to Start

12. Many people are afraid of *Nibbāna*, thinking that it leads to the "extinguishment" of oneself. See, "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) – Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering."

- But the deeper point is that we go through so much suffering in the rebirth process BECAUSE of our wrong view and perception of a "me" and "mine". Inevitable temptations lead to highly-immoral actions (*pāpa kamma*) that will trap us in the four lower realms (*apāyā*) with unimaginable suffering.
- Such *pāpa kamma* are stronger versions of *akusala kamma.* See, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."
- The first step is to see "*anicca* nature." Accumulating things perceived to be "valuables" makes no sense in two ways. We have to struggle to maintain those and will have to abandon them at least when we die. See, "Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections."
- The second point is that if we do immoral deeds to get them, those deeds will lead to bad rebirths and suffering.
- We can see only one part of the *apāyā*, the animal realm. Even then we mostly see our own pets, and not the unimaginable suffering that animals (in forests, jungles, and especially in the oceans) go through. There are no "old animals" there. Any old animal is eaten alive as soon as it becomes old and a bit slow.

Buddha Did Not Teach Anything That He Did Not Verify by Himself

13. Some of the above discussion may not be clear to everyone. It is a "previously unheard worldview" that only a Buddha can discover. However, learning Dhamma and living a moral life will gradually make those things clear.

- There are several *suttā* where the Buddha stated that he did not declare attaining the *Buddhahood* until he verified for himself the "real nature" of this world. For example, he verified the existence of the 31 realms and how a given being dies in one realm, and the rebirth takes place in another. Furthermore, he saw how that happens via the natural *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process.
- As we learn Dhamma, more and more will become clear. At some point, one would have developed "unbreakable faith" in Buddha Dhamma. That is when one has "*saddhā*." That will become solidified when one starts understanding that all suffering has roots in the perception of a "me" and "mine."
- Also see, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?"

3.6.7.4 Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Diṭṭhi

June 16, 2020

Getting Rid of "Me and Mine" Is a Step-by-Step Process

1. In the previous post, we discussed that the perception of "me" and "mine" is the root cause of suffering. See, "Me" and "Mine" – The Root Cause of Suffering."

- We discussed that one would not be able to remove that perception of "me" until attaining the *Arahanthood*.
- Therefore, that should not be the focus at the beginning of one's practice.
- **First**, one needs to get rid of the **ten types of wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*.)** Until one comprehends the truth of *kamma/vipāka*, the existence of the rebirth process, the creation of a "mental body" (a

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gandhabba in the case of a human *bhava*) at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, etc. one cannot get on the path to *Nibbāna*. See, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

- **The second step** is to remove ***sakkāya diṭṭhi***. We will discuss that in this post.

Diṭṭhi, *Saññā*, and *Citta Vipallāsa* – Three Obstacles in Getting Rid of Any Bad Habit

2. ***Vipallāsa* means "distortions" in mind.** If we do not have a clear understanding of the relevant concepts, we may take unwise actions based on our wrong views. Let us take an example to clarify.

- Consider an alcoholic, a person addicted to drinking. The addiction comes from the perception that it is good to have a drink to forget about any problems one may have, or just to enjoy that "drunken state of mind."
- Urged on by a good friend, that person starts to learn about the consequences of drinking. It can affect one's health adversely. Furthermore, it can make one do immoral deeds while drunk, and that can bring bad rebirth. Now he fully understands that he had wrong views about drinking, i.e., he had ***diṭṭhi vipallāsa*** about drinking. Now *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* about drinking are absent in his mind.
- Yet, he finds that the temptation to "have a drink" is still there. While he would not get drunk as before, the desire to "have a drink" can popup once-in-a-while. For example, if a friend is having a drink, he may join in. Thus, ***saññā vipallāsa*** is still there. To get rid of that, he needs to keep contemplating the adverse consequences of drinking and also keep resisting the urge to have another drink.

3. Then, if that person keeps up with that practice, he will lose that *saññā vipallāsa* too. But a trace of the desire may be left as ***citta vipallāsa***. Under extreme temptation, he may think about "having a drink." That is *citta vipallāsa*. Now, another effect of "continued practice" will take care of that too in a bit different way.

- With time, his body would not even tolerate a single drink. Instead of getting satisfaction from that drink, he might get a headache. That is when he would voluntarily give up even a single drink.
- That is because our bodily functions can be affected by the "state of mind". That starts happening from the very beginning, even while one is trying to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca* nature.) But the effects become clear after one has made significant progress.
- That is a simple explanation. More details at "Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra."

Only *Diṭṭhi Vipallāsa* Removed at the *Sotāpanna* Stage

4. At the *Sotāpanna* stage, one would only "see with wisdom" that it is unfruitful to consider anything as "me'" or "mine". As we saw in the previous post mentioned above, it is one's body that one considers being "one's own."

- The Buddha dissected what we consider to be "me" into five parts. One physical and four mental entities. That comes from our perception of "me" as "my body" and "my mind." Mind phenomena separate into four parts: we feel things happening (*vedanā*) and recognize them (*saññā*.) Based on that, we think about how to respond (*saṅkhāra*) and act with certain expectations (*viññāṇa*.)
- We have discussed those five entities or aggregates in detail. See, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."
- Our **craving** for those five aggregates (*pañca khandhā*) is *pañc**upādāna**kkhandhā*.
- We crave those because we have the wrong view that those five aggregates are fruitful and provide long-lasting happiness. That wrong view is ***sakkāya diṭṭhi.***

Sakkāya Means *Pañcupādānakkhandhā*

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5. As stated in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (MN 44), *sakkāya* means *pañcupādānakkhandhā* (or *pañca* ***upādāna*** *khandhā*.)

- We can see that by looking at the meaning of *sakkāya*, which comes from "*sath"* + "*kāya*." Here "*sath"* means "good" and "*kāya"* means "collection."
- In the five aggregates, we have five aggregates or 'collections" or "piles." For example, as we remember, the *rūpa* aggregate includes one's internal *rūpa* and external *rūpa*. Those include the present *rūpa*, past *rūpa*, and our visualizations of "future *rūpa*."
- Out of them, the most important is our own body or "internal *rūpa"* (its present status, our memory of its past, and our expectations of its future status.) Invariably, those "internal *rūpa"* are in the *rūpa* ***upādāna*** *khandhā.*
- That *rūpa* ***upādāna*** *khandhā* will also include external *rūpa* that we like or crave for. That may include one's family, friends, possessions, etc.
- Then the other four aggregates would include our mental attributes involving *rūpa*.
- Since we assume all five ***upādāna*** *khandhā* to be **good for us or fruitful**, i.e., they are ***sath kāya*** **(which rhymes as *sakkāya*.)**
- More details at "Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda."

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi Means the View That *Pañcupādānakkhandhā* Are Fruitful

6. Now we have a good idea of what is meant by *sakkāya* ***diṭṭhi***. It just means we like/crave those parts of the five aggregates because we have the **view** that they are fruitful and will bring long-lasting happiness.

- We become happy when all those that we crave provide us pleasure. That means they stay exactly as we want them to be.
- If things do not proceed the way we want, then we worry and suffer.
- The *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi Sutta* (SN 22.155) summarizes what we discussed in #5 and #6.

7. "WebLink: suttacentral: *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi Sutta* (SN 22.155)" states, "*rūpe kho, bhikkhave, sati, rūpaṃ upādāya, rūpaṃ abhinivissa* ***sakkāyadiṭṭhi uppajjati.*** *Vedanāya sati … saññāya sati … saṅkhāresu sati … viññāṇe sati, viññāṇaṃ upādāya, viññāṇaṃ abhinivissa* ***sakkāya diṭṭhi uppajjati***."

Translated: "When one is attached to various *rūpa* (especially one's body), places a high value on them, ***sakkāya diṭṭhi*** **(identity view) arises**. When one attaches to *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* associated with such *rūpa*, and places a high value on them, the **identity view arises."**

- In other words, one has *sakkāya diṭṭhi* if one sees this world as fruitful and can lead to long-lasting happiness.
- With that wrong view, one is under the impression that it is possible to have total control of one's future by making sure to accumulate "enough stuff" thereby ensuring long-lasting happiness.
- **That perception of "having full control" is also expressed by "*atta*." Note that the mundane meaning of "a person" is usually expressed by "*attā*" with a "long a."**
- Therefore, there are two meanings of the Pāli word "*atta*." The ultimate or absolute (*paramattha*) meaning of "having full control" is expressed by "*atta*." The ordinary or relative meaning (*vohāra*) is "***attā***" with a "long a" that refers to a "person."
- Let us discuss this further.

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Atta Can Have a Mundane (*vohāra*) or an Absolute (*Paramattha*) Meaning

8. Even though a "person" does not exist in the *paramattha* sense, any living person has to use "me" and "mine" in interactions with others. Even the Buddha talked about "HIS" previous lives. He often started a discourse by saying, "let ME explain this concept."

- Furthermore, the Buddha emphasized that one should abide by the accepted standard rules of society. It is unwise to try to enforce the fact that in ultimate reality, there is no "me" or a "self."
- There were many wealthy people, and even kings, who had attained *magga phala* and still engaged in their mundane "householder" activities. Of course, at the *Arahant* stage, one has to become a *bhikkhu*.
- Throughout the *Tipiṭaka*, the word "*atta"* appears with several different meanings. It is important to be able to use the appropriate meaning in a given context.
- **That is no different from using the word "right" in the following two contexts with entirely different meanings:** "turn right" and "you are right." In the first, it refers to the direction, and in the second, it means "correct."

Atta Meaning "Me" in Mundane Usage

9. There are many *Tipiṭaka* verses, where "*attā"* means a "person." The following are several examples.

- "***Attā****naṃ damayanti paṇḍitā"* in *Dhammapada* verse 6.80 means "The wise persons control **themselves"**.
- "***Atta****no sukhamicchati"* in *Dhammapada* verse 21.291 means "one seeks one's **own** happiness." Also, note the word *iccha* (desire) in "*sukhamicchati"* is *"sukham" + "icchati."*
- In the *Attadīpa Sutta* (SN 22.43), "***atta****dīpā viharatha"* means "make an island of **yourself,"** meaning "one has to seek one's own refuge."
- We will discuss the absolute or *paramattha* meaning of *"attā"* in the next post.

What is in "Me" (*Attā*)?

10. From ancient times, people have wondered about how to define "me" (or "*attā"* in Pāli.) Of course, one's body is the priority. But one's identity is also related to one's mental activities. Thoughts, feelings, perceptions are unique to each person.

- Anything that one can think of as a part of "me" or 'self" or "*attā"* is included in the five entities of *rūpa*, *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*.
- **It is only a Buddha that can do a thorough analysis and describes a person with those five "parameters."** That analysis is taught by all Buddhas.
- Of course, each Buddha figures that out each time, on his own.
- Normally there is at most one Buddha in a given eon. But our current eon is a special one with five Buddhas. Remnants of the teachings of the previous Buddha (Buddha Kassapa) prevailed through *Vedic* teachings and were there when Buddha Gotama was born.

That Terminology Was There Even Before Buddha Gotama – How Is That Possible?

11. Many people have the perception that Buddha Gotama "adopted" that five-fold analysis from the *Vedas* because those terms appeared in *Vedic* literature before Buddha Gotama.

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- There was Buddha Kassapa on this Earth before Buddha Gotama. Buddha Kassapa's teachings (especially the true meanings of key concepts) were lost with time. But many terms, including the concepts of *kamma, kamma vipāka*, five aggregates, and many others, were incorporated into *Vedic* teachings and transmitted through many generations. Of course, the *Vedic* teachings used the Sanskrit language, which was derived from Pāli or Magadha language. Sanskrit means "derived from" ("*san*" + "*krutha*" or සන් කෘත or සංස්කෘත in Sinhala.)
- The Pāli words like *kamma, Nibbāna, Paṭicca Samuppāda* were made "more impressive-sounding" by mostly adding the "r" sound. Those three Pāli words became *karma, nirvāna*, and *Pratītyasamutpāda,* respectively, in Sanskrit.
- The same is true for the concept of five aggregates or *pañca* ***khandha***. The *Vedic* teachings adopted them as five ***skandhas.***

Whose Concepts are *Kamma*, *Nibbāna*, *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, etc.?

12. A full account requires possibly a whole book. But there are several instances in the *Tipiṭaka* where Buddha Gotama explained to various *Brahmins* that many of their teachings originated with Buddha Kassapa.

- For example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Māgandhiya Sutta* (MN 75), Buddha Gotama has a conversation with a *Brahmin* who quoted a verse from the *Vedas*. Buddha Gotama then says that verse was initially uttered by Buddha Kassapa and that it come down through generations in the *Vedas* without the true meaning. I have discussed that in the post, "Arogyā Paramā Lābhā.."
- When Prince Siddhartha was born, such *Vedic* teachings were there. We have a somewhat similar situation right now, with many vital concepts misinterpreted.
- I mentioned the above because I see in online forums many people wonder whether Buddha Gotama "adopted" *Vedic* concepts. Those concepts originally came from Buddha Kassapa. But any Buddha discovers them by his own efforts.
- Then the question comes up as to the "evolution of humans." There was no evolution of humans. Humans existed on Earth (with *Brahma*-like bodies) at the beginning of the Earth. This is why it would take a book to discuss all these things. I have given a brief account of the "beginnings" in "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

We will discuss the concept of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* further in the next post.

3.6.7.5 Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – "Me and Mine" View

June 23, 2020

The View of "Me and Mine"- Only For About a Hundred Years

1. An average human has the wrong view that it is beneficial to consider mind-pleasing things in this world as "me" or "mine". As we discussed in the previous few posts, the most valuable *rūpa* in the world is one's physical body. Then there are parents, spouses, children, friends, etc that are considered to be "mine." See, "Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa."

- It is critical to realize that all those things last only about 100 years.
- **Upon death, even if one is reborn human, it will be a different body and a different set of humans that will become "me" and "mine."** We would not even know who we were in our previous life. We would not know what happened to all those "loved ones" we had in the previous life.
- That is the "big picture" that we need to focus on. That big picture can be discovered only by a Buddha.

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- It would be impossible for any other human to discover the "real nature of the wider world of 31 realms" where a given living-being goes through the birth/death process.
- But once explained by a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha, one can see the truth in his teachings.

"Me and Mine" View Can Lead to Immoral Actions

2. Based on that wrong view of "me" and "mine" we are sometimes forced to do immoral actions. Think about it carefully. **If we lie, steal, or hurt others, such actions can always be traced back to "taking care of me or mine."**

- It is critical to understand that this **wrong view of "me and mine" (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) is different from the perception of "me and mine."** *Diṭṭhi* means "view."
- Even after getting rid of the wrong view of "me and mine" that wrong-perception will still be there. That perception of "me" or the innate feeling of "me" will go away only at the *Arahant* stage.
- However, just "seeing" that it is is not fruitful to act on the basis of "me and mine" is enough for the mind to stay away from doing highly-immoral deeds. That "seeing" happens when one becomes a *Sotāpanna*.
- Of course, it may not be easy to comprehend. That is why the Buddha said, "this Dhamma has not been known to the world."

"Me and Mine" View Cannot Be Removed by Will Power – It Is Lost via Understanding the "True Nature"

3. The logic of Buddha Dhamma cannot be understood without the underlying principles. Those underlying principles are the rebirth process, laws of *kamma*, how *Paṭicca Samuppāda* to give rise to new births, etc. For that, one first needs to get rid of the ten wrong views and learn basic concepts like *gati, anusaya*, etc. See, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

- It is not easy to put all that together and see the truth of the "wider world-view." Yet, without that foundation, it is not possible to see that big picture and realize the truth of it.
- It may be hard to believe, but just that "understanding of the big picture" will lead to the removal of 99% of the "gunk" that has been accumulated in our minds in a rebirth process that has no discernible beginning.
- I recommend reading the recently compiled English text of discourse on this subject by the late Waharaka *Thero*: WebLink: PDF file: How to Attain Nibbāna as a Buddhist Layman – Part 1

That "Big Picture" Must be Learnt From a Buddha

4. If one has not heard the above from a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha, that person — no matter how intelligent — would not be able to figure that out by him/herself.

- The Buddha called such a person "*assutavā puthujjano*." That means "an ignorant person who had not heard this Dhamma."
- Of course, many people cannot and will not agree with that "new Dhamma". They do not have the capability to grasp it. They may not be willing to discard the wrong views that they have. There is nothing we can do about that.
- I have come this far in the rebirth process because I also had been incapable of grasping that in my previous lives.
- So, all we can do is try our best to understand. Even if one cannot understand, one needs to live a moral life and engage in meritorious deeds, so that the understanding can come in future life.

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Who Is an *Assutavā Puthujjano*?

5. There are many *suttā* where the Buddha described an "***assutavā puthujjano***."

For example, the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Paṭipadā Sutta* (SN 22.44)" states, "*Katamā ca, bhikkhave,* ***sakkāya samudayagāminī paṭipadā****? Idha, bhikkhave,* ***assutavā puthujjano*** *ariyānaṃ adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto, sappurisānaṃ adassāvī sappurisadhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto,* ***rūpaṃ attato samanupassati****, rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ; attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ.* ***Vedanaṃ …***

saññaṃ …saṅkhāre …viññāṇaṃ attato samanupassati"

Translated: "And what, *bhikkhus*, is the **path leading to the origination of identity view**? Here, *bhikkhus*, **an ignorant person who has not heard Dhamma** … **regards form as self** … ***vedanā*** as self … ***saññā*** as self … ***saṅkhāra*** as self … ***viññāṇa*** as self"

- "***Rūpaṃ attato samanupassati***" means, "regards form (meaning one's body) as "me" in one of four ways. In the same way, that person may consider each of the other four aggregates as "me" in one of four ways.
- Thus, considering each of the five aggregates in four ways "to be mine", leads to the "self-view" or 'identity view". That is "twenty-types of *sakkāya diṭṭhi"* or "***vīsativatthukā*** *sakkāya diṭṭhi*." See, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Nayasamuṭṭhāna* (Ne 36 / Netti 5)" of *Nettipakaraṇa*.
- Anyone who has not heard the correct explanation of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is an "uninformed/ignorant" human or ***assutavā puthujjano.*** That is why most people today belong to this category. Even when explained, some people have a hard time grasping this "previously unheard Dhamma."

Sutavā Ariyasāvako – One Who Has Heard and Comprehended Dhamma

6. The opposite of an ***assutavā puthujjano*** is a ***sutavā ariyasāvako***, who **has heard and comprehended the correct teachings** of the Buddha. Such a person knows the dangers in attaching to worldly things.

- There are many *suttā* in SN 35 (especially SN 35. 1 through SN 35. 12) that discuss a ***sutavā ariyasāvako***. For example, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Ajjhattāniccātītānāgata Sutta* (SN 35.7)" says: "*Cakkhuṃ, bhikkhave, aniccaṃ atītānāgataṃ; ko pana vādo paccuppannassa. Evaṃ passaṃ, bhikkhave,* ***sutavā ariyasāvako*** *atītasmiṃ cakkhusmiṃ anapekkho hoti; anāgataṃ cakkhuṃ nābhinandati; paccuppannassa cakkhussa* ***nibbidāya virāgāya nirodhāya paṭipanno*** *hoti. Sotaṃ aniccaṃ … ghānaṃ aniccaṃ …*"

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, the eye of the past and future (let alone the present) is of *anicca* nature, . Seeing this, a **learned noble disciple** doesn't attach to the eye of the past, he doesn't look forward to enjoying the eye in the future, and **he practices for non-attachment, dispassion, and cessation** regarding the eye of the present. The ear … nose …"

- Note that translating "*anicca*" as "impermanent" does not make any sense. The "eye of the past" has already been destroyed. There is no need to talk about the impermanence of it. What the verse says is that it is not beneficial to recall one's past and think fondly about it, hoping to enjoy such an eye in the future.

An *Assutavā Puthujjano* Has *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*

7. Thus ***sakkāya diṭṭhi*** **(identity or self-view)** arises because one takes one's body as "me." Of course, one may take one's ***vedanā***, ***saññā, saṅkhāra,*** and ***viññāṇa*** as self too. In other words, anyone who **views** one or more of the five aggregates as "mine" has ***sakkāya diṭṭhi.***

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"WebLink: suttacentral: *Sakkāyadiṭṭhi Sutta* (SN 22.155)" the Buddha says, "*rūpe kho, bhikkhave, sati, rūpaṃ upādāya, rūpaṃ abhinivissa* ***sakkāya diṭṭhi*** *uppajjati. Vedanāya sati ... saññāya sati ... saṅkhāresu sati ... viññāṇe sati, viññāṇaṃ upādāya, viññāṇaṃ abhinivissa* ***sakkāya diṭṭhi*** *uppajjati.*

- OR, "When one focuses on *rūpa* when one is "immersed" in *rūpa* and keep them close (in one's mind), **identity view** arises. The same can happen with *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa.*

Then the Buddha asks, *"Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ* ***niccaṃ*** *vā* ***aniccaṃ*** *vā"ti*?

- OR, "*bhikkhus,* are those *rūpā* of ***nicca*** or ***anicca*** nature?"
- *Anicca* and *nicca* are complex Pāli words with multiple (but related) meanings. See, See, "Anicca – True Meaning."
- Those two words are related to "*icca*" or "*icchā*" meaning liking or desire. See, "Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections."
- We will discuss the correct meaning of *"Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ* ***niccaṃ*** *vā* ***aniccaṃ*** *vā"ti*? in #9 below. First, let us look at the common INCORRECT meaning of it.

Critical Error in Equating "*Nicca* and *Anicca*" in Pāli as "*Nitya* and *Anitya*" in Sanskrit

8. The INCORRECT translation of *"Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ* ***niccaṃ*** *vā* ***aniccaṃ*** *vā"ti*? is, "*bhikkhus,* are those *rūpā* **permanent** or **impermanent**?"

- That is the English translation that appears in most current English texts. It is WRONG!
- The Pāli word "*nicca*" DOES NOT mean "permanent" and "*anicca*" DOES NOT mean "impermanent".
- However, the Sanskrit words "*nitya*" and "*anitya*" DO MEAN "permanent" and "impermanent".
- **That grave mistake of confusing Pāli words with wrong Sanskrit words has kept so many people from grasping the correct Buddha Dhamma.**
- Pāli words for "permanent" is *niyata* AND *dhuva.* Impermanence expressed as "*aniyata*" or "*addhuva*".
- For the life of me, I do not understand why all these "learned *bhikkhus* and scholars" refuse to take a bit of time to go through the *Tipiṭaka* and figure this out. **They should keep in mind that teaching wrong Dhamma is an offense.** The Buddha admonished that dealing with Dhamma is like handling a snake. If you get hold of the wrong end, you will be in danger.

Correct Translation of "*Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā"ti*?

9. In fact, there are more *suttā* in this series that probe deeper into how the root causes of suffering are tied up to the view of "me" and "mine" based on the high-value for world objects.

For example, WebLink: suttacentral: *Ānanda Sutta* (SN 22.159) further clarifies what we discussed in #6 above. In that *sutta,* the Buddha explains to Ven. Ānanda how attachment to *rūpa* with VIEW of "me and mine" leads to suffering and, thus, is the wrong view. The conversation goes as follows.

- "*Taṃ kiṃ maññasi, ānanda, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā"ti*?
- "*Aniccaṃ, bhante*".
- "*Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vā taṃ sukhaṃ vā"ti*?
- "*Dukkhaṃ, bhante*".

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- "*Yaṃ panāniccaṃ dukkhaṃ vipariṇāmadhammaṃ,* ***kallaṃ nu*** *taṃ samanupassituṃ:* ***'etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'****'ti*? [***kalla*** : [adj.] 1. **clever**; able; 2. healthy; sound; 3.ready; 4. proper.]
- "*No hetaṃ, bhante*".

Translation:

- "What do you think, Ānanda? Can anyone maintain *rūpa* to one's liking?"
- "One cannot (*aniccaṃ*), *Bhante*."
- "If one cannot maintain something to one's liking, does the lead to suffering or happiness?"
- "Suffering, *Bhante*."
- "If something cannot be maintained to one's liking, leads to suffering, and is subject to unexpected changes, **is it wise** to regard that as: **'This is mine, I am this, this is my self or identity'**?"
- "No, *Bhante*."

Then the Buddha asks about the other four aggregates (the mental aggregates) of *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa.*

- Venerable Ānanda agrees that those are also unfit to be "taken as mine or my identity."

Is It Wise to Take the Five Aggregates As "Me and Mine"?

10. **The key point is that these *suttā* only talk about whether it is SUITABLE or WISE to take any of the five aggregates as me or mine.**

- That pertains only to one's **view of a "me."** Getting rid of that VIEW is getting rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi.*
- One may still have the **feeling/perception of a "me."** That goes away only at the *Arahant* stage.
- Yet many people today try to start with "I do not exist" (with the incorrect translation of *anatta* as "no-self"). It is ridiculous to say, "I do not exist." It is obvious that we all exist.
- We will discuss **the concept of *anatta*** in the next post. That basically says one will be helpless in the rebirth process with the wrong view and wrong perception of a "me." That "me" will go through uncountable "bad births" with that wrong view/perception of a "me."

One Could Be Reborn a Human, *Deva*, *Brahma*, Animal, Hell-Being – Which One Is "Me"?

11. Think about that. Is "me" a human, animal, a *Brahma*, (or any of the many births possible)? This is why one cannot comprehend Buddha Dhamma without understanding the "big picture" of the Buddha about this world.

- That "big picture" is the non-stop rebirth process within the 31 realms of this world.
- It also includes the laws of *kamma* and *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Here, *Paṭicca Samuppāda* explains how different existences (*bhava*) arise due to *abhisaṅkhāra* (strong *kamma*.)
- It is those *abhisaṅkhāra* (done with *avijjā*) that lead to different existences as a human, *Deva*, *Brahma*, animal, hell-being, etc.
- Any living-being will be "preparing one's own future births" via generating corresponding *abhisaṅkhāra* (or good bad *kamma*) due to ignorance (*avijjā*.) That was the conclusion of the series of posts on "Origin of Life." See, "Origin of Life – One Creates One's Own Future Lives."
- That *avijjā* will reduce by a huge fraction when one gets rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi.* It will completely go away at the *Arahant* stage with the removal of "*asmi māna.*"

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3.6.7.6 Atta – Two Very Different Meanings

July 1, 2020

First, "*atta* (*attā*)" is pronounced with the "th" sound, as in "*metta* (*mettā*)". See, #12 of ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1."

Words With Double Meanings in English

1. A number of English words are spelled the same way and pronounced the same way, but have different meanings. For example, let us consider the word, "mine."

- The word **mine** is a possessive adjective. For example, "That house is **mine**" means the house belongs to me.
- **Mine** is also a noun. It can refer to a place where minerals (coal, gold, etc) are dug out of the earth.
- A **mine** (or **landmine**) also refers to a bomb that is buried underground. It can explode when someone steps on it or drives over it. They are used in war.
- There are many other words like that. We need to know which meaning to use based on the context (how it is used). Another simple word is right. It means a **direction** in "turn **right** at the traffic light". But it means something entirely different in, "you are **right**" meaning "you are **correct**."

Atta (and *Attā*) – Two Very Different Meanings

2. Many Pāli words have double meanings. In addition, **many Pāli words have a mundane meaning and a deeper meaning**. **We need to know which one to use depending on the situation.**

- One becomes good at figuring out which meaning is relevant in a given context, only after having a good understanding of Buddha Dhamma. A good understanding comes especially with practice, not merely by reading about Buddha Dhamma.
- That is why it is not a good idea to resort to Pāli dictionaries alone. See, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?"
- Pāli word "*atta*" has two frequently used meanings. One is the mundane meaning of "person" or "self." Let us discuss that first.

Atta Meaning "Person" or "Self" in Mundane Usage

3. There are many *Tipiṭaka* verses, where "*atta*" means a "person." The following are several examples.

- "***Attā**naṃ damayanti paṇḍitā*" in *Dhammapada* verse 6.80 means "The wise **persons** control themselves."
- "***Atta**no sukhamicchatī*" in *Dhammapada* verse 21.291 means "one seeks one's **own** happiness." Also, note the word *iccha* (desire) in "*sukhamicchatī*" is *"sukhaṃ*" + "*icchati.*"
- In the *Attadīpa Sutta* (SN 22.43), "***atta**dīpā viharatha*" means "make an island of **yourself**," meaning "**one** has to seek one's own refuge."

Various Wrong Views based on "Person" or "Self"

4. Humans always wondered what it is that feels like "me". What defines a "me" or a "self" or "*attā*?" Based on such thinking, they come to various wrong conclusions or wrong views about a "self."

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1) the Buddha described 62 types of wrong views that people have.

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- All these wrong views can be divided into primarily two categories (the other views are variations of these two.) In the terminology used today, we can list those two categories as follows.

Permanent Soul (*Sassata Vāda*): A given person has a permanent soul in *Abrahamic* religions (or *ātma* or *ātman* in Hinduism.) When the physical body dies, "the soul" or "*ātma*" gets hold of another existence. In *Abrahamic* religions, that next existence is forever in either heaven or hell. In Hinduism, one may go through many "incarnations" and would finally merge with *Mahā Brahma* to attain a permanent existence.

Materialistic View (*Ucceheda Vāda*): When the present life ends, no more future lives or existences. The material body is solely responsible for generating our thoughts (in the brain.) Many scientists today belong to this category.

5. The verse describing *sassata vāda*: "*Tatra, bhikkhave, ye te samaṇabrāhmaṇā* ***sassatavādā sassataṃ attānañca*** *lokañca paññapenti ..*"

means, "when those ascetics and *brahmins* assert that the **self** and the cosmos are **eternal** .."

- *Sassata* means "eternal."

The verse describing *uccheda vāda*: "*Tatra, bhikkhave, ye te samaṇabrāhmaṇā* ***ucchedavādā sato sattassa ucchedaṃ*** *vināsaṃ vibhavaṃ paññapenti ..*" meaning, "they assert the **annihilation of an existing being**.."

- *Uccheda* means to "break off" or "cut off." Materialists believe that we just live this life.

With the Mundane Meaning of *Atta*, *Anatta* is Not Used as Its Opposite

6. Therefore, in ALL of the above cases, the word "*atta*" refers to what we traditionally call a "self."

- In simple terms, materialists have the wrong view that a "self" has only this life.
- People in the other camp have the wrong view that a "soul" is forever.
- The Buddha pointed out that both views are wrong. A "self" would come to existence as long as appropriate causes and conditions are there. But there is no "permanent self" like a soul. An *Arahant* would not be reborn. He/she would have removed those causes and conditions for rebirth.
- In both cases, the word "*anatta* (or *anattā*)" is NEVER used to indicate the opposite of *attā*. The word "*anatta*" is NEVER used to indicate that a "self is absent." For example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Ānanda Sutta* (SN 44.10) Vacchagotta comes to the Buddha asked "Master Gotama, is it correct to say that there is a "self"?" He used the phrase, "***atthi attā***" to ask whether there is a "self." Then he phrased it the opposite way and asked, " is it not correct to say that there is a "self"?" There he used the phrase, "***na atthi attā***" to ask whether a "self" does not exist. See, "Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – No "Unchanging Self."

Now, let us discuss the absolute or *paramattha* meaning of *"attā*." Here, the opposite of *attā* (or "*anatta*") indicates two facts: (i) Any worldly thing does not have an essence. (ii) One would become helpless at the end if one attaches to those worldly things. These meanings need to be used in the context of the three characteristics of nature or *Tilakkhaṇa*.

Anatta As a Characteristic of Nature – No Essence in Worldly Things

7. This usage of the word "*anatta*" indicates "no refuge" or "no essence" to refer to THINGS IN THIS WORLD. It could also mean one would become "helpless" at the end if one pursues worldly things with greed or cravings. **This involves the deeper meaning of "*atta*" being "with refuge" or "with essence."**

- One would be safe and protected by overcoming the *anatta* nature. That is *Nibbāna*. Only *Nibbāna* has the "*atta*" nature.

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- **In this context, the three words *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta* describe CHARACTERISTICS of this world. They have NOTHING TO DO with the context of a "self" directly.**
- In brief, ***anicca* means that "worldly things" cannot be maintained to anyone's satisfaction in the long-run.** Those "worldly things" include not only material things but also mental attributes, among them *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*.
- **IF someone craves them and attaches to them, then that person will be subjected to future suffering.** That comes in two parts. First, one would become distressed because those desires will not be fulfilled at the end. Secondly, if one does immoral actions to get them, then one will have to face bad consequences of such actions (including rebirths in bad existences.)
- **Thus, in the end, attachment to worldly things will be of "no essence."** Those struggles would be in vain and are fruitless. **One would become helpless by pursuing such efforts.**

Anattha and *Attha* Are Strong Versions of *Anatta* and *Atta*

8. I have explained in a previous post that the words "*iccha*" and "*aniccha*" have the same meanings as "*icca*" and "*anicca*" but with stronger emphasis. See, "Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections."

- In the same way, "*atta*" and "*anatta*" in the present context have stronger versions indicated by "*attha*" and "*anattha*."
- In the WebLink: suttacentral: *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11), the Buddha described a person engaged in *kāmasukhallikānuyoga* or *attakilamathānuyoga* as "*anatthasaṃhito*."
- The verse at the beginning of the *sutta* is, "*Yo cāyaṃ kāmesu* ***kāmasukhallikānuyogo*** *hīno gammo pothujjaniko* ***anariyo anatthasaṃhito****, yo cāyaṃ* ***attakilamathānuyogo*** *dukkho* ***anariyo anatthasaṃhito***."
- Here, the word "***anatthasaṃhito"*** (***anattha*** + ***san*** + ***hito***) means an *anariya* or an ignorance average person is helpless because of the wrong views.

9. Furthermore, "*attha*" also indicates "truth" ("*artha*" in Sinhala) and "*anattha*" indicates "untruth or useless" ("*anartha*" in Sinhala) depending on the context. None of these words are used in the context of a "self."

- The above verse could also be explained as an *anariya* engaging in useless activities (either indulging in sense pleasures or going to the other extreme of self-mortification.) Either activity does not have any meaning or essence.

Anicca, *Dukkha*, *Anatta* – Closely Related Characteristics of This World

10. *Anicca, dukkha, anatta* are CHARACTERISTICS of this world. The word "*anatta*" in that context DOES NOT mean "no-self" or anything like that. However, a given person can BECOME *anatta* (helpless) by attaching to things of *anicca* nature that lead to suffering (*dukkha*.) But a person with *magga phala* has overcome that state of "helplessness" and has become an *Ariya* with refuge (*atta*.)

- The opposites of *anicca, dukha, anatta* (ie., *nicca, sukha, atta*) are characteristics of *Nibbāna*. See, "Tilakkhaṇa – English Discourses."
- One gets to *Nibbāna* by renouncing "this world of 31 realms."
- One attains *Nibbāna* by first realizing the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* NATURE of this world. Only then that one would have understood the Four Noble Truths.
- Only then it is possible to grasp that the Fourth Noble Truth of "the path to *Nibbāna*" is the Noble Eightfold Path. That Noble Path starts with *Samma Ditthi*, which is the "clear vision" that this world is of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* NATURE of the world with 31 realms.

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"Previously Unheard Dhamma" of the Buddha

11. That is a very succinct description of Buddha Dhamma, the "previously unheard teachings that can only come from a Buddha."

- The common perception is that one can find long-lasting happiness in this world. That there are so many "mind-pleasing things" in this world worth pursuing. If one makes a determined effort, one can "succeed in life" and "be happy."
- The Buddha agreed that there are many "mind-pleasing things" in this world.
- But the Buddha taught that there is suffering hidden in those apparent 'mind-pleasing" things. That hidden suffering is hard to see, and that is why not everyone can understand Buddha Dhamma. Without making a determined effort, it may not be possible.

An Analogy – *Assutavā Puthujjano* Is Not Different From a Fish Biting Into a Tasty Bait

12. The Buddha gave the following analogy. A fish bites into a tasty bait, because it cannot see the hook hidden in it. The fish only see the "tasty bait" and cannot see the hook, string, fishing pole, and the person holding that pole. If it could see the "whole picture" it would not even go close to that bait.

- In the same way, it is only a Buddha who can "see" the "bigger picture" with the 31 realms with the four suffering-filled realms and the rebirth process. Due to the ignorance of that "wider worldview," living-beings spend most of the time in those four lowest realms.
- An "*assutavā puthujjano*" or an "ignorant average human" is unable to see that hidden suffering. That is why most living-beings spend most of their *samsaric* journey within the four lowest realms. They get trapped there and become helpless. They become "*anatta*" or "without refuge" at the end. See, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – "Me and Mine" View."
- I have discussed those three words in many posts in the section "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" and also in the recently revised section on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)." It was also discussed with another approach in the "Origin of Life" section. Each person is different and one of those could be appropriate for a given person. In the end, they all converge to the same point and one would be able to see that they are all self-consistent.

Evidence That *Anatta* Does Not Mean "No-Self"

13. There are many *suttā* in the *Smayutta Nikāya* that discuss *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* and the relationships among them. Specifically SN 22, SN 23, and SN 35.

- For example, WebLink: suttacentral: Koṭṭhikaanatta Sutta (SN 35.164) states, "*Cakkhu kho, koṭṭhika, anattā; tatra te chando pahātabbo. Rūpā anattā; tatra te chando pahātabbo.* ***Cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*** *anattā; tatra te chando pahātabbo.* ***Cakkhusamphasso*** *anattā; tatra te chando pahātabbo. Yampidaṃ cakkhusamphassapaccayā uppajjati vedayitaṃ sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā tampi anattā; tatra te chando pahātabbo …*"

Translated: "The **eye, sights, eye-consciousness, and eye "san-contact" (samphassa)** are without essence: you should give up the desire/cravings for them. **The pleasant, painful, or neutral feeling** that arises conditioned by eye "*san*-contact" (*samphassa*) is also **without essence.** You should give up the desire for it."

- That statement is then repeated for the ear, tongue, nose, body, and mind. **It applies anything and everything in this world!**

Can Eye-Consciousness Have a "Self"?

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14. Most other translations state all those entities that I highlighted above are "**not-self.**" See, "WebLink: suttacentral: With Koṭṭhita on Not-Self" which states, "The eye, sights, **eye-consciousness**, and **eye contact** are **not-self**.."

- How can **eye-consciousness** possibly have a "self"? How can **eye contact** have a "self"? What does it mean to say they have "no-self"? Even a child should be able to see that statement does not make any sense!

Anything In This World Has *Anatta* Nature

15. In fact, as stated in the *sutta* in #13 above (and MANY other *suttā*) ANYTHING that exists in this world is of *anatta* nature. **They are all without any essence.**

- It starts with the *anicca* nature of ALL worldly things. That means no one can maintain anything in this world to one's satisfaction over the long run.
- But people try to do that impossible task because they crave many things in this world. But in the end, they would only suffer. That is partly because they do immoral deeds to acquire those "things" and end up having to face bad *kamma vipāka*. The verse "*yad* ***aniccaṃ*** *taṃ dukkhaṃ*" or the verse, "*Yam pi* ***icchaṃ*** *na labhati tam pi dukkhaṃ*" expresses that fact.
- That process will gradually move anyone to more and more suffering. One will eventually end up in the *apayā* with much suffering, and at that point, one would be truly helpless (*anatta*.) That is what is meant by, "*yaṃ dukkhaṃ tad* ***anattā***."
- That verse, "*yad aniccaṃ taṃ dukkhaṃ, yaṃ dukkhaṃ tad anattā*" appears in numerous *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka*. That is how living-beings become helpless in the rebirth process (by engaging in immoral deeds) in their quest of seeking "sensory pleasures."
- **That is the "previously unheard *Dhamma*" of the Buddha.**

3.6.8 Saññā (Perception)

Saññā is, at the very fundamental level, the recognition of an external stimulus. But it is more than that. We not only recognize that a given object is, say, a dog. But some people may be able to categorize it as a bull dog. Thus *saññā* about a particular object depends on the person.

Same is true for other four senses. When we hear a sound, we recognize what it is, say a bird singing a song. Some may be able to say which bird it is, some may not be. Any smell, taste, or touch works the same way. Without *saññā* we cannot identify things around us, and also cannot communicate with each other meaningfully.

One of the 31 realms of existence is the "*Asanna* realm." There, the beings have no *saññā* or perception. Thus in principle, those beings are without any awareness. Nothing registers in the mind. If anyone has attained the 7th *jhāna*, the "*Nevasanna Na'sanna*," then that person knows what it is like to born in the *Asanna* realm.

Saññā is described in more detail in, "Saññā – What It Really Means" and "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā."

Next, "Vedanā (Feelings)", ……

3.6.9 Vedanā (Feelings)

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In this and follow-up posts, we will discuss six types of *vedanā* (feelings) and how they arise. There are other types of *vedanā*, but these are the important ones to understand for the *Sotāpanna* stage. Three of these occur due to *kamma vipāka,* and the other three arise due to *saṅkhāra* (defiled thoughts).

- *Vedanā* comes from ("*ve*" + "*danā*") which means "දැනීම" in Sinhala. That means to "become aware of something." **When we sense something via our six senses, we become aware of it; that is *vedanā*.**

Two Ways *Vedanā* (Feelings) Can Arise

Vedanā (feelings) *can arise in* **two ways**:

1. First, as a consequence of a previous *kamma* (i.e., a *kamma vipāka*), possibly done many lives ago. Those usually are not avoidable.

- Unavoidable *vedanā* (feelings) are three kinds : *Sukha vedanā* (pleasant or joyful feeling), *dukha vedanā* (unpleasant or painful feeling), and *adukkhama asukha* (without being painful or joyful, just neutral), where we are just aware of it. This *adukkhama asukha vedanā* is also called *upekkha vedanā*.

2. Second, s a direct consequence of a *saṅkhāra* (one could say an ongoing action or a way of thinking). These are absent in *Arahants*.

- Three types of other *vedanā* are avoidable: *somanassa* (pleasant), *domanassa* (unpleasant), and *upekkha* (neutral) *vedanā*. They are solely mind-made and are due to defiled thoughts (*saṅkhāra*). The details discussed below.

Vedanā Arising from *Kamma Vipāka*

Kamma vipāka can happen to everyone, including *Arahants*. While everyone can avoid some *kamma vipāka*, others are too strong to be able to be avoided.

- For example, the Buddha himself had physical ailments later in his life as *kamma vipāka*. Because of a bad *kamma* that he committed many lives before, Moggallana Thero was beaten to death.
- However, *kamma vipāka* are not sure to happen. Some can be reduced in power by *Mettā Bhāvanā;* see, "Karaniya Metta Sutta – Mettā Bhāvanā."
- All *kamma vipāka* reduce in power with time and some eventually die out if they did not get a chance to come to fruition within 91 *Mahā kappas*. Many can be avoided by not providing conditions for them to arise (see, the discussion on *kamma bīja* in , "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka").
- One could also feel *sukha vedanā* (pleasant feelings) due to good *kamma vipāka*. These are also bodily feelings that arise due to "pleasant bodily contacts" like a getting a good massage or lying on a luxurious bed.
- These types of *vedanā* are not DIRECTLY relevant in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. For example, when Devadatta injured the Buddha, the Buddha did not generate "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

Vedanā Arising from *Saṅkhāra*

These are the *vedanā* that *Arahants* do not feel. Since they do not commit any *abhisaṅkhāra* (those strong *saṅkhāra* done with greed, hate, and ignorance), an *Arahant* avoids any feeling arising from *abhisaṅkhāra*. The easiest way to explain this kind of *vedanā* is to give some examples:

1. Three people are walking down the street. One has an ultra-right political bias (A), the second has an ultra-left preference (B), and the third is an *Arahant* who does not have special feelings for anyone (C).

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They all see a famous politician hated by the political right coming their way. It is a given that the sight of the politician causes A to have displeasure and B to have a pleasurable feeling.

2. On the other hand, the sight does not cause the *Arahant* to generate any pleasure or displeasure. Even though all three see the same person, they generate different types of feelings. *It is critical to realize that A and B created the feelings by themselves.*

2. Two friends go looking for treasure and find a gem. They are both overjoyed. It seems quite valuable, and one person kills the other so that he can get all the money. When he tries to sell the "gem", he finds out that it was not that valuable. His joy turns to sorrow in an instant. *Nothing had changed in the object, the piece of stone. It was the same piece of colored rock. What has changed was the perception of it (saññā).*

3. A loving couple had lived for many years without any problems and were happy to be together. However, the husband slaps his wife during an argument. The physical pain from the slap itself did not last more than a few minutes. But for how long the wife would suffer mentally? Even the husband, who did not feel any physical pain, would suffer for days if he really loved his wife. *In both cases, the attachment to each other led to real suffering. The wife could have dropped something on her foot and would have suffered about the same amount of physical pain. But she would not have had any lingering mental pain associated with that.*

Thus all these second kind of feelings arise due to greed, hate, or ignorance. They are due to *(abhi) saṅkhāra*. The feelings come from INSIDE oneself. They do not come from a *kamma vipāka*. We use external things to CAUSE happiness or suffering by our own volition.

- These types of *vedanā* (also called *samphassa jā vedanā*" or "*vedanā* generated via *samphassa*") are the ones relevant in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

Deeper analyses can be found at Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways

Next, "Viññāṇa (Consciousness)", …….

3.6.10 Viññāṇa (Defiled Consciousness)

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Viññāṇa is normally translated as consciousness or awareness. But it is much deeper and can be many different types. An overview is given below, and there are several posts on different types of *viññāṇa* in different sections on the website.

- *Viññāṇa* is very complex and is the key to *Nibbāna.* One should read the posts referred below; more posts can be found by using the "Search box" on the top right.
- First, it is very important to get a basic understanding of Pāli terms like *citta*, *viññāṇa*, and *nāma gotta*: "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."

Six Types of *Viññāṇa*

1. There are six types of *viññāṇa* corresponding to the six sense inputs (vision, hearing, taste, smell, touch, mind): *cakkhu, sota, jivhā, gandha, kāya*, and *mano viññāṇa*.

- When we experience a sense input (say, see an object), we get a happy, unhappy, or neutral feeling (*vedanā*), recognize it (*saññā*), and automatically generate *mano saṅkhāra.*
- *Viññāṇa* provides the overall sensory experience that includes *vedanā*, *saññā*, and *saṅkhāra*. Those latter three combined is called "*nāma*."
- However, in addition to just providing a "sense experience" (which is all "*nāma*"), *viññāṇa* can also act as the bridge between "*nāma*" and "*rūpa*" to "*nāmarūpa*." These *nāmarūpa* are the seeds for the

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creation of matter (*rūpa*). That is a separate type of *viññāṇa* — called *kamma viññāṇa* — as we discuss now.

Two Types of *Viññāṇa* –*Vipāka Viññāṇa* and *Kamma Viññāṇa*

2. *Vipāka viññāṇa* is awareness or consciousness. The five types *viññāṇa* of associated with the five physical senses are ALWAYS *vipāka viññāṇa*. *Mano viññāṇa* also could be a *vipāka viññāṇa*. When one "sees" something that is *cakkhu viññāṇa*; when one smells something that is a *ghāṇa viññāṇa*, etc; there are 6 types of *vipāka viññāṇa* that arise when sense inputs come through the 6 sense doors (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, touch, and the mind). These are the six types listed above in #1.

- **The second major type is *kamma viññāṇa* or defiled *viññāṇa*.** *Kamma viññāṇa* are those that arise via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- It is to be noted that *kamma viññāṇa* are always *mano viññāṇa,* i.e., *kamma viññāṇa* arise in the mind without going through the five physical sense doors.
- Therefore, *mano viññāṇa* can be *vipāka viññāṇa* or *kamma viññāṇa.*

3. *Kamma viññāṇa* are created via our defiled thoughts (*saṅkhāra*) which are three types: *mano, vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*.

- When we automatically generate thoughts due to a sense input those are *mano saṅkhāra*; then we consciously think about it and may even talk out loud about it (with *vacī saṅkhāra*); if we really get engaged, we may physical do things (with *kāya saṅkhāra*); see, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."
- It is also important to realize that "talking/thinking to oneself silently" without speaking is included in *vacī saṅkhāra*; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

4. We can see that what is called the "awareness" or "consciousness" is really *vipāka viññāṇa*; it is one's experience at a given moment.

- **On the other hand, *kamma viññāṇa* is what is called the "subconscious."** It is a hope or desire that lies hidden and comes to the surface from time to time. For example, if we are planning to buy a car, that idea (hope/desire) remains in our subconscious. When we see a car like the one that we want to buy, that *viññāṇa* is "awakened" and we start thinking about it. But once we buy the car, that *viññāṇa* will be gone, i.e., we will not think about it anymore.
- We are reborn mainly because we have the desire to live and enjoy life. But we do not get our exact wish most of the time; if we do *dasa akusala* to get what we want in this life, we are likely to be born in the *apāyā,* regardless of what we wish for.

Mechanisms for Generating *Vipāka Viññāṇa* and *Kamma Viññāṇa*

5. ***Kamma Viññāṇa* are generated in *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles;** see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda." As we saw above, *kamma viññāṇa* arise due to *saṅkhāra*: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."

- Therefore, we accumulate such *kamma viññāṇa* by doing (*abhi) saṅkhāra* due to our ignorance (that striving to get sense pleasures can lead to a long-lasting happiness), i.e., we do not comprehend the *anicca* nature.

6. ***Vipāka viññāṇa* arise via six ways due to sense inputs via the six sense faculties:** "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*," "*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ*,"…"*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*."

- In English, that means we see an object when our eyes capture light coming from that object; we hear a sound that comes to our ears, …we get a thought in our mind.

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- An example of a *mano viññāṇa* is, for example, something that happened in a previous day just popping into the mind.
- This process of the arising of the six types of *viññāṇa* is discussed in, "Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?."

Based on *Vipāka Viññāṇa*, We Initiate *Kamma Viññāṇa*

7. Everything that we INITIALLY EXPERIENCE is due to a *kammā vipāka,* i.e., it comes to us as a *vipāka viññāṇa.* They make us see, hear, smell, taste, experience bodily sensations, and bring in new thoughts to the mind.

- Based on those sense inputs, we MAY initiate new *kamma viññāṇa* if those sense inputs are either attractive (leading to greed) or repulsive (leading to hate/anger). This happens via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" as mentioned above.

8. If we start doing *saṅkhāra* consciously, then we start generating NEW *kamma* via the process, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." Then we would give rise to new *kamma viññāṇa*. If those *abhisaṅkhāra* are strong enough, those *kamma viññāṇa* can give rise to a special type of *vipāka viññāṇa* called *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* (responsible for rebirth).

- A *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, which is the state of mind at the moment of grasping a new *bhava* (new existence) is a *vipāka viññāṇa*; we cannot control it.
- *Paṭisandhi viññāṇa* is A RESULT of a past *kamma* that we did with a *kamma viññāṇa* at the time of doing that *kamma*. For example, someone kills a human being with a *kamma viññāṇa*, and that gives rise to a *kamma bīja* (*kammic* energy). That *kamma bīja* can bring in a *vipāka viññāṇa* in the form of a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* in the future.

9. This vicious cycle of "*vipāka*" leading to "*kammā*" leading to more "*vipāka*" is the process that binds us to the *saṃsāra* of endless rebirths, with (mostly) suffering.

- The Buddha describes this as, "*kammā vipākā vaddanti, vipāko kamma sambhavo, tasmā punabbhavo hoti, evan loko pavattati.*"
- That means, "*kammā* lead to *vipāka*, *vipāka*, in turn, lead to *kammā* and thus to rebirth (*punabbhavo*), and that is how the world (existence) is maintained."
- There, "*sambhava*" is "*san*" + "*bhava*," or "adding more existences." Also, "*loka*" is the world, and "*pavatta*" means "maintain."

10. Breaking this vicious cycle is the key to *Nibbāna*, as we point out next.

"*Yam kiñci dukkham sambhoti, Sabbam viññānapaccayā*" ("Whatever suffering that arises, It arises due to *viññāṇa*")

11. There are many *suttā* that clearly state that *Nibbāna* is attained by stopping the arising of *viññāṇa* (defiled consciousness), i.e., via "*viññāṇa nirodha*." A clear statement can be found in the "Dvayatānupassanāsutta (Sutta Nipata 3.12)":

"*Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti,*
Sabbaṃ viññāṇapaccayā;
Viññāṇassa nirodhena,
Natthi dukkhassa sambhavo."

Translated: "Whatever suffering that arises, all that arises due to *viññāṇa*; **With cessation (not arising) of *viññāṇa*, there is no existence with suffering**."

- **The *viññāṇa* referred to here is *kamma viññāṇa*.** For a discussion, see, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

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12. Of course, the way to stop *kamma viññāṇa* from arising is to stop doing *abhisaṅkhāra*, i.e., stop *kamma viññāṇa* in the step, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." That involves two steps:

- First, one needs to cultivate *paññā* and get rid of *avijjā*, so that "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step can be avoided. One needs to comprehend the *anicca, dukkha, anatta, asubha* nature of this world.
- Secondly, one also needs to be mindful and stop such *abhisaṅkhāra* from arising to stop the rebirth process or even to stop bad *kamma vipāka* in the future.
- Both those two steps are essential; they feed on each other. The more one understands the *anicca* nature, it is easier to stop such *abhisaṅkhāra* AND the more *abhisaṅkhāra* one stops, it becomes easier to comprehend *anicca nature.*

Key Points to Remember

13. *Kamma viññāṇa* are *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) that we create ourselves; they are also called "*kamma bīja*." We create them by doing *mano, vacī,* and *kāya saṅkhāra* due to our ignorance. That process is described by *paṭicca samuppāda*.

- We can stop generating *kamma viññāṇa* by being mindful and not doing *abhisaṅkhāra*, especially *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* or immoral deeds.

14. The type of rebirth (or other *kamma vipāka*) that arise due to those *abhisaṅkhāra* are described by *paṭicca samuppāda*: they are according to the type of *abhisaṅkhāra* done: "*pati icca* leading to *sama uppāda*"; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"."

- Then they bring *vipāka* or results in the future via *vipāka viññāṇa*. As long as one lives, one will experience those *vipāka viññāṇa*, even if one is an *Arahant*.
- However, an *Arahant* will not grasp a new *bhava* at the moment of death (at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment), because the "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step will not work for an *Arahant*: He/she will not grasp any *bhava*, i.e., no *upādāna*.

15. This is a highly condensed overview. Don't be discouraged if you cannot understand some things. One needs to spend some time reading relevant posts and contemplating them. Any questions can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Forums."

3.6.11 Rūpa (Material Form)

Revised February 3, 2018

Please see, "What are Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna" for an introduction.

Most people have many misconceptions about *rūpa*. So, we will systematically look at different kinds of *rūpa*. *Rūpa* are basically everything that the five physical senses sense: we see *vaṇṇa rūpa* (physical objects that bounce light off; also called "*rūpa rūpa*"), we hear *sadda rūpa* (sounds), we smell *gandha rūpa* (odors), we taste *rasa rūpa* (food), and we touch *pottabba rūpa* (physical objects). Our internal senses that sense those external *rūpa* are also fine *rūpa* that are controlled by the mind. Those that are sensed by the mind are *dhamma* (concepts), and mind is not a *rūpa*.

- Here is a simple way to figure out the five types of *rūpa*: If we take a toasted slice of bread that is *rūpa rūpa* or a *vaṇṇa rūpa*; if it is freshly toasted, when we break it, it will make a sound, which is a *sadda rūpa*; the smell of that bread is a *gandha rūpa*; when we taste it, we taste the *rasa rūpa* in the bread; when we touch it, we touch the *pottabba rūpa* in the bread.

There are many ways that *rūpa* can be analyzed. The basic "building blocks" of all rūpa are the four great elements (*mahā bhūta*): *pathavi* (element of extension with the characteristic of hardness), *āpo* (The element of cohesion with the characteristics of cohesiveness and fluidity), *tejo* (the element of heat or heat

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energy with the characteristics of hotness and coldness), and *vāyo* (the element of motion or kinetic energy with the characteristics of pushing and supporting).

- It must be noted that in many cases, the Buddha took existing terms and redefined them to be consistent with Buddha Dhamma. The terms *pathavi* (earth), *āpo* (water), *tejo* (fire), and *vāyo* (wind) were thought to be the basic building blocks for matter in the pre-Buddha era, including the Greeks.
- But those names have deeper meanings too; for an in-depth discussion see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

There are 28 types of basic *rūpa*, and the other 24 are derivatives (*upadaya rūpa*) of the four *mahā bhūta*.

1. *Rūpa* can be put into two categories regarding whether they are internal (*ajjhattika*) and external (*bāhira*). **The internal rūpa are the five *pasāda rūpa* associated with the physical body: eye (*cakkhu*), ear (*sota*), nose (*ghāṇa*), tongue (*jivhā*), and body (*kāya*).** Internal *rūpa* also include our physical body (including the physical eyes, ears, etc). Here are a few things to note: [***bāhira*** : [adj.] external; outer; foreign. (nt.), outside.]

- These five internal or *pasāda rūpa* are essential for experiencing the outside world. Without them, people will not be different from inanimate logs. Those internal *rūpa* associated with the physical body become inert (and external) when the *gandhabba* leaves the body.
- It must be emphasized that *pasāda rūpa* are NOT the physical organs that we see. These are fine *rūpa* (matter) that stop being regenerated at death. Thus *cakkhu* is NOT the physical eye.
- From the moment of death of the physical body, *cakkhu* is not there anymore; it is gone with the *gandhabba*. However, the physical eye is there and can be even used in another person's body within 24 hours or so.
- Therefore, those physical senses are internal only as long as the gandhabba is associated with the physical body. As soon as *gandhabba* leaves at the death of the physical body, they become external *rūpa*.

2. Out of all the external (*bāhira or bahiddhā*) *rūpa*, seven are called *gocara rūpa* or objective *rūpa* because those are the ones that can be sensed by the five internal (*pasāda*) *rūpa*.

- These are: visible (*vaṇṇa*) *rūpa*, sound (*sadda*) *rūpa*, smell (*gandha*) *rūpa*, taste (*rasa*) *rūpa*, and tangible *rūpa* (*phoṭṭhabba*). There are no separate *rūpā* called *phoṭṭhabba rūpa*; they are *pathavi, tejo,* and *vāyo*, three of the four great elements (*mahā bhūta*). Thus things we see with our eyes are the visible (*vaṇṇa*) *rūpā*; they are only part of the class of *rūpa*.
- It is important to note that the *gocara rūpa* or objective *rūpa* are the only *rūpa* that we EXPERIENCE with our five physical senses. For example the remaining great essential, *āpo*, is not experienced by our senses.
- The five *pasāda rūpa* and the seven *gocara rūpa* that are sensed by them are collectively called the *olarika* (gross or coarse) *rūpas* because they can touch (strike) each other. The other 16 *rūpas* are subtle or fine (*sukhuma*) *rūpa*.

3. There are several fine *rūpā* that are associated with our body.

- *Hadaya vatthu* (heart base) – together with the five *pasāda rūpa* — are located close to the heart.
- *Jivitindriya rūpa* (vital force of *kammaja rūpa*) is spread throughout the body.
- There are two *bhava rūpā* that determine whether it is a male or a female: *itthi bhava* (femininity) and *purisa bhava* (masculinity). One kind is spread throughout a body.
- *Āhāra rūpa* (*oja*) are nutritive essence that sustains the body. It is extracted from the food we eat.

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4. So far we have discussed five *pasāda rūpā*, seven *rūpā* that constitute the external *rūpa* (*vaṇṇa, sadda, rasa, gandha, pathavi, tejo, vāyo*) that are sensed by the *pasāda rūpa*, and the five other *rūpa* (*hadaya, jivitindriya*, two *bhava rūpa*, and *oja*) in #3.

5. The remaining *mahā bhūta* or the great element is *āpo*. It is the *rūpa* that holds any structure together, but it is not sensed by the body (*kaya*) *rūpa*. With the *āpo rūpa*, up to this point we have discussed 18 types of *rūpa*. **These 18 types of *rūpa* are called *nippanna rūpa* (concretely produced *rūpa*) because they are caused and conditioned by one or more of four things: *kamma, citta, utu* (*tejo*) and *āhāra* (food);** thus they are suitable for contemplation by insight.

- The five *pasāda rūpa,* two *bhava rūpa*, *hadaya vatthu* and *jivitindriya rūpa* (9 in all) are produced by *kamma* and *kamma* alone.
- *Sadda* (sound) *rūpa* are produced by *citta* and *utu* (*tejo*). Vocal sounds such as speech, laughter, whistling, etc are produced by *citta*. Non-vocal sounds, such as thunder and music from instruments are produced by *utu*.
- The different ways that *kamma, citta, utu*, and *āhāra* produce the 24 types of *rūpa* is summarized in the Tables and Summaries Section; see, "Rūpa – Generation Mechanisms."

6. **The remaining 10 *rūpa* are more abstract in nature. They are called *anippana rūpa* (non-concretely produced *rūpa*).**

- *Akasa dhātu* (space element) is not so much "space", but more like the inter-atomic space or intra-atomic space. It occupies whatever is not occupied by any other *rūpa*. Thus it is everywhere, even in the deep inter-galactic space where there is no "detectable matter." Scientists are beginning to suspect that there is much more energy in the vacuum (zero point energy) than the energy that we experience. It is like the deep ocean and what we see are only the ripples.
- We communicate using two fine *rūpā*: *vinnatti rūpa* or material qualities of communication. We use both the mouth and and the body to communicate with each other. *Kāya vinnatti* (bodily intimation) is gestures by hand, head, physical eye, leg, etc, to indicate one's intentions to another. *Vacī vinnatti* (vocal intimation) is the movement of the mouth to produce vocal speech.
- There are three *vikara* (mutable) *rūpa* that helps with the movements of the body. The *lahuta* (lightness or buoyancy) *rūpa* suppresses the heaviness of a body. This make it possible for up jump, for example. Imagine trying to toss up an equivalent weight! *Muduta* (elasticity) removes the stiffness in the body. *Kammannata* (weildiness) gives strength to hold up body parts. All these make possible our body movements.
- Finally, there are four *lakkhana* (material qualities) *rūpa* that are common characteristics of all *rūpas*: *Upacaya* and *santati rūpa* are associated with the arising of a *rūpa*, *jarata rūpa* is associated with the decay, and *aniccata rūpa* is the dissolving stage. See the lifetime discussed below.

7. The four great elements (*mahā bhūta*) are the primary *rūpa*. Each of the four has its own character: *pathavi* element of hardness; the *āpo* element of fluidity and cohesion; *tejo* of heat; *vāyo* of motion and pressure.

8. The *mahā bhūta* can never be detected separately. The eight *rūpa* of *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo,* are always found together with *vaṇṇa, gandha, rasa, oja* in inseparable units called **pure octads or *suddhaṭṭhaka*,** which are the fundamental units of matter. These eight *rūpā* are inseparable and indivisible, and thus are known as *avinibbhoga rūpa*; for an in-depth discussion see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhatthaka"

9. It is not necessary to memorize all these details about different *rūpa*. But it is good to have a reference base to look up if needed. Abhidhamma goes to much more detail and shows how the mental energy can form different kinds of *rūpa*.

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If you have not read about *saṅkhāra* (the remaining one of the five aggregates):

"Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Vipāka, Kamma Bīja", ……

3.6.12 Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates – A Misinterpreted Concept

December 25, 2015; revised September 29, 2018

First of all, many people have the impression that *rūpakkhandha* is one's own body OR that *pañcakkhandha* are "in one's own body." The problem with this critical mistake can be seen with the description of *rūpakkhandha* (and other four *khandha* as 11 types).

Eleven Types of *Rūpa* in the *Rūpakkhandha* (Same for Other *Khandhas*)

1. This is clearly described in many *suttā*, even though the true meaning has been hidden all these years. In particular, the WedLink: suttacentral: Khandha sutta (SN 22.48) summarizes what is included in each aggregate.

- Eleven types of *rūpa* (mental impressions) are in the *rūpakkhandha*: past, present, future, near, far, fine (*sukuma*), coarse (*olarika*), likes (*panita*), dislikes (*appanita*), internal (*ajjhatta*), and external (*bahiddha*). Here internal *rūpa* means (mental impressions) of one's own body parts, and external *rūpa* are (mental impressions) of external objects.
- Thus, it is quite clear that *rūpakkhandha* encompasses anything that we ever saw (including previous births), we are seeing now, and hope to see in the future. The record of what belongs to the past is permanent and is called *namagotta*. Any *rūpa* about the future (for example, a sketch of the type of house one is thinking about building) can change with time.
- Other four *khandhas* have the same 11 types.
- An acceptable English translation of the *Khandha sutta* is available online: WedLink: suttacentral: Khandha Sutta: Aggregates
- Even though it does not explain the concept as discussed above, one can see the 11 components of each *khandha* are clearly there. Also, note that it is NOT *Skandha sutta;* it is *Khandha sutta*. This is why I say that *skandha* is a WRONG TERM.

2. Now we can see yet again that Buddha Dhamma has become so contaminated over the past thousands of years. Fortunately, we still have the *Tipiṭaka* in close to original form. The Buddha stated that his *Buddha Sasana* will last for 5000 years, and the way he made sure that will happen, was to compose the *suttā* as I described in the post, "Sutta – Introduction."

- Furthermore, *abhidhamma* and *vinaya* sections, as well as three original commentaries, are still intact in the *Tipiṭaka*; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma" and other posts in "Historical Background."
- The main problem even with the *Theravada* version of "Buddhism" is that instead of using the *Tipiṭaka* as the basis, the tendency is to use the *Visuddhimagga* written by Buddhaghosa, who had not attained any *magga phala* and stated that his "wish" was to become a *deva* in the next life from the merits he gained by writing *Visuddhimagga*!
- Even when using the *Tipiṭaka*, most people use the wrong interpretations of key words such as *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* as well as *khandha*, and *paṭicca samuppāda*. This problem is apparent in the Sinhala translation of the *Tipiṭaka*, that was done with the sponsorship of the Sri Lankan government several years ago.

Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha – The Difference

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1. Contrary to popular belief, *pañcakkhandha* or *panca khandha* (five aggregates) is all mental, and realizing this fact can help get rid of the "*ghana saññā*," the perception that the world around us is "solid and permanent"' I will write more on this later.

- It is sometimes erroneously called *pancaskhandha*, and I will explain why that is not correct.

2. For example, there is a huge difference between *rūpa* (material form) and *rūpa khandha*, the aggregate of material form. *Rūpa khandha is* commonly written as *rūpakkhandha* by connecting the two terms to one word, by adding an extra "k" (a common way of connecting words or "*sandhi*" in Pāli). The same is true for other four aggregates. **The correct interpretation makes many other concepts easier to understand.**

- *Rūpa* is matter (and energy) and is made of the *satara mahā bhūta* (*pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo*) and their derivatives.
- *Rūpa khandha* is all MENTAL.
- Similarly, there is a difference between *vedanā* (feelings) and *vedanakkhandha* (the aggregate of feelings), even though here both kinds are mental; we will discuss the difference below. The other three *khandha* of *saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* are similar to that of *vedanā*.
- This is very important to understand, and I will proceed slowly to make the concepts clear.

3. The key in clarifying what *rūpakkhandha* is to examine why the Buddha added "*khandha*" to *rūpa*. He could have labelled past *rūpa*, future *rūpa*, *sukuma rūpa, olarika rūpa*, etc. to describe the 11 types of them as discussed above. What was the need to add "*khandha*"? **That is because *rūpakkhandha* is all MENTAL**, and to see how it comes about we need to examine how each of us experience "the world." Each of us does it differently.

- Each person has his/her own *rūpakkhandha* or the way he/she perceives the material *rūpa* in the world. That *rūpakkhandha* has associated with it other four *khandhas* and thus comprise the *pañcakkhandha*. And *panca upadanakkhandha,* or what one has cravings for, is a small part of that.
- Just like the concept of *anicca*, this again is a very important concept to understand, so please try to read through slowly at a quiet time and grasp the concepts. As the Buddha said, "at the end what matters is understanding a concept, not memorizing words."
- When I first grasped this concept, it was like turning the lights on in a previously dark area that I did not even know existed! This is a good example of what the Buddha meant by "*aloko udapādi*."

What is a *Khandha*?

1. One of the main problems we have today is that many key terms in use are in Sanskrit rather than original Pāli. The meanings get distorted. A good example is *paṭicca samuppāda*, for which the Sanskrit term is *pratittyasamutpada,* which does not convey the meaning; see, "Paticca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

2. Similarly, the Sanskrit term "*skandha*" is commonly used in the place of *khandha*, the original Pāli term. *Khandha* is a heap and the Sinhala term is *kanda*, which is even used today to denote a heap or a pile.

- When we experience the world, we do that with our six senses, and that experience is registered as thoughts (*citta*). But a single *citta* is born and gone in a small fraction of a second. What we EXPERIENCE are the **aggregates of numerous *citta*** that go through our minds even in a fraction of a second.
- We experience a *rūpa* (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, *dhamma*) with a *citta* AND based on that generate mental qualities of *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. In each *citta*, the mind analyzes all these, and that *citta* is gone in a fraction of a second.

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- The *manasikara cetasika* that is in each *citta* puts together the contents in all these "packets" — including our past impressions — and provides us with an overall experience that includes a "sketch of what we see, hear, ..", and those feelings, perceptions etc that arise due to that sense impression.
- This can be compared to the process of connecting individual links in a metal chain. In the old days, blacksmiths used to make chains by manually connecting one link to the next by hand. He can only see himself linking two of them at a time, but if he looked back he could see the whole chain that is being made. **In the same way, the five aggregates or heaps keep building up with each passing second.**

3. In another example, it is like a movie recording that keeps recording non-stop from our birth to death. And when we die it does not stop, it just start recording the new life. And these five heaps or aggregates that have accumulated over ALL previous lives are in the *namagotta,* a permanent record; see, "The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."

- Of course, we remember only a fraction of it, even for the present life. But some people remember more things than others; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- But we also make plans about the future. And those heaps about the future are also in the *pañcakkhandha*, but not in the *namagotta,* which only has records of what has already happened. As soon as the present moment goes by, more of the five heaps are added to the *namagotta*.
- Thus *pañcakkhandha* includes past, present, and future, whereas *namagotta* includes only that portion of the *pañcakkhandha* that has gone to the past.
- Even though I have discussed these concepts in the introductory posts in the *Abhidhamma* section, here I will go through a simpler version to get the ideas across. Those who are interested, can then review the posts in *Abhidhamma* section as well; see, "Essential Abhidhamma – The Basics."

What We Experience Comes in "Packets" or "Heaps" or "*Khandha*"

1. A simple view of how we sense the outside world is as follows: The five physical senses receive images, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches from the outside. Those sense inputs are sent to the brain via the nervous system. The brain analyzes such "signals" and helps the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) to extract the "meanings" conveyed by those images, sounds, smells, tastes, and touches.

- Let us take an example of looking at a cake. The eye is like a camera; it captures an image of the cake just like a camera does. That image is sent to the brain and the brain analyzes that picture, and sends to the mind (*hadaya vatthu*), which matches it with previous experiences (*manasikara cetasika* does this) and identifies it as a chocolate cake made by grandma. The brain and mind working together this way can analyze many such pictures in a fraction of a second.
- This is basically what scientists believe what happens too; but the difference is that scientists believe that the brain compares the current image of the cake with zillions of images "stored in the brain", which I say is an impossibility. The brain needs to scan through "its depository of images" and not only identify that it is not a loaf of bread or a piece of wood, but also what kind of a cake it is, and whether it is made by grandma or bought from a store. And this is done within a fraction of a second. Think about it! This is real *vipassana* meditation! What we are trying to do is to understand how nature works.

2. In Buddha Dhamma, the brain is in constant communication with the "*hadaya vatthu*" which is the seat of the mind. All our past experiences are "stored" in the mental plane (*manothalaya*) and *hadaya vatthu* can access that information; these are what we called "*namagotta*." See, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

How the brain is in constant communication with the *hadaya vatthu* and other details are discussed in the *Abhidhamma* section. Those details are not important as long as one can picture this process in one's mind.

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- This image sent by the eyes (and the brain) to the *hadaya vatthu* generates an imprint of **that image** and it goes into memory. **That image is the *rūpakkhandha* generated by that object,** the cake in our example; it is not material, it is a record.
- If it was a smell that was analyzed, then a record of that smell is made. Thus the *rūpakkhandha* here is a **record** of that particular smell. In this way, *rūpakkhandha* are just records or imprints. All five physical senses help generate *rūpakkhandha;* remember that sight, sound, smell, taste, touch are all *rūpa*.
- What the mind receives is a set of static frames in a given second. Many such records for various sense inputs go through our minds in a second. The mind is able to make this appear to us as a continuous movie, with pictures, sounds, tastes, etc flowing smoothly.

Animation Video

1. Just to give the flavor of what happens, we can look at what happens when we watch a movie. The movie is a series of static pictures or frames. When making a movie, what is actually done is to take many static pictures and then play them back at fast enough speed. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a certain "projection rate", it looks like real motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion

2. When we experience (see, hear,…) the outside world, what happens is very similar to the above. At the end of the video it is stated that the "movie" we see is an illusion, **and as the Buddha explained, that holds for real life as well.** In real life when we see someone coming towards us, what we actually see is a series of "static pictures" or *citta* projected at a very fast rate in our minds, giving us the illusion of a "movie like experience."

- Even though in the above video it is suggested that all the information from the "previous static frames" were put together by the brain, that is true only to a certain extent.
- The brain does put together the individual frames, but without actual "memories" it is not possible to get the deep details about what is seen.
- We not only "see" the video, but we also RECOGNIZE what is seen (we identify a given actor, we can even remember previous movies with that actor, we KNOW all about the scenes in the background, etc); to have all that information instantly available to the brain is not possible. **This is a point that needs a lot of thought.**
- What happens according to *Abhidhamma*, is that the brain periodically sends packets of acquired data put together by the cortex in the brain to the *hadaya vatthu*, which is basically the seat of the mind. There *citta vīthi* arise in accepting that information from the brain, and it is the mind that does all the compiling (with the help of the *manasikara* and *cetana cetasika*) and that is how we EXPERIENCE any sense input.
- For those who are interested in more details, see, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises."

3. When the mind analyzes those packets of information sent by the brain with *cittā*, it generates feelings (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), and follow-up thoughts (*viññāṇa*); if the mind likes/dislikes that sense input it may decide to act on it by generating *saṅkhāra*.

- Thus we can see that depending on the nature of the sense input, the mind will generate a "packet" of *vedanā* (i.e., *vadanakkhandha*), a "packet" of *saññā* (*sannakkhandha*), a "packet" of *saṅkhāra* (*sankharakkhandha*), a "packet" of *viññāṇa* (*vinnanakkhandha*) , in addition to the *rūpakkhandha* that was involved in the sense input. Actually all these five *khandhas* are generated within the same series of *citta*.

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Our Experience is Stored in Those Khandhas

1. Thus our experiences are stored in five type of "heaps" (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) in the mental plane (*manothalaya*). Some of these "clips" or "packets" from those five heaps or aggregates can be recalled and played back in our minds just like a movie is played back on a screen. When we do that we can recall that particular experience with sights, sounds, etc.

- It is the sum of all such packets of a given kind that is called a *khandha,* for example, a *rūpakkhandha*. All these are our **memory records** of what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and also think.
- The ability to recall past experiences, we call memory. Some have better memories than others. There are some people who can "playback" basically one's life day-by-day for many years into the past; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)." It is amazing to see how much they can recall.
- Yet, one can recall not only memories from this life, but also from past lives by developing *abhiññā* powers. Thus the Buddha Gotama was able to describe in vivid detail the scene, eons ago, when the Buddha Deepankara stated that he was to become a Buddha in the future.
- But let us get back to the main discussion.

2. The brain analyzes multiple sense inputs of different kinds in a second. When we watch a movie, we see the picture, hear the sounds, and if we are eating popcorn we can smell and taste popcorn too; see, "What is a Thought?." Even if you are not familiar with *Abhidhamma*, you can get a good idea of what happens by reading that post. Just try to get the overall picture of what happens instead of trying to analyze in detail.

- Thus our perception of an object is due to the sum of many thoughts (*cittā*) that arise per second. And **each *citta*** has "embedded in it", our feelings (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), our decisions on how to act (*saṅkhāra*), and our overall sense experience (*viññāṇa*). In the case of a visual, auditory, … event, we also have the corresponding "imprints of them" in our mind.
- **In other words, all our sense experiences can be described by five heaps or *khandhas.* The totality of our experience or "our world" is *panca khandha* (*pañcakkhandha*). And it has nothing to do with our physical bodies.**
- Thus it is important to understand that "*rūpa*" can used in the sense of "matter" and also in the sense of "records of those material *rūpa*."

3. These mental components are what the Buddha called *khandhas*. *Rūpakkhandha* does not include actual material objects, sounds, smells, tastes, or touches. **Rather *rūpa khandha* includes only the mental records or imprints of those sense inputs.**

- During our life, we continuously accumulate such *khandhas* or bundles of heaps of sense imprints. Thus a *rūpa khandha* or *rūpakkhandha* (note how the two words were connected by inserting an additional "k") is not actual *rūpa*, but our mental images of such *rūpa*.
- Similarly, we keep accumulating bundles of *vedanā* (*vedanakkhandha*), *saññā* (*sannakkhandha*), *saṅkhāra* (*sankharakkhandha*), and *viññāṇa* (*vinnanakkhandha*).

4. In fact, these *khandhas* are all that we have ever experienced, and would like to experience in the future. The five *khandhas* encompass our (changing) identity, and our sense of the whole world out there. They have embedded in them all our past experiences and also future hopes.

- This is what was meant by saying that *pancakkhadha* (the five aggregates) is our whole world.
- And these records can go back to beginningless time! Some people can recall more past records than others, but by gradually developing *abhiññā* powers, one can recall more and more past lives.

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Eleven Types of Rūpa in the Rūpakkhandha (Same for Other Khandhas)

1. This is clearly described in many *suttā*, even though the true meaning has been hidden all these years. In particular, the *Khandha sutta* summarizes what is included in each aggregate.

- Eleven types of *rūpa* (mental impressions) are in the *rūpakkhandha*: past, present, future, near, far, fine (*sukuma*), coarse (*olarika*), likes (*paneeta*), dislikes (*appaneeta*), internal (*ajjatta*), and external (*bahidda*). Here internal *rūpa* means (impressions) of one's own body parts, and external *rūpa* are (impressions) of external objects.
- Thus, it is quite clear that *rūpakkhandha* encompasses anything that we ever saw (including previous births), we are seeing now, and hope to see in the future. The record of what belongs to the past is permanent and is called *namagotta*. Any *rūpa* about the future (for example, a sketch of the type of house one is thinking about building) can change with time.
- Other four *khandhas* have the same 11 types.
- A short version of the *Khandha sutta* is available online: WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Khandha Sutta: Aggregates
- Even though it does not explain the concept as discussed above, one can see the 11 components of each *khandha* are clearly there. Also, note that it is NOT *Skandha sutta;* it is *Khandha sutta*. This is why I say that *skandha* is a WRONG TERM.

2. Now we can see yet again that Buddha Dhamma has become so contaminated over the past thousands of years. Fortunately, we still have the *Tipiṭaka* in close to original form. The Buddha stated that his *Buddha Sāsana* will last for 5000 years, and the way he made sure that will happen, was to compose the *suttā* as I described in the post, "Sutta – Introduction."

- Furthermore, *abhidhamma* and *vinaya* sections, as well as three original commentaries, are still intact in the *Tipiṭaka*; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma" and other posts in "Historical Background."
- The main problem even with the *Theravāda* version of "Buddhism" is that instead of using the *Tipiṭaka* as the basis, the tendency is to use the *Visuddhimagga* written by Buddhaghosa, who had not attained any *magga phala* and stated that his "wish" was to become a *deva* in the next life from the merits he gained by writing *Visuddhimagga*!
- Even when using the *Tipiṭaka*, most people use the wrong interpretations of key words such as *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* as well as *khandha*, and *paṭicca samuppāda*. This problem is apparent in the Sinhala translation of the *Tipiṭaka*, that was done with the sponsorship of the Sri Lankan government several years ago.

Part 2: Pancupādānakkhandha – It is All Mental

3.6.13 Pañcaupādānakkhandha – It is All Mental

January 1, 2016; revised November 2, 2017, June 28, 2019

Rūpa and *Rūpakkhandha* are two different things. There are *rūpa* made up of "physical matter" (*suddhaṭṭhaka*) in the *rūpa loka*. ***Rūpakkhandha* consists of each person's memories, hopes, and desires for some of the *rūpa* in the *rūpa loka.*** Since the other four *khandha* (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) are all mental anyway, all five are MENTAL.

1. In the previous post, "Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates – A Misinterpreted Concept," we discussed a deeper meaning of the *pañca khandha* or the five heaps or the five aggregates that define a given living being. Each person's *pañca khandha* or the "world" is different from another's.

- **Of course, in the 31 realms of existence there are *rūpa,* or material (and energy).** But our experiences are all mental (which also has energy). Please read the previous post again if you think

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rūpakkhandha is material. ***Rūpakkhandha* consists of our thoughts, memories, perceptions, desires, etc. on *rūpa* that we have experienced, are experiencing now, and hope to experience in the future.** We have those "imprints of *rūpa*" in our minds even if we cannot recall all of them.

- We experience the "material world" only at the "present time" (in a *citta vīthi*), then it is gone. We actually experience not a single *citta* — or even a single *citta vīthi* — but the overall effect of many *citta vīthi* that run in the blink of an eye.

2. This "overall experience of seeing" within a short time is what we actually call seeing (*ditta*). Same for hearing (*suta*). For the other three physical senses (*muta*), it can be there as long as we are actually experiencing them.

- For example, when we are eating a meal, the sense contact is there until we finish eating. When we have a headache (an actual *dukha vedanā*) or while getting a massage (an actual *sukha vedanā*), the sense experience is there for a while.
- But thinking about them (*vinnāta*) — via the sixth sense, the mind — can be experienced at any time; we can recall a past experience or conjure up an enticing future experience.
- *Ditta, suta, muta, vinnata* include everything that we experience. They are re-categorized as *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra,* and *viññāṇa* or the five heaps.
- It is not necessary to memorize terms like *ditta, suta, muta, vinnata*. I am merely naming them to avoid any confusion, since those terms are in the *suttā*. With time, one will remember.

3. *Upādāna* ("upa" + "ādāna" where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull") means "pull and keep close." One tries to pull and keep close only things that one really desires: *pañca upādāna khandha* or *pañcaupādānakkhandha*. We can translate the term, *pañcaupādānakkhandha*, as "five clinging aggregates."

- Thus out of an infinite variety of "things (material and mental)" one has experienced (not only in this life, but in all of existence countless rebirths) — *pañcakkhandha* –, those that one really have bonding with, and have the desire to "keep close" are *pañca upādāna khandha* or *pañcaupādānakkhandha*. **It is important to realize that "*rūpakkhandha*" is mental too**; see, "Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha." Same for the other four *khandhas*.
- Thus *pañcaupādānakkhandha* is what we desire, and is ALL MENTAL too. It is a small fraction of *pañcakkhandha*.

4. First, let us dig a bit deeper into the concept of *pañca khandha* (five heaps) or *pañcakkhandha*. Then one can see connections to other concepts at a deeper level.

- As we recall, the five heaps include everything that one has experienced (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) in the past, one is experiencing right now, and one hopes to experience in the future and in each of these three categories, they can be subdivided into other categories like *paneeta* (likes) and *appaneeta* (dislikes); see the previous post.
- Since each person's experience is unique, one's *pañcakkhandha* is unique, and is different from that of another living being. That is because even if the **external *rūpa* are the same**, the mental impressions are different.

5. A new born baby, does not have much of an experience in this life (other than some while in the womb). But he/she still have an infinite things from the past in those five heaps or aggregates.

- As the baby grows, its *pañcakkhandha* grows each day, adding to the five heaps not only with what is experienced, but also expectations and desires about the future.
- We, of course, remember only a fraction of what is in our *pañcakkhandha* even from our present life. Each day, we experience many things and forget most of it by the next day.

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6. However, some of deeper desires and habits and character remain, sometimes even unknown to us, beneath the surface as our *gathi* and *āsavas* (by the way, those will be reflected in the *cetasika* that automatically arise with our *citta*). As that baby grows, depending on its parents, friends, and other environmental factors, some of those (good and bad) *gathi* resurface and even grow.

- This is why each person is good at some things. If one has musical talent from the past lives, that child can flourish in an environment that provides suitable conditions. If that baby grows in a family that does not provide "a musical environment", then that *gathi* is kept hidden.
- Similarly, one who had the tendency to like alcohol, may be kept out of that habit in a family environment that looks down upon drinking. We can think about zillion other character features that can be suppressed or brought to surface to flourish depending on the environment.
- This is why some people, who have not shown any talent for anything for many years, suddenly "take off and thrive" in a new venture. Stated in another way, one may not realize that "one has *upādāna*" for certain things, unless exposed to it.
- We all have good and bad things that we have "*upādāna*" for. We should stay away from bad ones (forcibly if needed to) and find and cultivate good ones. This is why parent and teachers can play a big role in a child's future.
- Eventually, we need to lose "*upādāna*" for everything, but that comes much later in the Path when one has attained the *Anāgāmī* stage, or at least the *Sakadāgāmī* stage of *Nibbāna*. First we need to lose "*upādāna*" for the highly immoral activities. At the *Sotāpanna* stage, one realizes the perils of "*upādāna*" for only the worst habits that makes one eligible to be born in the *apāyā*. It is a gradual process.

7. The tendency to recreate past experiences and future desires need to be clearly distinguished from the ABILITY TO RECALL past experiences. The Buddha was able to recall things that happened trillions of years ago, but did not either enjoy them or had a revulsion to them.

- As we discussed in the section, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana," *kāma* (or more precisely *kāma rāga*) is the tendency to enjoy such mind-made pleasures from the past or future.
- Each person's set of *pañca upādāna khandha* has embedded in them the certain types of things and events they give priority to, i.e., one's *gathi* and *anusaya*. They **automatically** come out as particular set of *cetasika* (hate and fearlessness of doing immoral things, for example) in our *citta* or thoughts.
- Those *kāma rāga* that correspond to *gathi* in the *apāyā* can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*.
- *Rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga* are the tendencies to enjoy *jhānic* pleasures corresponding to *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms.

8. Thus now we can see *Nibbāna* in terms of *pañcaupādānakkhandha*. As one sheds "*upādāna*" for *gathi* corresponding to the *apāyā*, higher *kāma loka*, and *rūpa* or *arūpa loka* successively, one attains the *Sotāpanna*, *Anāgāmī* (via *Sakadāgāmī* stage), and the *Arahant* stage respectively.

- As one keeps shedding layers of *pañcaupādānakkhandha,* one proceeds to higher stages of *Nibbāna*, and upon attaining the *Arahant* stage loses all "*upādāna*" and thus *pañcaupādānakkhandha.* However, the *pañcakkhandha* remains, and upon the death all of it will stay in the *nāma loka* as *nāma gotta*.
- Thus anyone with sufficient *abhiññā* powers can examine those *nāma gotta*. That is how the Buddha Gotama described the lives of many previous Buddhas, and we learn about them today.

9. Unless one has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage, it is possible for "*apāya gathi*" to come to the surface (as *cetasika* like greed, shamelessness in doing immoral things, etc in our *citta* or thoughts), especially under extreme conditions. We all have been in the *apāyā* uncountable times, so it is not something to be speculated; we have had those *gathi*, and it is possible that they can resurface. This is the danger that we need to realize.

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- Even if we manage to avoid such "extreme conditions" in this life because we have been fortunate to be born under good conditions, we have no idea where we will be born in the future. This is why the Buddha said, "..*appamadena sampadeta*" or "make haste and sort out '*san*' or what to do and what not to do."

10. As we mentioned in the beginning, each one's *pañcakkhandha* is unique. Each has his/her own feelings, perceptions, mental attributes (good and bad), and *viññāṇa* regarding any sense event. We make our decisions accordingly. **Our character (*gathi*) is in *pañcakkhandha* (the way we see and comprehend the world) and even more so in our *pañcaupādānakkhandha* (our desires for the worldly things).**

- And *diṭṭhi* (our world views) is a critical part of both *pañcakkhandha* and *pañcaupādānakkhandha*. Our decisions depend critically on our *diṭṭhi*. There are many posts at the site on the importance of *diṭṭhi*. The first step to *Nibbāna* (the *Sotāpanna* stage) is *sammā diṭṭhi*.
- Unless one comprehends the true nature of this world of 31 realms (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), one cannot attain *sammā diṭṭhi* at least to some extent.

11. When one acts with *avijjā* (due to not comprehending the true nature of the world), one does (*abhi) saṅkhāra*, and keeps adding to the *pañcaupādānakkhandha*.

- When we start with the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra"* step, it leads to "*upādāna paccayā bhava*." Thus according the types of (*abhi) saṅkhāra* one does, one makes "bonding" or "attaches to" certain types of "*bhava*" or existence.
- *Paṭicca samuppāda* explains how we make *bhava* according to the level of *avijjā* (as indicated by our *gathi, anusaya*, etc) that is embedded in our *pañcaupādānakkhandha*.
- Thus, one's *pañcaupādānakkhandha* has embedded in it the "cravings and desires" of oneself, and where one is destined to have rebirths.

12. Therefore, we can see that no matter how we analyze things, they all converge to the same fundamentals. Before we embark on the journey to safety (*Nibbāna,* or at least the *Sotāpanna* stage), we need to figure out the "lay of the land." That is *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the nature of this world.

- Only then that our minds will willingly give up the *diṭṭhis* or wrong views.
- Only then that our minds will see the dangers of sense pleasures, starting at the excess levels of *kāma chanda* and *vyāpāda*, which could lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*.
- If you could not grasp everything, that is fine. Come back and read the post again later, especially after reading other relevant posts. Each time you read, you may be able to grasp something that was not unclear. It happens to me all the time. When the minds starts grasping at least partly, it will become much easier.

13. It is very important to see the difference between the "physical world" which is made of "*satara mahā bhūta*" and the *pañcakkhandha* which is all mental.

- **The physical world out there is the same for all of us.** But our mental impressions of it (*pañcakkhandha*) are different for each of us. It is easy to see that our feelings, perceptions, and *saṅkhāra* that we create upon seeing the same person are different.
- Our *pañcaupādānakkhandha,* or the fraction of the *pañcakkhandha* that we have attachment for, is even more personal, unique for each person.

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IV Living Dhamma

August 26, 2016

An experience-based process of practicing Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) is discussed with English discourses. Belief in rebirth process is not needed at beginning.

- **Subsection:** Essential Buddhism
  - Four Noble Truths – Suffering and Its Elimination
  - Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, and Viññāṇa
  - Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations
  - Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa
  - Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra – Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda
  - Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run
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  - Complexity of the Mind – Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra
  - Citta, Mano, Viññāṇa – Stages of a Thought
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  - Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities (with *Desana* 2)
  - Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life (with *Desana* 3)
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  - Noble Eightfold Path – Role of Sobhana Cetasika
  - Getting to Samādhi (with *Desana* 5)
  - Sexual Orientation – Effects of Kamma and Gathi (Saṅkhāra)
- **Subsection:** Mundane Sammā Samādhi
  - Micchā Diṭṭhi – Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect) (with Desana 6)

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- Suffering in This Life and Paticca Samuppāda (with Desana 7)
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  - What Is Vedanā (Feelings)?

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❖Vedanā – What It Really Means

❖Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?

- What is Saṅkhāra (Mental Formations)?

❖Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means

- Rūpa Aggregate

❖Bhūta and Yathābhūta – What Do They Really Mean

❖What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!

- Viññāṇa Aggregate

❖Viññāṇa – What It Really Means

❖Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter

❖Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means

- Sakkāya Diṭṭhi

❖Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?

- Nāmarūpa Formation

❖Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāṇa

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4.1 Essential Buddhism

December 25, 2018

Comments/questions at the puredhamma discussion forum: "Forums." The registration process and guidelines are at: "Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines." I can also be reached via email: lal@puredhamma.net.

Four Noble Truths – Suffering and Its Elimination

Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, and Viññāṇa

Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations

Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa

Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra – Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run

Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently

Ānāpāna and Satipaṭṭhāna – Fundamentals

Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna – Two Meanings of Sati

4.1.1 Four Noble Truths – Suffering and Its Elimination

January 6, 2019

Introduction

1. The First Noble Truth is about the suffering that can be eliminated from arising.

- The second describes how suffering arises, due to our own cravings (**which we manifest via our own *saṅkhāra* that we generate willingly, as we have discussed**; see, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means"). I will write a simpler version in the next post.
- The Third Noble Truth says that future suffering can be stopped by eliminating those cravings. That REQUIRES and understanding of the wider world view of the Buddha with the rebirth process within the 31 realms.
- The Forth Noble Truth is the way to acquire that understanding by "learning and living" that *Dhammā* (by following the Noble Eightfold Path).

2. The Buddha said, "my *Dhammā* has not been known in this world. This *Dhammā* has never been heard of previously."

- What is new about knowing that there is suffering around us? Everybody knows that there is suffering with old age, diseases, poverty, etc. One does not have to be a Buddhist to see that.
- **So, we need to figure out "what is new" about suffering that is explained in the First Noble Truth.**

The First Noble Truth – What is Suffering

3. I have discussed the First Noble Truth in the post, "Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta." Summary:

"Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering. Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering and having to separate from those things one likes is suffering. **If one does not get what one likes (*iccha*), that is suffering – Doing worldly activities (*saṃkhittena*) to get**

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all those things one craves for (*pañcupādānakkhandha*) is suffering. [*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]

- There is a deeper meaning in the part, "**If one does not get what one likes (*iccha*), that is suffering**," that is connected to the *anicca* nature.
- That deeper meaning is expressed in terms of *taṇhā* (craving) is expressed in the final part, "**Doing worldly activities (*saṃkhittena*) to get all those things one craves for (*pañcupādānakkhandha*) is suffering.**"

4. Just as in science, something comes about due to causes. Our present life as a human has come about due to causes (*kamma*) done in the past. Some of those were "good *kamma*" and that is why we can enjoy some pleasures. Bad *kamma* have led to instances of suffering.

- But there are lower realms, including the animal realm, where suffering is much higher. Bad *kamma* lead to such births.
- **Suffering in the four lowest realms is the real suffering.** That is what we first need to focus on.
- **And all that suffering arises because we crave for things in this world because of our *avijjā* (not comprehending the Four Noble Truths).**

5. **Seeing this hidden suffering is indeed difficult.** When the Buddha attained the Buddhahood, it said that he was worried whether he could convey this deep ideas to most people.

- We seek pleasures that are highly visible. But if we gain such pleasures with immoral acts, the consequences of such immoral acts are not apparent. We can see a stone thrown up coming down, but we cannot see any bad consequences to the drug dealer who seems to be enjoying life.

The Second Noble Truth – Causes for Future Suffering

6. the cause of future suffering is indicated in the First Noble Truth: It is the craving for sense pleasures. The worst outcomes (rebirths in the *apāyā*) will result if we do immoral things to get such sense pleasures.

- For example, person X may kill another person to get his money or to marry his wife. Even though X may accomplish that goal and "enjoy life" for even 100 years, that is nothing compared millions of years of future suffering X will go through due to his immoral action.

7. When a fish bites the bait, it does not see the suffering hidden in that action. Looking from the ground we can see the whole picture and we know what is going to happen to the fish if it bites the bait. But the fish is unable to see that whole picture, and thus does not see the hidden suffering. It only sees a delicious bit of food.

- In the same way, if we do not know about the wider world of 31 realms (with the suffering-filled four lowest realms), we only focus on what is easily accessible to our six senses.
- In order to really comprehend suffering through repeated rebirths, one needs to comprehend that most suffering is encountered in the 4 lowest realms (*apāyā*); see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" at puredhamma.net.
- Thus, stopping suffering requires one to be mindful of one's actions and stop doing bad *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* (i.e., immoral thinking, speech, and deeds).

8. Therefore, the "never heard truth about suffering" that the Buddha revealed is the suffering that is hidden in sense pleasures. The level of suffering depends on what we do (*vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*) to get those pleasures. **If they are immoral then worst suffering in the *apāyā* will result.**

- We believe that those sense pleasures are to be valued and to be enjoyed. That is because we do not see right away the consequences of any bad actions that we do to get those sense pleasures.

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- For example, if one rapes a woman to get enjoyment for a short time, one could be spending millions of years as an animal in the future because of that immoral action.
- However, it may not be easy to grasp this point. One needs to advance step-by-step; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."
- The first step to reduce suffering in the future is to avoid doing bad deeds (*kamma*) via thoughts, speech, and bodily actions (again, these are associated with *mano*, *vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*).
- **Therefore, we create our own future happiness via *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* (good *saṅkhāra*) or future suffering via *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* (immoral *saṅkhāra*).**

The Third Noble Truth – How to Stop Future Suffering

9. As we discussed above, such suffering can arise in this life due to our own (*apuññābhi*) *saṅkhāra* (which we generate in order to satisfy our cravings).

- In the same way, ALL FUTURE SUFFERING can also be stopped by controlling our own *saṅkhāra*.
- We attach to things with greed and hate via *saṅkhāra*, because of our ignorance of the Four Noble Truths (*avijjā*). As we have discussed, this is the first step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* leading to "the whole mass of suffering": "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."

10. The Third Noble Truth is about what can be achieved by systematically removing those causes.

- *Nirāmisa sukha* increases from the point of embarking on the Path, and has four levels of PERMANENT increases starting at the *Sotāpanna* stage and culminating at the Arahant stage; there are several posts starting with, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

11. In order to stop the arising of "bad *saṅkhāra*" we need to do two things: (1) remove *avijjā* by learning true Dhamma, and (2) making use of our free will to get control of our *saṅkhāra* (this is the basis of *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*).

- A systematic way to achieve this is stated in the Fourth Noble Truth.

The Fourth Noble Truth – The Way to Stop Future Suffering

12. The second Noble Truth is describes those CAUSES that we need to work on. The root causes are greed, hate, and ignorance, but they need to be removed mainly via understanding the Three Characteristics (*Tilakkhaṇa*) and also via removing our bad *sansāric* habits; see a series of posts starting with, "Habits, Goals, Character (Gathi)" to "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas."

- The way to achieve this is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path: *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (understanding what is embedded in the Four Noble Truths), and then thinking (*saṅkappa*), speaking (*vācā*) , acting (*kammanta*), living one's whole life that way (*ājīva*), striving harder (*vāyāma*), getting to the right mindset (*sati*), and finally to *samādhi*.

13. When we follow the Noble Eightfold Path, *nirāmisa sukha* arises first and then various stages of *Nibbāna*.

- *Nirāmisa sukha* starts when one lives a moral life (see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and follow-up posts).
- The root causes of immoral behavior are greed, hate, and ignorance. Ignorance can be reduced to the extent of attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage just via comprehending the Three Characteristics of "this world of 31 realms," i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations," and the follow-up posts. It is that powerful.

Why Is It Hard to See the "Hidden Suffering"? – Time Lag

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14. The main problem in clearly seeing the "cause and effect of mind actions" is that the results of those actions have a time delay and that time delay itself is not predictable.

- In contrast, it is easy to predict what is going to happen with material things (moving an object, a vehicle, a rocket, etc). The success of physical sciences is due to this reason. Once the underlying laws are found (laws of gravity, laws of motion, electromagnetism, nuclear forces, quantum mechanics, etc), one has complete control.

15. But the mind is very different. To begin with, no two minds work the same way. Under a given set of conditions, each mind will chose to act differently. With physical objects, that is not so; under a given set of conditions, what will happen can be predicted accurately.

- Effects of some actions (*kamma*) may not materialize in this life and sometimes it may come to fruition only in many lives down the road (but with accumulated interest).
- Even in this life, mind phenomena are complex: This is why economics is not a "real science." It involves how people act sometimes "irrationally" for perceived gains. No economic theory can precisely predict how a given stock market will perform.

16. **This "cause and effect" that involves the mind is the principle of *kamma* and *kamma vipāka* in Buddha Dhamma.**

- But unlike in Hinduism, *Kamma* is not deterministic, i.e., not all *kamma vipāka* have to come to fruition; see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- Suitable CONDITIONS must be there to bring good or bad kamma vipāka to fruition. That is why *kamma* is not deterministic and we can stop ALL future suffering.
- We just need to get rid of *avijjā* and *taṇhā*, two key steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. That is how *Aṅgulimāla* overcame all that bad *kamma* of killing almost 1000 people.

Only a Part of Suffering in This Life Can Be Eliminated

Finally, we can look into what can of suffering can be stopped from arising in this itself, so that we can gain confidence in Buddha Dhamma. One does not need to blindly believe and follow Buddha's teachings.

17. There are two types of *vedanā* (feelings); see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

- First is due to *kamma vipāka.*
- The second is mental suffering due to *saṅkhāra* (via attachment to sensual pleasures and friction (*paṭigha*) due to things we don't like). This could lead to depression.

18. This life is the RESULT of past *kamma*. Once a life starts, it cannot be stopped until "its *kammic* energy" is exhausted. This life WILL end up in old age, decay, and eventual death.

- Therefore, if someone has aches and pains due to old age, it is not possible to get rid of them other than to use medications or therapy to lessen the pain and manage it.
- Even the Buddha had back pain due to old age, and had a severe stomach ache at the end.
- One may get injured, come down with a disease, etc.
- All these are due to *kamma vipāka.*

19. On the other hand, it is possible to stop the second type ("mental suffering") that arises due to our own way of thinking (again, our own *vacī saṅkhāra*).

- Therefore, we can EXPERIENCE the relief from suffering (called *nirāmisa sukha*) in this life itself.
- The suffering (or *vedanā*) that a living *Arahant* has eliminated is called "*samphassa ja vedanā*." **This is what leads to depression in some people**.

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- Here, "*samphassa*" is "*san*" + "*phassa*," or "contact with one's own defilements (*san*)"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."

Humans Have Free Will to Eliminate Future Suffering

20. The life we have as a human is a RESULT of a past good deed. The life of a dog or an ant is the result of a past deed by that sentient being.

- And what happens to us in this life is a COMBINATION of what we have done in the past (*kamma vipāka*) AND what we do in this life.
- What happens to an animal is MOSTLY due to *kamma vipāka* from the past.
- The difference between a human and an animal is that the animal does not have much control over what is going to happen to it. But human birth is a special one: We have a higher level mind that CAN change the future to some extent, and with possible enormous consequences.
- **We have free will and animals (or those beings in other lower realms) do not. We can control our *saṅkhāra*, and they cannot. It is very difficult to get a human birth. We should not waste this opportunity.**

4.1.2 Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, and Viññāṇa

December 25, 2018; revised August 23, 2019; April 9, 2020

Pāli to English Translations – Introduction

1. The Pāli words *citta, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* are mistranslated in most current literature as thought, feeling, perception, mental formations, and consciousness, respectively.

- The last four (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*) are critical concepts in Buddha Dhamma. They represent the four mental aggregates.

2. The word *saṅkhāra* is translated as "mental formations." It does not convey the meaning at all. *Viññāṇa* is translated as just "consciousness" and that is simply wrong.

- *Saṅkhāra* is associated with "emotions", so we need to make the connection to emotions. In particular, we get attached to somethings and get repulsed by others. In both cases, we generate a wide variety of emotions that lead to three types of *saṅkhāra* in our minds.
- They are *puññābhisaṅkhāra* (*puñña abhisaṅkhāra,*) *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* (*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra,*) and *āneñjābhisaṅkhāra* (*āneñja abhisaṅkhāra.*) In simple terms, that means moral thoughts/deeds, immoral thoughts/deeds, and the cultivation of *arupāvacara jhāna.* For details, see, "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – What Is "Intention"?"

Conventional Meanings

3. The following are the descriptions or definitions that I found online, which seem to be closest to the Pāli words.

Thought (for *citta*): "an idea or opinion produced by thinking or occurring suddenly in the mind."

Feelings (for *vedanā*): Normally used together with emotion. For example, a "feeling of joy."

Perception (for *saññā*): recognition.

Emotions (for *saṅkhāra*): Some define emotions as: "joy-sadness, anger-compassion, greed-benevolence, etc. etc.."

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Consciousness (for *viññāṇa*): "the state of being awake and aware of one's surroundings."

4. That is all modern psychology says, and there are many overlaps there too. There are no universally accepted definitions for those words yet.

- On the other hand, the Buddha has provided a very detailed analysis of the Pāli words *citta, saññā, vedanā, saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa*.
- *Saṅkhāra* arises due to emotions. These emotions are called *cetasika* which is normally translated as "mental factors."
- Therefore, *citta, saññā, vedanā, saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa* SEEM TO correspond to the English words thought, perception, feeling, actions based on emotions, and consciousness. But that can lead to many misinterpretations, as we will discuss below.

We Need to Use Pāli Words Like *Citta*, *Saññā*, *Vedanā*, *Saṅkhāra*, *Viññāṇa*

5. **That is why it is almost impossible to translate those Pāli words into a single English word.** The closest is probably "perception" for *saññā*, even though *saññā* also means something more profound.

- **It is much better to learn the meaning of each Pāli word and use that word itself.**
- I will briefly discuss some key features to get a basic idea. Other aspects are discussed at: "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?."

Citta and Thought – Not Even Close

6. *Cittas* arise as a series; a single *citta* never arises by itself.

- In a sensing event that involves the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body), a *citta vīthi* (or a series of *citta*) arise with 17 *citta*.
- In the case of *citta* arising directly in mind, the basic *citta vīthi* has 12-14 *citta*. But in some exceptional cases, there is no limit to the number *citta* that can occur (like in *jhāna samāpatti*).
- There can be billions of *citta vīthi* running within "the blink of eye" according to *Abhidhamma*. **The Buddha said that there is nothing in this universe faster than a *citta*.**
- After reading this post, you may want to read the previous post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)." That could make things more clear.

Citta and *Cetasika*

7. So you can see that what we call a "thought" is NOT a single *citta*. **What we experience as a "thought" is the overall effect of a large number of *citta vīthi*.**

- Each *citta* arises with at least seven *cetasika* (mental factors). *Vedanā* and *saññā* are two of those psychological factors. Once a "good *citta*" occurs, many of those arise without changing to "bad *citta*" in the middle. That is why a "given sense experience" is just called a *citta*, even though it may have billions of individual *citta*.
- There are 52 mental factors (*cetasika*) that could arise in a *citta* ("thought"). Thus, a simple "thought" can be quite complex.
- If it is a "moral *citta*," then it would have some combination of "good mental factors" such as compassion or "fear of wrongdoing" (*hiri*). There are 25 of them, and only several of them arise at a given time.
- If it is an "immoral *citta*," it would have "bad mental factors" such as greed and hate. There are 14 of them.

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- Those good and bad mental factors (*cetasika*) never arise together.

Vedanā and *Saññā* – In Every *Citta*

8. *Vedanā* and *saññā* are two special types of *cetasika*. That is why they are treated separately from other *cetasika*.

- Both of those arise with every citta.
- *Vedanā* basically "feels" that a sense event is happening. There is a ***sukha vedanā*, *dukkha vedanā*, or a neutral *vedanā*** (more accurately ***adhukkhamasukha vedanā***) associated with EACH sense event. Therefore, joy is not a *vedanā*; see #2 above. There are only three types of *vedanā*.
- ***Saññā* is responsible for recognizing what the sense object is**, based on one's prior experience with that object. So, one perceives a rose and that it has color of red, for example.
- Those are, of course, fundamental descriptions.

9. There are 52 *cetasika*, including *vedanā* and *saññā*. Out of the other 50 *cetasika,* some included in "*saṅkhāra*"; which particular *cetasika* will be involved will depend on the specific situation. They basically define whether a *citta* is good or bad.

- As we mentioned before, *vedanā* and *saññā* arise with all *citta*, good and bad.
- When one does an immoral deed, some of those "bad *cetasika*" (called *asobhana cetasika*) arise with *citta*.
- When one does a moral deed, some of "good *cetasika*" (called *sobhana cetasika*) arise.

Saṅkhāra Are Our Actions Done With Emotions

10. *Cetasika* represents the English word "emotions."

- When we experience those emotions, they are called "*mano saṅkhāra*."
- When we start thinking consciously about them, they become *vacī saṅkhāra*; we also speak with *vacī saṅkhāra*. Here, *vacī* is pronounced "vachee."
- If we do bodily actions with such emotions, then those are done with *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- So, we can see that "*saṅkhāra*" are more than emotions. ***Saṅkhāra* are what we think and do with such sentiments.**
- **It is essential to realize that we have control over *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra*, but *mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically based on our *gati*.**

11. To summarize what we have discussed so far:

- What we experience (and call a thought), is actually the overall effect of millions of *citta vīthi.*
- Current scientific research says a human can only register sense events lasting at least a hundredth of a second (about ten milliseconds). During that time, millions of *citta vīthi* would have arisen.
- The sense object is recognized with the *saññā cetasika*, and accordingly, a *sukha*, *dukkha* or neutral *vedanā* arise.
- Based on that recognition (but simultaneously) a set of good, bad *cetasika* arise.
- Based on those good or bad set of *cetasika*, the mind generates good bad *saṅkhāra* with which we think, speak, and do things.

Emotions Arise Based on One's *Gati* and the Sense Input

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12. Thus *mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically based on our *gati* (or *gathi*) and the particular sense input. If one likes a particular sense input (based on one's *gati*), then one will start thinking about it.

- So, we consciously think and speak with *vacī saṅkhāra* based on those emotions (*mano saṅkhāra*) that initially arise. If our emotions get high enough, we may take bodily actions based on *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- All three types of *saṅkhāra* arise in mind.

13. I need to emphasize the fact that occurring of a set of good or bad *cetasika* DOES NOT happen arbitrarily. Nothing happens without a cause.

- Basically, two key factors determine what kind of *cetasika* arise for a given sense event: **(1) One's *gati* (pronounced "gathi"), roughly meaning character/habits, and, (2) the particular sense object.**
- Pali words are written differently than normal English words. See, "'Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and "'Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."
- *Gati* has been explained in many posts: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)," "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View," "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control," are just a few.

Viññāṇa Is the Overall Experience – Plus Future Expectations

14. Finally, *viññāṇa* represents one's overall sense experience (including *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*).

- *Viññāṇa* has something in addition to those. One may form a future expectation based on that sensory input.
- **If one gets attracted to a given sense experience, one may keep thinking about it and initiate an expectation to enjoy it further.** *Viññāṇa* is that expectation.This is an energy generated in what is called a *javana citta*. **That creates a *kamma bīja* that can bring *vipāka* in the future.**
- More information at: "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means" and "Viññāṇa (Defiled Consciousness)."

15. So, we see that *viññāṇa* is much more than just consciousness. It is wrong to translate *viññāṇa* as just consciousness (or awareness).

- That is only an basic description of *viññāṇa*. Deeper aspects of *viññāṇa* can be found in the subsection: "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

Expectations Are Only in *Mano Viññāṇa* (Normally Called *Viññāṇa*)

16. There are six types of *viññāṇa*.

- We become aware of something in our physical world via *cakkhu viññāṇa* (seeing), *sota viññāṇa* (hearing), *ghāṇa viññāṇa* (smelling), *jivhā viññāṇa* (tasting), and *kāya viññāṇa* (touching).
- Then *mano viññāṇa* takes over, and will decide to act on it — and if needed — to make "future expectations" or "plans." (Three *manodvāra citta vīthi* follow each *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* per *Abhidhamma*.)
- **Therefore, it is the *mano viññāṇa* that builds expectations for the future.**
- To emphasize: *Kamma bīja* that can bring future *vipāka* are generated only in ***mano viññāṇa*.** The other five types of *viññāṇa* only bring in the external sensory input.
- **Therefore, when *suttā* refer to *viññāṇa* without a distinction, the reference is to *mano viññāṇa*.**
- The other five types of *viññāṇa* just "bring the sense signal to mind."

Viññāṇa and *Saṅkhāra* Feed on Each Other

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17. For example, *cakkhu viññāṇa* is like a camera taking a picture. It is the *mano viññāṇa* that takes actions (generates *saṅkhāra*) based on that sensory input.

- If the sense input is attractive, it will try to get "more of such sense inputs," i.e., it will initiate a *viññāṇa* to "achieve that expectation" via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." For example, let us assume that person X sees a new car and "falls in love with it" and makes a *viññāṇa* (an expectation, which is a mental energy) for it.
- That *viññāṇa* to "buy that car Y" will be in the subconscious of X. It will be in his subconscious until either he buys it or it turns out that there is absolutely no way for him to afford it.

18. Days later, he is driving to work and sees a similar car on the road (that is, of course a *cakkhu viññāṇa*).

- Now that *viññāṇa* to "buy that car Y" will come back to his mind (triggered by that *cakkhu viññāṇa*. Then of course his *mano viññāṇa* will take over and his interest in the car will come to his mind.the car
- Then we will start generating *vacī saṅkhāra* (conscious thoughts) about buying that car and how nice it would be drive to work in it, etc). That is the backward step of "*viññāṇa paccayā saṅkhāra*." The *Paṭicca Samuppāda* step "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" runs backward too; see, "Āsevana and Aññamañña Paccayā."
- That in turn will provide "more food" for that *viññāṇa* via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."
- Therefore, *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* "feed on each other."

One should contemplate on these ideas and apply them to other "real life situations." That is real "insight meditation" or "*vipassanā bhāvanā*."

Resources

19. A reasonably good idea of the structure in *Abhidhamma* can be gained by reading *Bhikkhu* Bodhi's book, "WebLink: PDF download: A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma."

- "WebLink: PDF download: Buddha Abhidhamma – Ultimate Science," by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon is also a good FREE publication.
- But both of those authors also translate *viññāṇa* as consciousness. Furthermore, they have translate *citta* also as consciousness. There are other translation problems too.
- However, by reviewing those two resources one can see how in-depth and detailed the mind processes are analyzed in *Abhidhamma*.
- The "Abhidhamma" section, together with the "Tables and Summaries" section also provides more information on *Abhidhamma*.

4.1.3 Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations

January 1, 2019; revised May 9, 2019

1. *Viññāṇa* means "without *ñāṇa*" or without wisdom, i.e., with ignorance. *Viññāṇa* could also mean "defiled *viññāṇa*", i.e., not knowing the consequences of doing *dasa akusala*.

- When one attains the *Arahanthood*, when one's *paññā* (wisdom) will be optimized and one will have "undefiled or clear *viññāṇa*."
- There are many *suttā* that clearly state "*viññāṇa nirodha*," or stopping the arising of *viññāṇa* (defiled *viññāṇa*) leads to *Nibbāna*.

A succinct statement can be found in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dvayatānupassanāsutta (Sutta Nipata 3.12)":

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"*Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti,*
Sabbaṃ viññāṇapaccayā;
Viññāṇassa nirodhena,
Natthi dukkhassa sambhavo."

- **Translated:** "Whatever suffering that arises, all that arises due to *viññāṇa*; **With not arising of *viññāṇa*, there is no existence with suffering**."
- A detailed explanation is at, "Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."
- I will introduce the concept of *viññāṇa* in a simple way. In the simplest form, *viññāṇa* is any type of expectation even without moral/immoral implications.

2. *Viññāṇa* includes or encompasses the following: our feelings (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), and a set individual mental factors (*cetasika*). They all arise together, and the set of *cetasika* that arise is dependent on each person's *gati* (habits/character). **If you are not familiar with *Abhidhamma*, don't worry about it.** I will take a simple example to illustrate *viññāṇa* below.

- Five of the six types of *viññāṇa* are strictly *vipāka viññāṇa.* These are the five types of *viññāṇa* associated with the five physical senses.
- We become aware of something in our physical world via *cakkhu viññāṇa* (seeing), *sota viññāṇa* (hearing), *ghāṇa viññāṇa* (smelling), *jivhā viññāṇa* (tasting), and *kāya viññāṇa* (touching); these are due to past *kamma vipāka.*
- **When one of our five physical senses detects something in our physical world, one of those five types of *viññāṇa* arise. If we get interested in them, we start generating *mano viññāṇa* and doing *kamma*.**
- Let us take a simple example to clarify those basic ideas.

3. When a man X sees a young woman (Y), that is called a "seeing event" or *cakkhu viññāṇa*. Suppose the woman has just come to X's workplace as a new employee.

- With that *cakkhu viññāṇa*, X recognizes Y as an attractive female and that is called *saññā*; X may generate "happy feelings" when seeing Y and that is *vedanā*; X may also generate lust in his mind and that is a mental factor (*cetasika*).
- If X gets interested in Y, then X may also generate lust in his mind with subsequent *mano viññāṇa,* and start generating *mano, vacī,* and *kāya saṅkhāra*; see the previous post.

4. With the establishment of this new *viññāṇa*, there is now an expectation in X's mind of getting a date to go out with Y, and may be getting to marry Y someday.

- That is a *mano viññāṇa* that stays hidden in X's mind. It has the expectation of getting an opportunity to have a close relationship with Y.
- That idea will remain hidden in X's mind and can re-surface at appropriate times, especially when seeing Y again, or when someone mentions Y's name for example. This is "*viññāṇa paccayā saṅkhāra*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- The more X will engaging in generating such *saṅkhāra*, that *viññāṇa* will also strengthen; that is the "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

5. Thus both "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" and "*viññāṇa paccayā saṅkhāra*" will be operating back and forth, and will keep strengthening that *viññāṇa*.

This is what is meant in many *suttā* by saying that "*viññāṇa* will grow" as one keeps doing *saṅkhāra*.

For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cetanā Sutta (SN 12.38)": " *Yañca, bhikkhave, ceteti yañca pakappeti yañca anuseti, ārammaṇametaṃ hoti viññāṇassa ṭhitiyā. Ārammaṇe sati patiṭṭhā viññāṇassa hoti.* ***Tasmiṃ patiṭṭhite viññāṇe virūḷhe āyatiṃ punabbhavābhinibbatti hoti.*** *Āyatiṃ*

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punabbhavābhinibbattiyā sati āyatiṃ jāti jarāmaraṇaṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā sambhavanti. ***Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti***.”

Translated: ““*Bhikkhus*, what one intends, and what one plans, and whatever one has a tendency towards: this focus (*ārammaṇa*) a basis for the maintenance of *viññāṇa*. When there is an *ārammaṇa* there is a support for the establishing of *viññāṇa*. **When *viññāṇa* is established and has come to growth, there is the arising of future renewed existence (*punabbhavā*)**. When there is the future renewed existence, future birth, aging-and-death, sorrow, lamentation, pain, displeasure, and despair come to be. **Such is the origin of this whole mass of suffering**.”

6. So, let us assume that X has been seeing Y for a few days and may be even got to talk to her a few times (*vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* are associated those activities). Each time X interacts with Y, that “*viññāṇa* for having a close relationship with Y” will grow in X’s mind.

- Furthermore, X will be thinking about Y often (which is generating *vacī saṅkhāra*), that will also help make that “*viññāṇa* for having a close relationship with Y” to grow.
- That happens via “*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*” step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

7. Several days later, X finds out that Y is married, when her husband comes to meet her at work.

- He could clearly see that she is happily married and there is no point in even thinking about having a relationship with her.
- **In an instant, X’s “*viññāṇa* for having a close relationship with Y” will be eliminated (for most people).**
- When the reality of the situation is comprehended by the mind, corresponding *viññāṇa* will be stopped. **This is what is meant by “*viññāṇa nirodha*.”**

8. **Therefore, it is important to see that a *viññāṇa* (or an expectation) will be eliminated as soon as one realizes the futility (or the dangers) of that expectation.**

- At a deeper level, all of one’s highly immoral types of *viññāṇa* will be permanently removed when one will be able to see the futility/dangers in engaging in immoral deeds. That is when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage via comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Next, one’s expectation for seeking pleasures in this world will be totally removed when one realizes the futility — and dangers — in seeking such sense pleasures. That is when one attains the *Anāgāmi* stage of *Nibbāna*.
- Once one becomes an *Anāgāmi*, one is at a stage where one can start seeing the futility of *jhānic* pleasures and start getting rid of *rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga* (or the futility of born in the *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara* realms. That is when one becomes an *Arahant*.
- Therefore, the way to *Nibbāna* is a step-by-step process; see, “Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?.”

9. There are many types of *viññāṇa* that we can have. The minor ones are just expectations of getting something done or buying something or getting new job, etc.

- *Saṅkhāra* or “thinking of that expectation and making plans to get it done also by speaking and doing things (that includes *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra*)” will make that *viññāṇa* to grow. This comes via the “*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*” step.
- In another example, suppose X is thinking about buying a certain type of car. That idea or expectation will be “at the back of his mind” all the time. If he sees a car like that on the road, then that *viññāṇa* will be awakened, and he will start thinking about it again. Now, one day X buys that car. Then that *viññāṇa* will also disappear since he will no longer interested in buying a car. That expectation has been fulfilled.
- Therefore, a *viññāṇa* will “take hold in the and grow” only as long as one has a desire AND one believes that it can be fulfilled.

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10. I gave those two examples to illustrate the basic concept. But more complex types of *viññāṇa* can grow based on certain types of activities that X engages in, and those can become *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* that can lead to rebirths.

- For example, if X constantly engages in helping others, donating time and money to charities, etc, he would be cultivating the mindset of a *deva* (even without knowing). Then that "moral *viññāṇa*" would grow with time and may lead to a rebirth in a *deva* realm.
- If one is constantly thinking and planning to make money by exploiting/deceiving others, he/she is doing *vacī/kāya saṅkhāra* that will be feeding a "bad *viññāṇa*" that can lead to a birth in the *apāyā*.
- Therefore, *viññāṇa* can be various types.
- However, there are six basic types of *viññāṇa*. The above examples all belong to "*mano viññāṇa*," except the *cakkhu viññāṇa* that was involved when X saw Y.

11. As we discussed in #2, there are five basic types of *viññāṇa* just bring external sense objects (pictures, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches) to our mind.

- Then *mano viññāṇa* takes over, and will decide to act on it — and if needed — makes "future expectations" or "future plans." **Therefore, it is the *mano viññāṇa* that has expectations for the future.**
- We ignore most of the things we see, hear, etc. But if we get attracted to something, then we will be going back to see, hear, etc and may be making other related plans too. That is all done with *mano viññāṇa*.

12. Obviously, *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* is a very important *mano viññāṇa*. It can determine future births.

- This is a complex subject, but when one engages in highly immoral deeds, the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* that grows may not be what one desires.
- For example, suppose X is a serial rapist. He gets a temporary sense satisfaction by raping women. What he does not know is that he is cultivating a *viññāṇa* that is appropriate for an animal. So, he could get an animal birth because of that immoral *viññāṇa* he is cultivating.
- So, hopefully you can see the connection between *viññāṇa* and *gati* (pronounced "gathi") too. *Gati* (character qualities/habits) is an important concept that has been hidden in recent years.

13. When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*, one would see the futility of such immoral and briefly-lived sense pleasures. Then such types of "immoral *viññāṇa*" would not be cultivated in his mind.

- In other words, one's "hidden immoral *gati*" will be permanently removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- That is comparable to X losing the "*viññāṇa* for having a close relationship with Y" in #3 to #7 above. In that case, X clearly saw the uselessness of having that *viññāṇa*, and it died.
- It would be a good idea to read and understand posts on *gati*: "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View"; "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein"; "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control."

14. I made this discussion simple in order to get two main ideas across, which are:

- *Viññāṇa* is a complex concept. This is why it not appropriate to translate *viññāṇa* as just "consciousness."
- *Mano viññāṇa* arise due to *saṅkhāra* ("*san*" + "*khāra*"). We cultivate those via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles.
- This is why "*san*" is a key root word in Pāli; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."

15. I hope that those who translate deep *suttā* word-by-word will at least read these series of posts and make amendments to their ways of translating key *suttā* that discuss deep meanings. They are no different

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from the Sati *bhikkhu* who could not understand what is meant by *viññāṇa* in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Maha Tanhasankhaya Sutta* (MN 38).

- One should not be translating such deep *suttā* (also there is no point in reading them either) until one understands what is meant by *viññāṇa.*

16. The WebLink: suttacentral: Kevaṭṭa Sutta (DN 11) is another such a *sutta* (among many others).

- The key verse there is at the end of the *sutta*: "*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ, anantaṃ sabbatopabhaṃ Ettha āpo ca pathavī, tejo vāyo na gādhati. Ettha dīghañca rassañca, aṇuṃ thūlaṃ subhāsubhaṃ; Ettha nāmañca rūpañca, asesaṃ uparujjhati;* ***Viññāṇassa nirodhena, etthetaṃ uparujjhatī***"'ti.
- This is explained in detail at, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."

17. As I have said many times, Buddha Dhamma is deep. It takes an effort to learn. Just translating deep *suttā* word-by-word or just reading those translations will not be of much benefit in the long run.

- Of course some *suttā* can be translated word-by-word, like the WebLink: suttacentral: Kalama Sutta (AN 3.65). Those are basic *suttā* that provide guidelines to live a moral life. But deep *suttā* that discuss *anicca, anatta*, or *Nibbāna* require a more deeper knowledge of the basics like what is meant by *saññā, viññāṇa, saṅkhāra*, etc.
- **It is best to learn the meanings of these key words and just use them, instead of translating them as a single English word. I hope you can see why, with the above discussion on *viññāṇa*.**

Also see, "Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa" and "Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra – Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda." These three posts are essential to be understood if one really wants to understand Buddha Dhamma.

4.1.4 Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa

January 11, 2018

1. In a recent post, "Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations," I discussed how *viññāṇa* or "future expectations" are established when one gets attached to something and starts doing *saṅkhāra* (conscious thinking, speech, and actions) about it.

- In this post, I will elaborate more on the importance of *saṅkhāra* and the connection to *viññāṇa*. In a few posts, I will try to explain how we create our own future suffering by engaging in *abhisaṅkhāra* or "strong *saṅkhāra*."
- These *abhisaṅkhāra* are nothing but how we think about, speak about, and take actions on moral/immoral issues. If we do any of the *dasa akusala*, then we are generating "bad *abhisaṅkhāra*" or "*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*" (abbreviated as "*apuññābhisaṅkhāra*").
- Those *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* lead to suffering. Therefore, key to stop future suffering is to gradually reduce *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* and eventually to stop them.

2. In addition to what we discussed in that previous post, another key point is to realize that all our speech and bodily actions are started by the mind.

- Can you do anything, if you (or your mind) does not want to do?
- You may be in the middle of doing something (say walking to the kitchen), but you can decide you don't really want to go the kitchen and instead walk to the living room. If you start saying something, you can stop in mid-sentence if you want to.
- Some people have strange ideas about humans not having free will. They should try what I just suggested above. It is not that hard to verify.

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3. All the progress that science has made is based on the "mind power" of the humans (scientists coming up with breakthrough innovations in their minds). Mind comes first and this is what is expressed in the very first *Dhammapada gāthā*: "*manopubbangamā dhammā..*" or "mind is at the forefront."

- A child's future depends on how well he learns. If the mind of the child goes in the wrong direction, he/she could become a drug addict or even a murderer.
- In the same way, we determine our own LONG TERM future in the rebirth process by the ways in which we think, speak, and act. That is what is really explained in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (normally translated as "Dependent Origination"; again, it is much better to use the Pāli term and understand what is really meant by it).

4. From the moment we wake up in the morning, we do nothing but generate *saṅkhāra*.

- When we just experience a sense input (seeing, hearing, etc) , "*mano saṅkhāra*" are automatically generated.
- **The Buddha said, "*vedanā, saññā* are *mano saṅkhāra*":** we just experience the sense input by recognizing it and generating a "*sukha, dukkha*, or neutral feeling about it."

5. When we start thinking consciously about a particular sense input (what we saw, heard, tasted, etc), we start generating *vacī saṅkhāra*; we may also speak with *vacī saṅkhāra*. Here, *vacī* is pronounced "*vachee*."

- For example, if we see a nice car and start thinking about how nice it would be to own such a car, how we can impress our friends with it, etc, we are fully aware of such thoughts.
- Such conscious generation of thoughts about "what to do about a given sense input and how to go about it", for example, are *vacī saṅkhāra*. Actual speech is also *vacī saṅkhāra.*
- **The Buddha said, "*vitakka, vicāra* are *vacī saṅkhāra*": stay on the given sense input and generating thoughts about it or related things.**
- Furthermore, we can keep going with such "day dreaming" or we can stop them. If it is something we like, it may be hard to stop thinking about it, i.e., it may take will power.
- That is what is involved in *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*: **stopping bad *vacī saṅkhāra*.**

6. If we just proceed with those *vacī saṅkhāra*, our emotions may get strong and we may start speaking out (stronger *vacī saṅkhāra*). If we get "really worked up" we may do bodily actions with such emotions, then those are done with *kāya saṅkhāra*.

- For example, let us say two people get into an argument and start shouting at each other. Each person is speaking harsh words (generated via *vacī saṅkhāra*).
- Then one of them (person X) gets "really worked up", loses all restraint, and hits the other person. That "hitting action" was done with *kāya saṅkhāra* (generating thoughts to raise the hand and hit that person).

7. It is important to realize that both speech and bodily actions are initiated by the mind.

- In the above example, both people were engaged in generating "bad *vacī saṅkhāra*," which are nothing but "bad speech", the opposite of "*Sammā Vācā*" or "correct speech."
- Then person X took did an even worse thing by hitting the other person. That was a "bad action", opposite of "*Sammā Kammanta*."
- Therefore, they were both acting with "*avijjā*" or ignorance of the consequences of their actions. That is "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," the first step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

8. Now, we can see what is meant by "*saṅkhāra*" (and "*abhisaṅkhāra*").

- In the above example, both *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra* generated by person X were "*abhisaṅkhāra*" or "strong *saṅkhāra*."

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- If those two people were just taking about something *kammically* neutral, say about the weather, then that would involve just "*saṅkhāra*."
- **If they were talking about weather, while walking,** then that would involve both *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* that are NOT of "*abhisaṅkhāra*" type. That speech and action did not involve generation of "*kammic* energy."

9. Therefore, it is important to understand the difference between just *saṅkhāra* and *abhisaṅkhāra.* In the *suttā*, or in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the word "*saṅkhāra*" is used often without specifically saying whether it is just "*saṅkhāra*" or "*abhisaṅkhāra*."

- Depending on the context, we should be able to determine whether it is just "*saṅkhāra*" or "*abhisaṅkhāra*."
- Not only that, but *abhisaṅkhāra* are also two types: *puññābhisaṅkhāra* (*puñña abhisaṅkhāra* or "good deeds") and *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* (*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* or "bad deeds").
- Here by "deeds" we include all three types of *saṅkhāra*: *mano, vacī*, and *kāya*. We should AVOID all three types of *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* or immoral thoughts, speech, and actions.

10. It is again important to emphasize that *mano saṅkhāra* arise AUTOMATICALLY based on two things: (1) the sense input, and (2) one's own *gati* or *gathi* (character/habits), as we discussed in the post: "Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, and Viññāṇa."

- For example, if someone has a bad temper (that is a bad *gati*), then that person can be made angry by the slightest provocation.
- On the other hand, there are people who are calm and measured and are not easy to become angry. It will take much stronger provocation to make them angry.
- In the same way, some people are greedy and are easily attached to tasty foods. Some people are kind and quick to come to help for others in need, etc.

11. The key to making progress in the Path of the Buddha is to cultivate "good *gati*" and gradually reduce "bad *gati*."

- If one is "quick to anger", that is a bad *gati*. One important way to reduce that bad *gati* is to stop generating *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* by will power when they start arising.
- For example, some people get angry even when they hear the name of a person they do not like. Then they start thinking about all the bad things that person has done in the past. That is generating "bad *vacī saṅkhāra*."
- Even though one may not be saying a single bad word, just consciously think about bad thoughts about another person will feed that bad habit. So, it is important to realize that generating such "silent bad thoughts" is as bad as saying harsh words.
- Of course actually speaking out (also *vacī saṅkhāra*) and doing bad things to person (hitting for example), are also bad *abhisaṅkhāra*.

12. This "feeding bad habits" via (*apuññābhi*)*saṅkhāra* generation is explained via the step, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

- **When person X has a "grudge against person Y", person X has a "*viññāṇa*" or an expectation in his mind to "get back to Y or hurt Y" whenever an opportunity arises.**
- That *viññāṇa* "gets food to grow" each time X starts generating bad thoughts about Y, speak against Y, or do something to hurt Y. Those all belong to *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra.*
- On the other hand, *mano saṅkhāra* about Y arise automatically in X's mind when X sees Y or even when Y's name is mentioned by someone else. Then X is likely to start generating *vacī saṅkhāra* or "conscious thoughts about Y."

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- The key to progress is to STOP such *vacī saṅkhāra* AS SOON AS one becomes aware of them.

13. Just like a person, an animal, or even a tree would grow when given food on a regular basis, one's *viññāṇa* would grow when "it is fed on a regular basis" by generating *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.

- It works backwards too. If food is reduced, a tree will not grow well. If food and water are totally stopped, the tree will die.
- **In the same way, if one stops feeding a given "*viññāṇa*" (or a "future expectation") by stopping *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*, that *viññāṇa* will die with time.**
- In the same way, we want to "feed a good *viññāṇa*," say to act kindly towards other people and animals. So, we should INCREASE *vacī* and *saṅkhāra* generation: generate more compassionate thoughts and engage in compassionate activities like giving.

14. So, hopefully, we now have a good idea about what *saṅkhāra* (and *abhisaṅkhāra*) are and how they lead to good or bad *viññāṇa*.

- We will discuss more on *viññāṇa* in the next post. In the mean time, please do not hesitate to ask questions. It is important to understand these basic concepts.

4.1.5 Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra – Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda

February 25, 2019

1. To review briefly what we have covered in the last few posts in "Essential Buddhism":

- A defiled consciousness or *viññāṇa* has an "expectation" for the future. That is the "*kammic* energy" that is responsible for "sustaining the rebirth process." We are just getting the basic idea established in these posts.
- We do that willingly by generating (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra*, or very simply, by the way of we think, speak, and act.
- One who has not understood the First Noble Truth is willingly generating (*abhi*) *saṅkhāra* via, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" that leads then to the cultivation of different types of *viññāṇa* via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" step. That is how *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles start. They end up in "*jāti paccayā jara, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha,..*", the whole mass of suffering!
- **Therefore, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" lead to all future suffering.** We will proceed step-by-step.

2. There are five types of *viññāṇa* that can be called "just consciousness", i.e., without "future expectations." These are *cakkhu viññāṇa* (a "seeing event"), *sota viññāṇa* (a "hearing event"), etc for the five physical sense inputs. One more special case with *mano viññāṇa* is discussed in #4 below.

- A "defiled *viññāṇa*" or "an expectation for the future" is associated only with the *mano viññāṇa*, which is what normally referred to in a *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle if a specific type is not mentioned.
- **Therefore, in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* or in any *sutta*, if a reference is made to *viññāṇa*, that is referring to "*mano viññāṇa*" or "mind consciousness."**
- The mind generates the "*kammic* power" to create "*kammic* energy" or "*kamma bīja*" ("*bīja*" is pronounced "beeja", so I prefer to write it as "*bīja*"); see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." [***bīja*** :[nt.] seed; germ; generating element.]

3. Other five types of *viññāṇa* (e.g. *cakkhu viññāṇa*, etc) are only registered in the mind, when we see, hear, taste, etc.

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- This is stated as "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*" in suttā or in *Abhidhamma*. This is normally translated as "eye consciousness arises when a picture is seen or received by the eyes." That gives the basic idea, but it has a deeper meaning that we will discuss later.
- Similarly, hearing happens with "*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ*" ("hearing consciousness arises when a sound is heard or received by the ears"), etc.

4. In addition to the sense inputs via the five physical senses, we also get sense inputs DIRECTLY to the mind. These are "past memories and future hopes" that just come to the mind, and are *mano viññāṇa*. Even though they seem to come to the mind due to no reason, it also happens due to the mind DIRECTLY receiving a past memory (called *dhammā*; this *dhammā* is different from *dhamma* in Buddha Dhamma).

- This process is stated as "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*," or "mind consciousness arises when a *dhammā* (or a past memory) is received by the *mana indriya* or the mind."
- This event is also "just consciousness", remembering a past event or a future expectation; for a deeper discussion, see, "What are Dhammā? – A Deeper Analysis."

5. Therefore, the mind can "receive" six types of "sense inputs", i.e., the mind becomes "aware of" or "becomes conscious about" those six types of sense events.

- **Based on those, the mind may "take actions" (to think further, to speak, or to act using the body). Those are called *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.**
- Those *saṅkhāra* then lead to a defiled mindset or a "defiled *viññāṇa*" via the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) process. **Therefore, such "defiled *viññāṇa*" can arise only via PS processes.**
- **And that happens ONLY IF the mind gets attached to that sense input (an attractive figure, a pleasing sound, tasty food, nice smell, soothing touch, or an important past event (or planned future event).**

6. Please read the above points in #5 very carefully again and again, until the concept is understood. This is the key to understanding the key Pāli words *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa* and also the concept of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

- Whenever we willingly grasp something (or whenever we get attached to something), whatever results from that action has corresponding nature. Because one got attached willingly, a similar *bhava* (existence) will result: i.e., *pati+icca* leading to *sama+uppāda* or *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS).
- Here, "*pati+icca*" means "getting attached willingly" and "*sama+uppāda*" means "giving rise to a corresponding (similar) existence." [***uppāda*** :[m.] rising; **coming into existence**; birth.]

7. The "existence" one gets is according one's own *saṅkhāra* that are generated according to one's mindset. As we have discussed before, first *mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically based on one's *gathi* (or *gati*) , when one gets attached to a sense event.

- **Then if one does not act with mindfulness (i.e., does not see the bad consequences of generating such thoughts), one will start generating *vacī saṅkhāra*.** If one's emotions get strong enough, one could start speaking (more *vacī saṅkhāra*), and even taking bodily actions (*kāya saṅkhāra*). A deeper discussion at, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."
- We will first consider a PS process that happens many times during a given lifetime. This PS process is not discussed in the *Visuddhimagga* or any current English texts on Buddha Dhamma.

8. **In *pavutti* PS, bhava or existence refers to a "temporary existence" during a given lifetime.** *Pavutti* basically means "current." [***pavatti*** : *[aor. of pavattati]* moved on; proceeded; existed. (f.) **happening**; incident; news.]

- In the most fundamental sense, a "greedy state of mind" will result when we get attach with greed, i.e., one develops a habit or *gathi* or *bhava* corresponding to that state of mind; a "hateful

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state" (habit/*gathi*/*bhava*) results via hateful attachment; acts of greed and/or hate are always done with ignorance.

- The *pavutti* PS, which describes how we develop certain habits or *bhava* or *gati* during a given lifetime. It is often easier to use an example to illustrate these PS cycles.
- *Pavutti* PS is important because the habits (*gati*) that we cultivate during this lifetime can feed the *uppatti* PS process leading to future rebirths. [***uppatti*** :[f.] rebirth; coming forth; origin.]

9. Let us examine how a teenager becomes an alcoholic, using the *pavutti* PS. The teenager become friendly with a group of other teenagers who are into drinking. Initially, he may be reluctant to join in, but due to ignorance (*avijjā*) he joins them and starts drinking.

- If a good friend or a family member came to know about the situation they could have prevented the teenager from associating with such bad company, i.e., ignorance could have been dispelled by explaining to him the adverse effects of not only drinking, but also of associating with such a group.
- Now we will examine in detail how this happens.

10. The PS cycle thus starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*"; due to ignorance of the adverse results, the teenager starts drinking with that group (*saṅkhāra* = "*san* + *khāra*" or actions of accumulating, in this case bad *kamma*).

- The more he is involved with such drinking activities, the more he thinks about it and develops a "defiled mindset" or a "defiled *viññāṇa*" for that activity. This is "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."
- This is explained in detail in the previous post: "Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa."

11. When he really begins to like drinking, he starts thinking about it even while doing other things. **This is "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step.**

- In this case, *nāmarūpa* are the mental images associated with that *viññāṇa*, i.e., the names and shape of particular alcohol bottles, the places where he normally drinks, the friends who drink with him, etc.
- He also thinks about the next "event" and visualizes the scene, all these are associated *nāmarūpa*. Thus, here *nāmarūpa* are the mental images of "things" and "concepts" that one would like to enjoy.
- "*Nāma*" means "name" assigned to a person/object, "*rūpa*" means "spatial profile" associated with that *nāma*.
- "*Nāmarūpa*" are the "mental images" together with the associated feelings (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), *saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*, the COMBINED effect of "*nāma*" and "*rūpa*."

12. Now his six senses become "involved" to provide a reality to those *nāmarūpa*; to provide the desired sense pleasures. In Pāli terms, the six *indriya* (senses) become "*āyatana*." For a lack of a single English word, I will call an "*āyatana*" an "import/export facility", and really get involved in the actions associated with drinking events.

- Eyes are used as *indriya* when they are used just to identify things out there. When eyes are used to repeatedly look at an object TO ENJOY IT, then the eyes are used as "*āyatana*."
- His mind is often thinking about the next "event" (where, when, with whom, etc), he makes necessary preparations for the "event" using all six senses (now *āyatanas*), that are in accordance with the *nāmarūpa*.
- **Therefore, this is the "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*" step**, where *saḷāyatana* means the six *āyatana*: the eye is now not merely for seeing, it has become an assistant in the lookout for a "good drink" or a "good friend to chat with", etc.

13. **Then we have "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*," i.e., all six *āyatana* become actively engaged making contact with relevant sense objects.**

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- His eyes are on the lookout for a favorite drink or a favorite person to chat with, etc. Here instead of *phassa*, it is (more appropriately) called "*samphassa*" (= "*san*" + "*phassa*"), where "*san*" implies it not just contact, but a "*san*" contact.
- This may be a good time to review the term "*san*," if you have not already done so: "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."

14. Such "*samphassa*" lead to *vedanā* (feelings), i.e., "(*san*)*phassa paccayā vedanā*." He experiences "good (but immoral) feelings" with all those sense contacts.

- Because of such "good feelings", he gets further attached: "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*"; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

15. Now comes, "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*." *Upādāna* means "grabbing or getting hold of something automatically" like an octopus grabbing its prey with all its eight legs.

- In the present case, the teenager wants very much to re-live this experience, and he gets immersed in it; when he is experiencing the event his mind is totally absorbed in it; he does not think, and does not have the mindset to think about, any adverse consequences. This is the critical "habit forming" or "*bhava* forming" step.

16. So, the next inevitable step is, "*upādāna paccayā bhavo*"; this particular state of getting drunk becomes more and more ingrained in his mind. It becomes "a *bhava*" or "existence" or habit that is of importance to him. He very much wants to re-live that experience.

- And that is exactly what he gets: "*bhava paccayā jāti*." This "*bhava*" or the *kamma* seed is now well established, and he can be born in that state quite easily. All he needs is an invitation from a friend, or even a sight of a bar while travelling, for example.
- It is natural to get into that state, or be "born" in that state. So, he gets drunk at every opportunity. See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and (Repeated) Births Therein" for more details.

17. However, like everything else, any birth is subjected to decay and suffering: "*jāti paccayā jarā, marana.., **eva me tassa dukkhandha samudhayo hoti***," i.e., "the whole mass of suffering."

- But in the case of a single drinking event, that state of intoxication comes to an end, possibly with a big headache and a huge hangover. That episode ends with nothing to show for it, but a hangover.
- Even worse, now he is "hooked'; he has formed a bad habit, which only strengthens even more if he does it again and again. Because each time, the PS runs, the *viññāṇa* for that habit gets more fuel, and the *bhava* gets stronger.

18. The more the teenager gets trapped in that *bhava*, the more *jāti* that occurs, i.e., more frequently he will be drunk.

- And it is not even necessary to participate in a "drinking event" to run another PS cycle. He may be sitting at a desk trying to study, and may start going through the PS cycle MENTALLY.
- He can start right at "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and be generating *vacī saṅkhāra* (*vitakka/vicāra* or planning), thus generating (and strengthening) the *viññāṇa* for drinking, generating *nāmarūpa* (visuals of places, friends, alcohol bottles, etc), and thus going through the rest of the cycle: *saḷāyatana, samphassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, jāti* ("living it"), repeatedly.
- Thus numerous such PS cycles can run at any time, probably increasing its frequency as the *bhava* or the habit builds up. The stronger the *bhava* or habit is, it will be harder to break it.
- This is why meditation together with another good habit to work on should be undertaken to replace a bad habit. While in meditation, one can contemplate the adverse consequences of the bad habit.

19. It is important to realize that the above PS cycle does not run to its conclusion when the drinking "event" is over. Rather the cycle can run repeatedly unless it is stopped willfully, deliberately.

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- **And the way to do that is to act with "mindfulness" and stop those bad first conscious thoughts (*vacī saṅkhāra*) that start arising.** This is the key to "real *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditations" in Buddha Dhamma.
- Then one would be stopping the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step. That will stop "bad *viññāṇa*" from arising or being cultivated by the elimination of "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" step. That will of course stop the end result of suffering.

20. If those *abhisaṅkhāra* cultivated get strong enough, they can lead to future births as well. The rebirth process proceeds via the *uppatti* PS process, which is very similar; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda."

- Therefore, it is the same principle that will eventually stop "long-term suffering" in the rebirth process via the *uppatti* PS process.

4.1.6 Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run

January 15, 2019; revised January 21, 2020

I receive many questions from people who insist that breath meditation "works." Breath meditation can indeed provide a relief that can be exhilarating for those who have not experienced a "permanent cooling down." The latter is harder to get and require a determined effort, but will be a permanent solution to the "problem of existential suffering."

Introduction

1. Doing breath meditation to achieve a "temporary relief" from the "suffering in this world" is like taking an aspirin or a tylenol or a sleeping pill to get relief from a headache. If that headache has a root cause in the onset of cancer in the body, then taking aspirins will only allow the tumor to grow. In the same way, breath meditation does absolutely nothing to remove the root causes (greed, anger, ignorance.)

- One needs to get long-term medical treatment to get rid of cancer. Then the headaches will also go away.
- In the same way, to stop future suffering from arising, one needs to remove defilements (greed, hate, and ignorance) from one's mind. Then all the mental stresses will also go away permanently.
- It makes sense to get a temporary relief using a pill, but one MUST start working on a long-term solution for the root cause of cancer.
- In the same way, it is OK to do a bit of breath meditation to deviate the mind from a stressful situation, but it is unwise to use it as a long-term solution.

2. The problem here is that many people get "addicted" to breath meditation, just as a drug addict starts an addiction by getting used to "taking a pill" to get to an "ecstatic state of mind" for a few hours.

- The problem is that the drug addict will have to keep increasing the dose with time to get the "same kick."
- Even though breath meditation is not directly harmful like drug addiction, it is dangereous in the sense that it will shift the focus from the primary goal of a permanent solution to the "problem of suffering."
- Furthermore, breath meditation can lead to *anāriya jhāna*, and that is a trap. Once people start enjoying *jhāna*, they even equate that to *Nibbāna*. I will discuss this later on.
- The Buddha always analyzed a given problem in detail so that one could get a clear picture of the whole situation. So, let us analyze possible causes for the agitation of the mind.

Heating of the Mind Due to Too Many Sense Inputs

3. The mind can focus on only one thing at a time. However, it SEEMS that we can see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and also think about concepts all at the same time.

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- For example, when watching a movie, we see and hear the film, and also be thinking about the movie plot. If we are eating popcorn, we can touch, smell, and taste popcorn too. So it SEEMS that we are using all six sense faculties "at the same time."
- But we have that perception of a mind engaged in all at once only because the mind is VERY FAST. It can go back and forth among the six sense inputs at an incredibly fast rate.
- The Buddha said that the mind is the fastest entity in the world.

4. But in the above example, the mind (or more accurately the brain) gets overworked. All those sensory inputs need to be processed by the brain, which is like a computer. You may have seen that a computer can get "overheated" when it is running too many applications at the same time.

- That is why we cannot watch movies all day long. If we watch even two movies without a break, we are likely to get a massive headache. The brain gets overloaded.
- So, this is one kind of stress that we feel. It is simply due to the mind (and the brain) trying to process too many sensory inputs.
- There is another, more important, way that a mind can get stressed. That may not be obvious to many. Let us discuss that now.

Heating of the Mind Due to Greed, Hate, and Ignorance

5. Do you remember the last time when you got outraged? How did that feel? You get hot. The whole body becomes hot and agitated; blood pressure goes up; face becomes dark because the blood becomes dark (By the way, this is clear evidence that the mind can affect the body).

- This "burning up" is called "*tāpa*" in Pāli (pronounced "thāpa"; තාප in Sinhala), and is due to greed, hate, and ignorance. "*Ātāpī*" means the opposite, "cooling down via getting rid of those defilements."
- That is the "fire" discussed in detail in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ādittapariyaya Sutta (SN 35.28).
- Therefore, "*ātāpī sampajāno*" means "remove the fire or heat" from one's mind by being aware of the '*san*' or "immoral tendencies."
- When someone can get to the "*ātāpi sampajāno*" state, one feels calm and "cooled down"; see, "Kāyānupassanā – The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)" and other sections in "Mahā Satipatthāna Sutta."

6. When one acts with greed, "heating up" still happens, may be to a lesser extent than when one is angry. As a kid, when I was stealing something, I felt heated and uncomfortable.

- The same is true when one acts with ignorance too. One is not confident whether that is the right thing to do; the mind goes back and forth: is this right or wrong? Should I do it or not? That is called "*vicikicchā*" in Pāli. Because one does know, one is not confident, one becomes anxious, and the body gets heated up.
- On the other hand, do you remember how you felt when you made someone happy, either via a good deed or word? You cooled down; it felt good. Didn't you feel the opposite of when you got mad?

7. Thus, when one gives up acting with hate, greed, or ignorance, one becomes less agitated, at ease, with a sense of peacefulness. One can enhance this calmness by also engaging in moral deeds – this is *sīla* or ethical conduct.

- Giving up an immoral lifestyle and engaging in moral activities is the basis for getting to *Nibbāna*, the ultimate "cooling down."
- As one can see the benefits of cooling down, one will avoid actions done with hate, greed, and ignorance. And one will be looking forward to doing act of goodwill, generosity, and with mindfulness.
- Avoiding greed, hate, and ignorance is the same as preventing *dasa akusala*.

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Mind Can Handle Only One Sense Input at a Time

8. In #3, #4 above, I mentioned that the mind could focus on only one sensory input at a time. Let us take an analogy to see why that is so.

- We all have seen a "ring of fire" at some circuses. The performer rotates a long stick with burning torch, and it looks like a "ring." Yet, we know that it is not really a "ring," but it is just the fast rotation that "fools our eyes" to be seen as a continuous ring.
- The light is coming from only one point on the circle at a given time. But we see it as a continuous ring; see #13 of "Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?."

9. In the same way, at a given instant, only one sensory input is processed by the mind: seeing ,hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or contemplating. They come in packets of about a few milliseconds (a millisecond is a thousandth of a second).

- Yes. Scientists have done systematic studies in recent years to confirm this picture that the Buddha explained in *Abhidhamma* 2500 years ago!

10. For example, we may see a snapshot of the movie at a given instant. A few milliseconds later, we hear a word, followed by the brief smelling of popcorn. and so on. They go through the mind very fast, and we FEEL LIKE we are experiencing all those at the same time.

- The mind can to sort all those different sensory inputs and present a cohesive continuous picture. That is the magic of the mind.
- Even just the movie itself is a series of static pictures projected on the screen at a fast rate, above 20 frames per second. If we slow down the projector, we will be able to see individual frames very similar to a picture taken by a camera.
- A movie camera takes 24 frames a second. When projected on the screen, it appears to be continuous.

11. That is why the Buddha said that the mind is like a magician. The fast mind can give us the impression of experiencing many things at the same time. But it is a series of discrete events happening VERY FAST.

- **All those sensory inputs need to be processed by the brain for the mind to experience them.**
- If there are too many, that leads to stress in the mind and in the brain. That is why one could get a headache by watching too many movies or television programs.
- Even if it is just one sense input (say, looking at an attractive person and generating lustful thoughts), that itself can lead to stress (even though most people do not feel it that way). Here the real stress is masked by one's anticipation of sense pleasures.

Why Breath Meditation "Works" on Temporary Basis

12. Now we have discussed three things that come in to play.

- A mind (with the help of the brain) can process only one sensory input at a time. But it handles a large number of such inputs in a second so that we have the illusion that we are experiencing many things at the same time.
- If the mind is experiencing many sense inputs (called *ārammaṇa* in Pāli) — like watching a movie and eating popcorn — both the brain and mind get stressed out or get "overheated."
- Another type of "heating" happens with greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts. Even if one focuses on one thing (say anger on someone), the mind gets heated internally, and that is called "*tāpa*" in Buddha Dhamma.

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13. When we focus the mind on the breath, we are forcing the mind to "stay focused on just feeling the breath." The mind is staying on one "thought object" and not running back and forth among many. Also, the brain virtually has no "load" to process.

- That also avoids the more subtle yet essential "heating up" is due to greedy, hateful, or ignorant thoughts from coming to the mind.

14. Now we can see why "breath meditation works" temporarily.

- **It disengages the mind from too many sensory inputs** and forces them to stay on one task. That is really the easiest to see.
- **Furthermore, it also removes the possibility of sensual, hateful, or even ignorant thoughts arising in the mind.** The mind is OCCUPIED with one harmless sense input: monitoring the breath or something like that.
- You can prove this for yourself by focusing the mind on the up and down movement of your belly. In mundane *kasina* meditation, yogis focus the mind on a *kasina* object. Since most of you are used to breath-meditation, it may appear to be better. But if you spend time doing any other type, like *kasina* meditation, you will get used to it.

Breath Meditation: Addictive and No Long-Term Benefits

15. As you can see, "breath meditation" can be useful in solving the first problem: It can keep the mind on a single focus.

- While it can find a temporary solution to the problem of "internal heat generation" (*tāpa*) by SUPPRESSING the root causes (greed, hate, and ignorance), it is not able to permanently remove them.
- Then they can be "triggered" (or made to come to the surface) when a strong sense input (like seeing an attractive figure). The the "agitation" will be back.
- There is a second problem: **When we have those lurking in our minds, we tend to do *dasa akusala* too, which will also lead to more suffering in the future.**
- Therefore, REMOVING (instead of just suppressing) greed, hate, and ignorance will benefit in the short term as well as in the long run.
- That permanent solution is in the real *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā* in Buddha Dhamma.

16. As we discussed earlier, someone in pain feels the need to keep taking pain relievers to avoid the pain. A drug addict feels the need to keep taking drugs to maintain the "high."

- In the same a way, a person engaged in breath meditation feels the need to do it on a regularly to "maintain the calmness."
- If one does this all day long for several days (while at a retreat), one really starts feeling a "sense of great relief."
- But when one leaves the retreat and gets back to the "rat race," all those agitations come back.
- I know several people who go to retreats to get "refueled" regularly. Getting addicted to breath meditation can be harmful in that way. One is wasting precious time in doing something that will only provide a short-term solution AND is preventing one from undertaking a long-term PERMANENT solution.

The Better Solution – Real Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna

17. The better way is to systematically get rid of the tendencies for such greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts to come to mind and stay there.

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- One cannot accomplish that in a few days. It needs an effort in two ways: First, one needs to understand why greed, hate, and ignorance (*dasa akusala*) give rise to "heating of the mind" or *tāpa*.
- At the same time, one needs to live a moral life with minimum burdens. We will live only for about 100 years at most. Is there a point in amassing a huge sums of money or luxurious things, only to leave all that behind at death?
- The more things one "owns," the more stressful it will be one's mind. One's mind will be burdened all the time.
- Of course, that does not mean one should endure poverty and suffering. We should ALWAYS minimize suffering. That is the "middle way" prescribed by the Buddha.

18. That seems to be simple enough, and it is. But there are many more details on how one can increase this "relief" or "cooling down" or "*ātāpa*." But it is a step-by-step process.

- The relief from this "heat" or "burning" does happen, especially after one gets on the Noble Path, by comprehending the root causes for this stress.

19. Many people tell me that they cannot focus their minds and do a meditation session without concentrating on the breath. If they try to meditate on a Dhamma concept, the mind tries to fly off in different directions.

- The solution is simple. It is not essential to do "formal meditation sessions" in the beginning.
- If you read the WebLink: suttacentral: Sabbāsava Sutta (MN 2) carefully, you will see that *bhāvanā* is **essential** only after the *Sotāpanna* stage ("*āsavā dassanā pahātabbā*"), to get to the *Sakadāgāmi* stage and beyond ("*āsavā bhāvanā pahātabbā*").
- What is really needed is "contemplation" and "examination," which is *vīmaṃsā* (also related to *dhammavicaya sabbojjhaṅga*), though that could be also called "*bhāvanā*."

20. In any case, it is good to understand and practice the real ***Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*. That means what to take into the mind and what to be rejected from the mind).** That can be done even before getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- The most important first thing is to learn true Buddha Dhamma and live a moral life (*sīla*) while engaging in meritorious deeds like giving and helping out others in need.
- This will help maintain one's focus on learning Dhamma concepts first. Then one would be able to do formal meditation sessions without the help of breath meditation.

4.1.7 Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently

January 21, 2019

Introduction

1. In the last post we discussed how focusing the mind on breath CAN calm a mind. But we also saw that any relief one gets is temporary. Here we discuss the *Ānāpānasati* that is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānasati Sutta (MN 118).

- We also briefly discussed in the previous post the idea that in order to permanently REDUCE and eventually REMOVE the "mental stress" we need to purify our minds. ."
- Here we will discuss some details, and show the connection to *dasa akusala* and *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, key concepts in Buddha Dhamma.
- You may want to read the earlier post: "Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run."

2. From the sutta (MN 118): "***Ānāpānassati**, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā **cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti**.*

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Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulīkatā ***vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti.***"

Translated:

"*Bhikkhus*, when *Ānāpānassati* is developed and cultivated, it is of great benefit leading to ultimate release. **When *Ānāpānassati* is developed and cultivated, it fulfils *cattāro satipaṭṭhāna* (the four foundations of mindfulness).** When the four foundations of mindfulness are developed and cultivated, they fulfil the seven enlightenment factors (*satta bojjhaṅga*). When the seven enlightenment factors are developed and cultivated, **they fulfill ultimate knowledge and release (*vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti*)**."

- So, *Ānāpānassati* and *Satipaṭṭhāna* are the same and both lead to *Nibbāna* (*Arahanthood*). *Satipaṭṭhāna* describes the steps in more detail, but the key is to first understand what is meant by *Ānāpāna*.
- Here we discuss the basic ideas of *Ānāpānassati bhāvanā*. Details at: "Bhāvanā (Meditation)."

An Example of Getting Angry

3. We start with a simple case of getting angry. Being angry makes one turns into a totally different person as we briefly mentioned in the last post.

- Not only one will have an agitated (and uncomfortable) state of mind, but one's body complexion will change too. One's face becomes "very unpleasant" even to look at.
- With that agitated mindset, one may do something really bad (even hit or kill someone if things get out-of-control).
- Now, let us see WHY we get angry.

4. The root cause of anger is greed. We get mad when someone or something gets in our way to prevent us from getting something that we really crave. Therefore, *vyāpāda* (anger) arises out of *abhijjhā* (greed).

- Note that *abhijjhā* and *vyāpāda* are the first two of *pañcanīvaraṇa* (five "hindrances"): **they are a "hindrance" to a calm state of mind!**
- Furthermore, *vyāpāda* can bring rebirths in the *niraya* (hell), while greed can bring rebirths as hungry ghosts (in *preta* or *peta* realms). **Thus *vyāpāda* is worse than *abhijjhā*.**

Why Some People Get Angry Than Others?

5. As the Buddha always pointed out, in order to eliminate a problem, we must first find the causes that gave rise to that problem. Then when we eliminate those causes, the problem will NOT ARISE anymore. That is the meaning of the word, "*nirodha*" ("*nir*" + "*udā*"). *Dukkha nirodha* is "eliminating future suffering."

- When one understands *dukkha samudaya* ("*san*" + *udaya*" or how "*san*" give rise to suffering), then one can understand dukkha nirodha or how to stop suffering from arising; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- The tendency to get angry is a *gati* (pronounced "*gathi*"), which can be loosely translated as a "character quality", which gets established firmly if one has made it to be a habit.
- The more angry one gets (this is what is really meant by "*āna*" in *Ānāpānasati*), more will the "tendency to get angry" becomes. This is important to understand.

6. This has been established in neuroscience in recent years. Our brains (or more accurately neural circuits in the brain) get "wired" for certain habitual activities. **The more we do something, the easier it becomes to do it again.**

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- That holds not only for "defiled activities" like getting angry, to "getting addicted to do something on a regular basis like smoking and drinking, to eating too much, or even harmless (and useful) habits like driving.
- For example, after one learns to drive, it becomes a habit. When we drive, we are mostly on "auto pilot", especially if it is a regular drive like driving to work every day. Here is an article that is an easy read: "WebLink: healthtransformer.co: The Neuroscience of Behavior Change."

7. Therefore, the trick to stop getting angry is to "try to stop that anger when one becomes aware that one is angry" (this is what is really meant by "*āpāna*" or put out or get rid of, in *Ānapāna*, which comes from "*āna*" + "*āpāna*"). Many Pāli words are shortened to rhyme.

- The long-term solution is to think about the CONSEQUENCES of such an angry mindset, and focus one's attention deliberately on a neutral or a "pleasing thought object", say visualizing a calm Buddha image in one's mind.
- If such an angry mindset comes to one's mind while in a formal meditation session, then one COULD do "breath meditation" for a few minutes to get the mind off of that mindset.
- The easiest is to just to count to 10 in order to quickly stop the incoming thought and then to think about the bad consequences of such an angry mindset.
- **The key point is that "stopping these angry thoughts from arising" MUST BE DONE any time and all the time, whether one is in formal meditation or just engaged in regular activities.**

8. Thus a critical aspect of being able to stop such bad thoughts is to really understand the bad CONSEQUENCES of having such thoughts (which would feed that bad *viññāṇa* and could even lead to bad bodily actions).

- Therefore, an understanding of the bad consequences of immoral deeds and thoughts (*kamma vipāka* resulting from bad *kamma*) will be valuable.
- See, for example: "Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya" and "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

How That Bad *Viññāṇa* Was Created in the First Place

9. Now we need to see how this "*viññāṇa* of enemy Y" is created and where it exists. This is what is explained in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Don't worry. It is easy to see this process.

- Let us take an example. Persons X and Y were competing for something that they crave: a girl friend, a job, an elected position, we can think about many possible scenarios. But suppose X starts hating Y because Y is competing to win the heart of a girl.
- Now, every day X is thinking about how to block Y from "getting the girl." He may try to get Y kicked out of his job or to physically hurt or even kill Y.
- These conscious angry thoughts about Y are *vacī saṅkhāra* generated by X.

10. That is how a *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process starts with "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."

- The more one does any type of *saṅkhāra* (*mano, vacī*, and *kāya*), the more strong that "*viññāṇa* of enemy Y" will become in X's mind.
- In simple terms, that means thinking about harming Y, speaking against Y, or doing something to hurt Y. All those activities will help that "*viññāṇa* of enemy Y" to grow.

11. When X is consciously generating such "bad thoughts" about Y, then X will be **imagining (creating) scenarios in one's mind** of hurting Y in some way. This could be telling a lie about Y's character to the girl in question or his boss, for example. Or it could even be creating in his mind how he will ambush Y and carry out a physical attack.

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- This is called creating "*nāmarūpa*" (creating various scenarios) in one's mind: "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*."

12. That will initiate the next step: "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*."

- The more bad thoughts (*vacī saṅkhāra*) that X generates, his all six sense faculties (*saḷāyatana* or six *āyatana*) will start getting involved. He will be looking to see (using *cakkhāyatana*) whether Y is talking to that girl, and he may write a nasty email about Y to his boss (using *kāyāyatana*), etc.
- Of course, some of these steps occur simultaneously, and go back and forth too. For example, "*nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇa*" happens as well as "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*." In other words, more "*nāmarūpa*" X makes in his mind, his bad *viññāṇa* will grow too.

13. Each of such activities will lead to contact with "*san*" (his greed towards the girl and hate towards Y), via "*saḷāyatana paccayā* (*san*)*phassa*" or "*saḷāyatana paccayā samphassa*."

- That invariably leads to the next step: "***samphassa paccayā vedanā***," which is also known as "***samphassa ja vedanā***," i.e., X is now generating a lot of "**angry feelings that arise due to hate**," which leads to "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*."

14. It is important to note that "*taṇhā*" is not just greed. *Taṇhā* really means "getting bonded to a situation via greed or hate."

- Now X cannot let go of it, and now he pulls it even closer: "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*": *upādāna* ("*upa*" + "*ādāna*") means 'pulling closer' (in the mind).
- This leads to the next critical step of "*upādāna paccayā bhava*." This is where that "*kammic* energy" that was initially created via the "*viññāṇa* of enemy Y" gets really established in the *kamma bhava*. It is easier to just think of "*kamma bhava*" as a form of energy that stays out there in the universe (just like visible *rūpa* are out there).
- This energy is also called *dhammā* (with a long ā) that can come back to one's mind at times. That is how the "subconscious" works, and we will discuss that at a later time.

Paṭicca Samuppāda processes are described in detail at: "Paṭicca Samuppāda. "

Viññāṇa, *Kamma Bhava*, *Kamma Bija* – Related to Each Other

15. **We can see that both *viññāṇa* and *bhava* are associated with *kammic* energy.** The easiest way to remember is that *kamma bhava* is where *kammic* energy is, and **those various types of *kammic* energies (good and bad) are *kamma bija* (seeds, pronounced "beeja") in the *kamma bhava*. They are waiting to bring *kamma vipāka* or the results of those *kamma*.**

- When we do good *kamma* (say donating food to needy), we also create good *kamma bija* in the *kamma bhava* that can bring future "good *vipāka*" or "good results."
- Therefore, there are good and bad *kamma bija* (seeds) waiting in the *kamma bhava,* to bring in *kamma vipāka*, so to speak.
- **Just like a seed can give rise to a plant, a *kamma bija* can give rise to a *kamma vipāka*. A good seed will give rise to a good plant (something useful, say apples or grains), and a bad seed will give rise to a bad plant (weeds).**

16. When a *kamma bija* brings a *kamma vipāka* to the mind, it leads to a mindset that is compatible with the kamma vipāka; that is ***viññāṇa***.

- **Therefore, a *viññāṇa* can be good too (in a mundane sense), for example, when engaging in a meritorious deed. We first need to get rid of "bad *viññāṇa*." All *viññāṇa* are reduced to "pure consciousness" at the *Arahant* stage. It may take some time to grasp this point.**

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- Earlier we saw (#8-#13) that *viññāṇa* is the "initiator" of a *kamma bija* that is "deposited" in the *kamma bhava*. Then that *kamma bija* will be waiting for right "conditions" to bring that mindset back to the mind.
- Then that mindset (*viññāṇa*) can lead to doing more saṅkhāra (and *kamma*) that will in turn make that *viññāṇa* to grow; that will in turn lead to strengthening the corresponding *kamma bija* in the *kamma bhava*.
- Then a corresponding *gati* (or *gathi*) is established. It is important to understand what is meant by *gati*. **Then it will be easier to show different *gathi* (including the "angry *gathi*" of X that we discussed above) are established.**

See, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)," "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View," "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control."

Putting It All Together – These Fundamentals Are Essential

17. So, now we are starting to see the connections among these different terms: *saṅkhāra, viññāṇa, bhava, kamma bija, gati, Ānāpānasati,* etc.

- Whenever you have time, you may want to go back and read relevant previous posts. With repeated readings, things will become much more clear.
- In the *suttā*, the Buddha used this pattern of repeating stuff over and over. That makes it easier for these concepts to sink in.
- Please don't hesitate to ask questions if something is not clear.

18. **Understanding Buddha Dhamma is all about understanding the steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*:**

"*Yo paticcasamuppādam passati,*
so Dhammam passati.
Yo Dhammam passati,
so paticcasamuppādam passatī"

"One who sees *paticcasamuppāda*
sees the Dhamma.
One who sees the Dhamma
sees *paticcasamuppāda.*"

(WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28); at the end)

- If one to understands *Paṭicca Samuppāda,* one needs to understand all these key terms like *saṅkhāra, viññāṇa, bhava, kamma bija, gati, Ānāpānasati*, etc.
- Other relevant posts are listed below. **The more one reads and contemplates on, the more one will be able to understand:**

"Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations," "Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, and Viññāṇa," "Four Noble Truths – Suffering and Its Elimination," "Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa."

4.1.8 Ānāpāna and Satipaṭṭhāna – Fundamentals

January 30, 2019

1. *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (DN 22) just describes in more detail the *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā* that is in the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (MN 118).

- This post discusses the fundamentals related to both *suttā*. More details at: "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."

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2. One synonym for *Nibbāna* is "cooled state", which means the mind is "permanently cooled down." There can be no anger, greed, or ignorance can arise such a mind.

- However, we start at a more basic state. When we start doing real *Ānāpāna/Satipaṭṭhāna*, we will start feeling a PERMANENT relief from our stressed minds.
- On the other hand, "breath meditation" provides only a temporary relief.

3. We discussed how our thoughts can affect our minds in the previous post, "Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run."

- When angry thoughts arise, one's whole body becomes hot and agitated; blood pressure goes up; face becomes dark, because the blood becomes dark.
- On the other hand, when one has compassionate thoughts in one's mind, one's mind feels joyful and it shows up in the face too.

4. Some people are more prone to generating angry thoughts; others are more like to generate compassionate thoughts. In other words, some people have "angry *gati*" while other have "compassionate *gati*." Previously we discussed that there are a wide variation of *gati* ranging from very bad to very good.

- Of course, these *gati* do not show up all the time. Even a person with "angry *gati*" must be provoked for such angry thoughts to arise.
- In Buddha Dhamma's language, a person with "angry *gati*" has "anger hiding in the mind" waiting for a trigger to come to the surface. These are called "*anusaya*" or "*kilesa*" (hidden defilements).
- The key word *gati* (pronounced "gathi") is related to one's habits and character; see "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)."

5. We can take an analogy to clarify this. *Anusaya* can be compared to dirt at the bottom of a glass of water. If the glass is not disturbed, the dirt will settle at the bottom, and the water may look clean at the top.

- If there is a lot of dirt at the bottom of the glass, only a slight disturbance can make the dirt come up and make the water dirty. But if it is only a little bit, most minor disturbances may not make the water dirty.
- Just like that, the more *anusaya* (or corresponding defilements) one has, it will be easier for them to come to the surface. If one has "very angry *gati*," that person would be easy to be angered.

6. On the other hand, if there is no dirt at the bottom of the glass, no matter what kind of disturbance it is, the water will remain pure.

- The mind of an *Arahant* is like that. He/she can live totally unaffected surrounded by the world's most tempting sense objects.
- We have a long way to get to the *Arahant* stage. But we can start getting rid of these "bad *gati*" or "*anusaya*" or "defilements" by cultivating the correct *Ānāpāna/Satipaṭṭhāna*.
- When one's mind becomes purified, it will be hard to make that person agitated or depressed. One will have a relatively calm mindset even under normally stressful conditions.

7. Even though a glass of water has dirt in it, if the water is left undisturbed for a while, the dirt gets settled at the bottom and the water becomes relatively clear.

- That is what happens with "breath meditation." One focuses one's mind on a neutral thought object for a while and all "agitations" subside. **But they do not go away.**
- **Breath meditation appears to provide relief.** In particular, if one goes to a retreat and spends several days with one's mind removed from "enticing" AND "angry" thoughts, one feels a high sense calmness.
- However, when one comes back and gets into the usual "rat race", with all kinds of enticing and aggravating inputs from the environment, all those *anusaya*" come back to the surface!

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8. In real *Ānāpāna/Satipaṭṭhāna*, those *anusaya* or "hidden defilements" will be REMOVED gradually. The procedure involves the following:

- Get rid of bad thoughts (such as anger) that may arise due to whatever reasons.
- Let any "good thoughts" that may arise (such as compassion or just thoughts about *dhamma* concepts) to continue.
- Deliberately contemplate on *Dhamma* concepts like *dasa akusala, gati, anusaya, kilesa, kamma, kamma vipāka*, Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, Paṭicca Samuppāda, etc.
- We will see in upcoming posts, how those "three components" are taken into account in the four types of *Satipaṭṭhāna*: *kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā*, and *dhammānupassanā*.

9. If a bad thought comes to the mind, one must think about the bad consequences of keeping such thoughts in one's mind and forcefully remove them. For example, if someone says something to make one angry, one could count to ten in one's mind (or just walk away) and not retaliate.

- This is hard to do first. But with practice, one can see the benefits and one will be motivated to continue.
- The nice thing is that the more one trains, the easier it becomes to control one's impulsive reactions.

10. In order to get rid of any bad habit (which are related to *gati*), it will be VERY HELPFUL to see the bad consequences of such bad habits.

- A smoker needs to convince himself that smoking can lead to various health problems, including cancer. That will be an incentive to get rid of smoking.
- Taking drugs is even worse, one could die with many health problems if one becomes addicted to drugs.
- Even eating too much is a bad habit. One should look at the statistics that clearly show the bad health consequences of over-eating.

11. Learning *Dhamma* is like learning the bad consequences of bad habits. When one is engaged in immoral activities, one will have bad consequences of those actions, speech, and thoughts in two ways:

- Even if one is making a lot money doing immoral things, one WILL have a stressed mind even in this life.
- The more important consequences may realize in future lives. Highly immoral activities lead to births in the four bad realms (animal realm is one).
- Therefore, it is essential to learn true Buddha Dhamma, where one can begin to understand *kamma* and *kamma vipāka*.

12. Another way to say this is that one needs to see the difference between "*dhamma*" and "*adhamma*." ***Dhamma* are the "good, moral deeds" and *adhamma* are the "bad immoral deeds."**

- Note that *dhamma* here is different from the Buddha Dhamma, even though they are related. *Adhamma* are opposite of *dhamma*.
- As we have discussed before, *adhamma* lead to a stressed mind and *dhamma* lead to a calm mind at the very basic level.
- At the next level, strong *adhamma* or "highly immoral deeds" have very bad consequences in the future, especially in future lives (rebirths in the lowest 4 realms). On the other hand, strong *dhamma* or "highly moral deeds" lead to good rebirths in the higher realms.
- I have discussed them previously. It would be beneficial to review them.

"How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

"Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?."

"Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma."

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"Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control"

4.1.9 Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna – Two Meanings of Sati

February 4, 2019; revised August 2, 2019

This post is critical. Before one can do *Ānāpānasatisati* or *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditations, one needs to understand what is meant by *"sati."*

Double Meanings of Words – Unique In Pāli with Deeper "Dhamma Meanings"

1. Many Pāli words have "double meanings." As we will see below, that happens in other languages too.

- However, the situation is unique in Pāli in the context of Buddha Dhamma, because some Pāli words have deeper meanings that are just to do with Buddha Dhamma.
- An example that we have already discussed is *viññāṇa*. The ordinary meanings is "consciousness", but the more profound meaning is "defiled consciousness." In order to see the context in a given situation, one must know both meanings; see, "Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa."
- Therefore, unlike in other languages, one must have a more in-depth knowledge of Buddha Dhamma to see the deeper meanings of words like *viññāṇa* and *sati*.

2. One fundamental problem with English translations that we have today arises because most translators try to use dictionary translations. Many times, a dictionary, a dictionary may not list all possible meanings, especially the deeper meanings.

- For example, in most Pāli dictionaries, "***sati***" is given the following two meanings: **mindfulness** and **attention**.
- However, there is another more profound meaning that is only approximated by "mindfulness'" as we discuss below. **The key is to figure out "mindful of what?."**
- But let us first see why this is not a big problem in English (or any other language).

Double Meanings in English versus Pāli

3. In English novels or any other "mundane text", two different meanings are commonly used even in the same paragraph of a document.

- For example, the word **right** conveys two different meanings in the following sentence: These are the **right** directions; make a **right** turn at the first traffic light.
- Following are more examples:

  Rose: My favorite flower is a **rose**. He quickly **rose** from his seat.

  Type: He can **type** over 100 words per minute. That dress is really not her **type**.

(Read more at "WebLink: grammar.yourdictionary.com: Words with Multiple Meanings").

4. **The unique situation in Pāli is that words like "*sati*" have unique meanings that can be understood ONLY in terms of fundamental concepts and the context.**

- To comprehend the deeper meaning of some keywords, one must learn and understand that meaning.
- It has nothing to do with one's intelligence. If one has not heard that meaning from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha, one can NEVER figure that out by oneself.

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- Since "*sati*" is a critical Pāli word that appears in the context of *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*, we should spend some time on it.

Mundane Meaning of *Sati* – Attention Can Lead to *Bhava* and *Jāti*

5. **From the "mundane meanings" in #2 above, perhaps "attention" is the best.** When we are engaged in a specific task, we need to keep our attention on that task.

- For example, one needs to keep one's attention to traffic while driving or paying one's attention to a teacher who is teaching a new concept.
- Another example is keeping one's attention on a particular "thought object," whether it is something one is looking at, listening to, studying, etc.

6. When one focuses one's attention to get possession of a worldly thing, that is actually the "seed" for future *bhava*. **That is a crucial point for those who would like to look into it.**

- It is discussed in the post, "Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti – What Does It Really Mean?."
- One may not be able to grasp it until one understands *Paṭicca Samuppāda* to some extent.

Why the Mundane Meaning Is Not Enough for *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*

7. Now let us take some examples to see why "attention" and even "mindful" will not give the deeper meaning in the context of *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*.

- Suppose a suicide bomber is assembling a bomb that he intends to use to kill many people. He must be paying careful **attention** to what he is doing, and that is the **ordinary meaning of *sati*** there.
- Even the term "**mindful**" can be used to describe the mindset of a suicide bomber while assembling the bomb. He must be mindful of his task. If he makes even a slight mistake, he may trigger the bomb right there.
- Therefore, that bomb maker must have attention and be mindful of his task. Obviously, he is not engaged in *Satipaṭṭhāna*.

8. We can see this in many other "mundane" examples too.

- A surgeon doing a complicated operation must pay total attention to the task; he must be mindful of what he doing.
- The same applies to anyone doing any critical mundane task. Driving, studying, a nuclear scientist designing an atomic bomb that can kill millions of people, an engineer designing a crucial component for a spaceship, etc.
- **That is not the essential "*sati*" that one must have in order to cultivate *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*, even though one must ALSO pay attention and be mindful.**

9. However, **breath meditation only requires the ordinary meanings: one must be paying total attention to the breath and one must be mindful of that task.**

- I have explained in the post, "Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run," how "breath meditation" can provide a temporary relief, AND why that can be addictive and bad in the long run.
- For one to engage in true *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*, one must have a particular "mindset" IN ADDITION to paying attention. That is **being aware of the moral/immoral implications** of one's thoughts, speech, and actions.
- **As we will see below, that true *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna* also involves also speech and bodily actions.** The *Iriyāpatapabba* section in *Satipaṭṭhāna* is ALL ABOUT physical actions. That cannot be done by sitting down and focusing on the breath. We will discuss that later in detail.

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- In order to understand "*sati*," we need to look at the ultimate goal of a Buddhist.

One Needs to be Mindful of the Goal in Buddha Dhamma

10. The ultimate goal is the *Arahanthood*, or *Nibbāna,* **which is, "*rāgakkhayo Nibbānam, dosakkhayo Nibbānam, mohakkhayo Nibbānam,*" or "completely removing greed, anger, and ignorance from one's mind."**

- We don't need to start there. But one embarks on the Path by gradually removing those three defilement from one's mind.
- One definition of *Nibbāna* is "cooling down (of the mind)." That "cooling down" can be experienced even at the beginning to some extent.

11. When one is attracted to a sense input (that is enticing OR repulsive), that WILL lead to a burdened mind. Thoughts associated with greed or anger are unavoidable..

- Therefore, one needs to be aware of such DEFILED thoughts, speech, and actions and stop them as they arise. That is the key to true *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*.
- **That particular mindset is "*sati*."**

Deeper Meaning of *Sati* Involves a Unique Mindset

12. Therefore, the meaning of "*sati*" in the context of *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna* has a more specialized meaning. A suicide bomber making a bomb, or even a student intensely concentrating on learning a subject, will not have that *sati*.

- This "deeper *sati*" is a "good mental factor" (a *sobhana cetasika*). The *sati cetasika* is cultivated by learning *Dhamma* and eventually comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- **This "*sati*" is VERY DIFFERENT from the ordinary meanings. In the very basic version it means "having a mindset to stay away from *dasa akusala*," which is what one does when one follows the Eightfold Path.**
- In short, one's attention would be focused **NOT on an immoral or even a mundane task**, but on getting rid of "immoral thoughts, speech, and actions" AND on cultivating "moral thoughts, speech, and actions."

13. **However, we can see that the ordinary meanings of "maintaining attention" or "being mindful" must ALSO be there during *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*.**

- One must keep the attention (*sati*) on "good things" and remove attention away (*asati*) from "bad things" too while keeping the "*sati* mindset."
- By the way, there is no "*asati*" *cetasika* or a "bad mental factor"; it has only the ordinary meaning. ***Asati* means keeping the mind away from any *ārammaṇa* or any "thought object."**
- *Asati* means "not being focused on a given thought object." **There is ONLY one meaning for *asati.***

14. I hope one can clearly see why just paying attention or being mindful is not enough to cultivate *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*.

- One must understand that "cooling down of the mind" has its origins in staying away from *dasa akusala* AND also actively engaged in moral deeds, speech, and thoughts.
- In particular, it is essential to understand the importance of cultivating moral *vacī saṅkhāra* (conscious thoughts and speech); see, "Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa."

15. When that is done consistently (keeping the mind on good things and off of bad things), over time it leads to *Sammā* ***Sati.*** That, in turn, leads to *Sammā Samādhi.*, completing the Noble Eightfold Path.

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- But one needs to know what is good and what is bad to be focused on. What is bad is *dasa akusala* and what is good is *dasa kusala*, i.e., staying away from *dasa akusala*.
- When one makes progress on the Path and starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), one's *sati* will grow. That will be lead to better *samādhi*.

The Goal Is Not To Remove All Thoughts From the Mind

16. **I also need to mention a common mistake some people make. They think they need to get rid of ALL thoughts that come to the mind.**

- When one is engaged in *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna*, one's goals are two fold: get rid of evil thoughts that come to the mind AND cultivate good thoughts.
- *Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna* involves both "*āna*" or "*assāsa*" (taking in good things) and "*āpāna*" or "*passāsa*" (discarding bad things).

17. Another way to say this is that one needs to see the difference between "*dhamma*" and "*adhamma*." *Dhamma* are the "good, moral deeds" and *adhamma* are the "bad, immoral deeds."

- As we have discussed before, *adhamma* leads to a stressed mind and *dhamma* leads to a calm mind at a fundamental level.
- At the next level, strong *adhamma* or "highly immoral deeds" have very terrible consequences in the future, especially in future lives (rebirths in the lowest four realms). On the other hand, strong *dhamma* or "highly moral deeds" lead to good rebirths in the higher realms.
- We discussed *dhamma/adhamma* in the previous post. I want to mention another aspect of it now.

What are *Dhamma* and *Adhamma*?

18. In many *suttā*, the Buddha has clearly stated that *dasa akusala* are *adhamma*, and that staying away from those are *dhamma*. For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhamma Sutta (AN 10.182)": "*katamo ca, bhikkhave, adhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi*," i.e., basically *dasa akusala*.

- There are many *suttā* where the Buddha describe *adhamma* as *dasa akusala* or opposites of the eight factors in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- On the other hand, *dhamma* are *dasa kusala* and the eight factors in the Noble Eightfold Path.

19. This act of keeping the mind (*sati*) on "good things" and keeping it away (*asati*) from "bad things" is the key to Buddhist meditation: ***Sati***paṭṭhāna, Ānāpāna***sati***.

- Both require keeping the mind focused on "good things" and stopping it from focusing on "bad things."
- When that is done consistently, over time it leads to *Sammā* ***Sati*** (or always keeping the mind on good things), and then to *Sammā Samādhi*, completing the Noble Eightfold Path.
- But one needs to know what is right and what is bad. What is bad is *dasa akusala* and what is right is *dasa kusala*, i.e., staying away from *dasa akusala*.

Dhamma Are the Things to "Bear" and *Adhamma* Are the Things One Should Not "Bear"

20. What is meant by "*dhamma*" here is "what one bears in the mind" or "the mindset." One thinks, speaks, and acts according to that mindset.

- But as we have seen, what one thinks, speaks, and acts are called *saṅkhāra*. And "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" means one's *viññāṇa* are based on one's *saṅkhāra;* see, "Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāna."

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- Then *Paṭicca Samuppāda* leads to "*bhava paccayā jāti*." Therefore, when one generates "*bad saṅkhāra*" one ends up creating "bad *jāti*" for oneself (both during this life and in future lives).

21. Now, "bad *saṅkhāra*" are generated when one bears "bad *dhamma*." "Good *saṅkhāra*" are created when one takes "good *dhamma*."

- That is really the basis of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, and its connection to "*sati*."
- **When one gradually gets rid of "bad *dhamma*" by staying away from *dasa akusala*, and cultivates "good *dhamma*" by engaging in moral deeds, one cultivates "*sati*" via *Satipaṭṭhāna*/*Ānāpānasati*.**

Sati Included in Five of the 37 Factors of Enlightenment

22. There are "37 Factors of Enlightenment" that the Buddha said are critical to attaining *Nibbāna*, and thus must be cultivated.

- The importance of the word "*sati*" is apparent since it appears as 5 of the 37 factors in different forms.
- *Sati* is in the Five Faculties (*Pañca Indriya*), Five Powers (*Pañca Bala*), Four Factors of Mindfulness (*Cattāro Satipaṭṭhāna*), Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*Satta Bojjhaṅga*), and the Eightfold Noble Path (*Ariya Atthangika Magga*); see, "37 Factors of Enlightenment."

23. When *Ānāpānasati*/*Satipaṭṭhāna* is cultivated, all 37 factors are cultivated automatically, and one attains *Nibbāna*.

- For example, according to the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118): "*..Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulīkatā **vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti***."
- **Translated:** "***..Ānāpānassati*, when used (*bhāvitā*) and used frequently (*bahulīkatā*), completes (*paripūreti*) four types of *Satipaṭṭhāna*.** *Cattāro satipaṭṭhāna*, when used and used frequently, completes *Satta Bojjhaṅga*. *Satta Bojjhaṅga* when used and used frequently, **completes the full release (*Nibbāna* or *Arahanthood*)**."

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4.2 Living Dhamma – Overview

October 27, 2016

- Living Dhamma – Introduction
- Peace of Mind to Nibbāna – The Key Step
- Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth (with first *Desana* "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"; *desanā* title different from post title)

4.2.1 Living Dhamma – Introduction

August 5, 2016; Revised August 26, 2016 (This replaces the deleted post, "Introduction to a New Approach to Meditation").

1. This series started as a subsection in the "*Bhāvanā* (Meditation)" section. But I think it can be the "step-by-step" by process of "learning and living" Dhamma starting from a very fundamental level. One does not need to be bothered about too many Pāli words or deeper concepts at the beginning.

- From many comments that I get, it is clear that many people have "road blocks" at concepts like "*kamma vipāka*" and "rebirth." When we start at a fundamental level, one does not need to worry about them. One's own change in experience — as we proceed — will hopefully help clarify those concepts as we proceed.
- All other sections at the website can be used to investigate and learn different aspects from different angles. Buddha Dhamma is a self-consistent theory of nature. There are no contradictions.

2. About a month ago, I started thinking about this approach based on emails from a few people about their experiences. Many people feel the positive effect of meditation, but seem to be "stuck" without being able to go past a certain point.

- I must hasten to add that this "new approach" is fully consistent with Buddha Dhamma and not an invention of mine. It is just another way and — hopefully a refreshing way — to look at how to practice Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) with a clear understanding.

3. What got me started thinking was the following email from a person (X) who has been doing mostly *anāriya* meditation, including conventional *metta bhāvanā* (I am withholding the name for obvious reasons); highlights are mine. *Anariya* meditation basically means doing meditation without comprehending *anicca* nature, so most people start that way:

"..The other issue I wanted to ask you about was that I sometimes start wondering if meditation is just dulling my mind, making me less sensitive to what others are doing around me, like a sedative almost. Am I getting addicted to meditation that I need a constant dose, and when I stop I feel I am missing something. for example when I was meditating regularly I no longer felt like reading books or listening to music which I loved earlier so I felt like it was changing my core personality.

To experiment I stopped my formal meditation for a few weeks and I found that I began to get agitated and anxious as before. I was also able to enjoy songs as before. I know that is consistent with what you say about *anāriya* meditations – that the effects are temporary.

So I am curious to ask you, have you experimented with stopping your meditation practice for a few weeks? I am asking because I understand that you are doing the *Ariya* meditation and that those effects should be more permanent. Or are you so used to your meditation practice that it would be a torture to ask you to stop even for a few days let alone a few weeks. But the trouble is – if you never stop how will you know if the effects are permanent or not…"

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4. I am grateful to X for sharing this beautifully written description. I believe many people have experienced such thoughts at various times. Our tendency to always go back to sense pleasures is very strong, because that is what we have been doing through uncountable rebirths in the *kāma loka* in the past.

- Whether it is *Ariya* or *anāriya* meditation (including even breath meditation), the tranquility of mind (peace of mind) that comes during a meditation session is due to the suppression of the five hindrances (*pancanivarana*); see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."
- In simple terms, the five hindrances are: sense cravings, tendency to be angry, sleepy or dull mind, scattered mind, and the inability to decide the right action. They are always in the background, "covering the mind" and constantly making the mind "agitated and anxious" as X described above.
- What happens during a meditation session (or even if one a fully focused on some task that does not involve sense pleasures), is that the mind is taken off of all such hindrances temporarily. This is actually the first stage where one could experience the "cooling down" or "*nivana*" or "*niveema*." It can be called a mundane version of *Nibbāna*. This is also called "*nirāmisa sukha*"; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- When one is on a regular meditation program (or in a meditation retreat), that "cooling down" can last during that whole time — days or weeks — outside the meditation sessions.

5. Another person (Y) asked the following related question: "*Nirāmisa sukha* is felt by which *citta*?."

- *Nirāmisa sukha* is not experienced by a specific *citta*. Rather, *nirāmisa sukha* APPEARS when *cittā* BECOME free of defilements, i.e., when the mind becomes (at least temporarily) free of hindrances; see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances." We will go into details in upcoming posts, but this is a CRITICAL point.
- More examples: Water becomes clear and pleasant when all the dirt is removed. One feels good when a headache goes away; that relief was not gained by adding something, but by removing the headache.
- Similarly, *nirāmisa sukha* is felt when hindrances and defilements are SUPPRESSED temporarily. When those are removed PERMANENTLY in four stages, one feels more permanent happiness of *Nibbāna*. At the *Sotāpanna* stage, a big junk of stresses associated with defilements are PERMANENTLY removed. At the *Arahant* stage, ALL defilements are PERMANENTLY removed, and the "cooling down" is complete.
- Thus it is going to be a gradual process. It is a mistake to try to go all the way all at once. Don't even think about the *Arahant* stage (let alone the *Anāgāmī* stage where one has removed *kāma rāga* or attachment to sense pleasures), but concentrate on attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- For many, even before that one needs to experience the *nirāmisa sukha*. That is what we focus on initially.
- **It is when *kamachanda* and other *nivarana* are suppressed that one is able to experience the *nirāmisa sukha*, grasp the *anicca* nature, and become a *Sotāpanna*. This is easier when one abstain from *dasa akusala* too.**
- Thus, in order to grasp the *anicca* nature (i.e., to suppress the *nivarana*), the mind needs to be purified to some extent. Person X above is almost there, but you can see how hard for X to be not be tempted by sense pleasures.

6. I will go into details in the upcoming posts in this section, but through countless rebirths we have cultivated a craving for sense pleasures that inevitably lead to the five hindrances, that cover our minds and not letting us see the real nature of this world. **Sense pleasures have the following key characteristics:**

- They are definitely "pleasurable", i.e., the sense experience is palpable and enjoyable. The Buddha himself said that beings will not be trapped in this suffering-filled rebirth process unless they are seduced by these pleasurable sense contacts.

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- The price we pay for that "happy feeling" is that the mind gets excited and restless. Furthermore, that pleasurable feeling cannot be maintained for long times; we get tired of it no matter what it is. Think about anything (food, sex, watching movies, etc), and you will realize that soon we would have had enough of it and we just move onto some other pleasurable activity or "just take a rest."
- But that experience is addictive. The urge to do it again comes back very strong at later times. If we cannot experience it at that time, we at least tend to recall the past experience and try to enjoy that. This is due to the fact that we have a reservoir of mental impurities (*kilesa*) in our minds, as we discuss in an upcoming post.
- Until one can realize the dangers in at least excessive sense pleasures (*anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature), one's mind is easily tempted by those sense pleasures; **one is afraid that one will "miss out" on the sense pleasures. This is what X was trying to convey above.**

7. The meditation experience is the totally opposite of sense pleasures. *Nirāmisa sukha* can be maintained as long as one stays in the "meditation mindset." But it is not an "enjoyment" in the sense of a sense pleasure. It is really a "peace of mind" (one could actually feel a bodily *sukha* sensation in a *jhāna*, but we will discuss that later). This is why X is tempted by them, even though they lead to general agitation of the mind (see the first highlighted sentences in #3 above).

- *Nirāmisa sukha* BECOMES addictive (i.e., preferable over sense pleasures) only AFTER getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage (at which time it can be called beginning of the "*Nibbāna sukha*" or "*nivan suva*"). At that time, even though one may still be tempted by sense pleasures until the *Anāgāmī* stage, one will ALWAYS go back to meditation for relief. Until then it is always a battle that is so eloquently expressed by X in #3 above.
- Furthermore, at that stage one will have voluntarily given up some of more excessive sense pleasures. This is something that just happens. **One needs to forcefully give up only those things that are directly harmful to oneself or to others.** For example, sexual MISCONDUCT needs to be forcefully given up, but not sex (We recall that one of the main *upāsikā* of the Buddha, lady Visaka, attained the *Sotāpanna* stage at age 7, but got married and had 22 children). The urge for sexual pleasure will AUTOMATICALLY go away only at the *Anāgāmī* stage.
- Of course, one could start discarding some "conventionally pleasurable" but not directly harmful things like watching TV or going to concerts etc. (as X stated in #3 above). I also experienced the same kind of things in early practice. I would rather learn Dhamma than watch TV even in the early days. "pleasure of Dhamma" is different.
- However, I still get pulled into a limited number of sense pleasures occasionally, so I know how hard it is to resist especially those activities that one has gotten used to. Getting rid of all *kāma rāga* (i.e., reaching the *Anāgāmī* stage) is the hardest. But once the *anicca* nature is comprehended to some extent, it becomes easy to discard most things as a waste of time.

8. Therefore, in the beginning it could be a "tug of war" between those addictive sense pleasures that we are used to enjoy and the long-lasting but not so addictive *nirāmisa sukha* of meditation. Here, meditation also includes listening, reading, and contemplation of Dhamma.

- As one's mind gets more and more cleansed, the "joy of Dhamma" WILL increase. One WILL BE able to grasp deeper and deeper meanings even from the same discourse or a post.
- The time to contemplate on *anicca* (and *Tilakkhaṇa* in general) is when one starts "liking Dhamma", with the *pancanivarana* temporarily lifted. If one starts forcing the mind to accept the *anicca* nature, that may not be successful, and one may get discouraged. Of course, each person is different and some may be able to do it.

9. Finally, in X's last (highlighted) statement in #3 above, the question was: If I stopped meditating for two weeks, would I be able to "switch back to enjoying sense pleasures" as X did?

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- I am quite sure I could abstain from meditating for two weeks if I really wanted to. But, such an abstinence would not change "my core." It just cannot. Sometimes when I go on a trip with my family, I do not get to meditate for several days. For example, last month there was a break of about 7-8 days during such a trip. But when I get back, I automatically get back to my normal schedule of meditation.
- In addition, most of my "meditation" is not formal. I think about Dhamma concepts whenever there is time, sitting in a car, just before falling asleep, first thing when I wake up, etc.
- Furthermore, I don't feel "missed out" on those cravings that I have lost, even though I can still experience that "sense pleasure." For example, while I was working I used to have an alcoholic beverage daily for over 30 years, even though I did not really get "drunk"; it was just a habit. Nowadays, that habit has automatically disappeared. Still, If I am out with an old friend (who does not know that I have changed) and he has a drink, I may have one just to keep him company. But the "urge" to have a drink at the end of the day is never coming back. A big chunk of "mental impurities" (or *kilesa*) have permanently been removed from my mind.

10. What we are going to do is to look closely at what these defilements are that needs to be removed in order to purify the mind, so that those *pancanivarana* will be permanently lifted and the mind can grasp deeper and deeper concepts easily.

- It is easier to solve a problem when one figures out what the problem is, and the root causes that lead to the problem.
- Our problem here is the defiled mind. The root causes are the mental impurities (or *kilesa, keles*, or *klesha* in Pāli, Sinhala, and Sanskrit respectively) that have accumulated in our minds over the beginning-less rebirth process. These are ultimately responsible for the five hindrances (*pancanivarana*) that cover our minds.
- We will discuss these *kilesa* in future posts. They provide a simple way to identify and quantify mental impurities, and how they are to be discarded step-by-step.

Next in the series, "Peace of Mind to Nibbāna – The Key Step."

4.2.2 Peace of Mind to Nibbāna – The Key Step

August 12, 2016; Revised December 21, 2016

I have changed the title of this post from "Nirāmisa Sukha to Nibbāna Suva – The Key Step."

One needs to experience a "peace of mind" or "cooling down" (*Nirāmisa sukha)* before starting on the Noble Path to *Nibbāna*; the transition to the *Sotāpanna* stage happens when one comprehends the *anicca* nature while experiencing *nirāmisa sukha*.

- After that transition, *nirāmisa sukha* becomes permanent with the removal of the *pancanivarana.* The full explanation will take more posts, but we start here.
- Many people start meditating without understanding what to meditate on. One needs to learn basics of pure Buddha Dhamma first. One can start with conventional meditation techniques that are out there, but in order to grasp deeper Dhamma, one needs to seriously start staying away from the ten defilements (*dasa akusala*) as much as possible.

1. In the previous post "Living Dhamma – Introduction," we discussed the experience of X. Please read it before reading this post.

- X had experienced *nirāmisa sukha* by engaging in a regular *anāriya metta bhāvanā*. Even though it led to a relaxed and calm state of mind, X realized that at the same time the desire to engage in some types of sensual pleasures (reading books or listening to music) went away.
- Then X stopped meditating for two weeks and the ability of enjoy books or music came back. However, the *nirāmisa sukha* also went away and X's mind was again burdened and agitated.

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- Some people may not even have had experienced such a temporary "cooling down" or *nirāmisa sukha*, so I thought of discussing this a bit more before discussing the technical term "*kilesa*." It is important to figure out one's current status before trying to get to the next stage. It is a step-by-step process.
- One needs to get to that stage (where X was) to at least to experience difference between the *nirāmisa sukha* and sense pleasures in order to start comprehending *anicca* nature. It is at that stage that *pancanivarana* are temporarily lifted and the mind becomes calm enough to comprehend *anicca* nature. However, that can happen momentarily during listening to a discourse too.

2. When one is fully immersed in sense pleasures, the mental burden that inevitably comes with it is not apparent to that person. We have gotten used to the "mental agitation in the background" and don't feel it most of the time. Only when one somehow gets into a "calmed state of mind" by some way, that one can begin to appreciate the burden of this "constant agitation or incessant distress" that is in the background.

- Through the meditation program, X has begun to appreciate the relief from this "incessant distress" effect due to *pancanivarana*, and the relief is called *nirāmisa sukha*.
- However, the conundrum is that there is a price to pay (if one does not comprehend the *anicca* nature)! To the dismay of X, the ability to enjoy some favorite sense pleasures went away.

3. In very simple terms, this problem arises because X has not comprehended the *anicca* nature (what we will be doing in this new section is to discuss a step-by-step process that could help comprehend the *anicca* nature).

- In X's mind, those sense pleasures are worth hanging on to. And that feeling is VERY POWERFUL. Even though I have lost the craving for SOME sense pleasures, I still have more left. So, I know how hard it is to get rid of that "nagging feeling" of needing to go back to old ways.
- The only difference is that those desires that I lost are not coming back. There is no "nagging feeling" or an urge of needing to go back to those "lost cravings."

4. This is why comprehending the *anicca* nature nature is so important at X's stage. When one comprehends the *anicca* nature to SOME EXTENT, one loses the "nagging feeling" to go back to SOME OF THE sense pleasures.

- Only when one truly realizes the dangers (or at least the worthlessness) of a given sense pleasure, that one automatically gave up that sense pleasure. For example, if one likes to go hunting, one will not give it up voluntarily until one starts seeing the bad consequences of that activity. Same for fishing, being an alcoholic or a drug user, etc.
- Comprehension of the *anicca* nature comes gradually. **One first sees the dangers in immoral sense pleasures. Then one sees the worthlessness in extreme sense pleasures that are not harmful to others, but to oneself. One sees the worthlessness of any sense pleasure in the *kāma loka* only at the *Anāgāmī* stage.** This why it is a step-by-step process.

5. It is like holding onto a gold necklace that was thought to be very valuable. But if it was proven without any doubt that the necklace was an imitation, then one would lose the attachment to it INSTANTLY.

- Attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage via comprehending the *anicca* nature to some extent is like that, i.e., realizing the dangers (and/or worthlessness) of SOME extreme sense pleasures. Even though one may not realize that one has lost the craving for SOME sense attractions, one will realize that within weeks or months.
- Then, the more one meditates on the *anicca* nature, the more one starts seeing the perils of other (less harmful) sense pleasures too. That is why one HAS TO proceed step-by-step. Getting rid of ALL *kāma rāga* (attachment to sense inputs via the body touches, smells, and tastes) happens only at the *Anāgāmī* stage.

6. However, I must say that X is a bit unusual in the sense of losing the desire to read books and listen to music. Those are not really "extreme sense pleasures." Before that one will lose the desire to go fishing,

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mistreating animals, etc. and also getting a pleasure from lying, gossiping, slandering, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc. I am quite sure X never had a tendency for those anyway.

- I also do not want people to get the idea that one needs to lose sense pleasures such as reading books or listening to music in order to become a *Sotāpanna,* or to experience *nirāmisa sukha*. That is not the case. One could even be a *Sotāpanna* and still have those two tendencies. I have mentioned a person in the time of the Buddha who became a *Sotāpanna* but could not get rid of the urge to have a drink (however, he did not live that long after attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage). This is why no one can say whether another person has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- A *Sotāpanna* absolutely would not do only those deeds that could make him/her suitable for rebirth in the *apāyā*. That means, he/she has removed high levels of greed, hate, and ignorance to the levels of *kāma rāga*, *paṭigha*, and *avijjā;* see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."
- My belief is that X had cultivated *anāriya jhānā* in previous but recent rebirths, and is carrying that "*gathi*" to this life. X has described some bodily sensations that are associated with *jhānā*. This is why it is easy for X to at least temporarily lose attachment to even fairly harmless things like reading books or listening to music.

7. Each person loses a set of individual characteristics (*gathi*) upon attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage. One should be able to look back and see what those are, just like X did. And, of course, whether those changes are permanent.

- As I mentioned I have lost the urge to have a drink at the end of the day, which I had been doing for over 30 years. I did not force that, even though I contemplated the bad possible consequences of keeping that habit.
- When one follows the Path, one does not forcefully give up sense pleasures, only immoral actions that can hurt other living beings; even X did not forcefully give up books or music, it just happened. Losing the desire for sense pleasures happens gradually, starting with extremes.
- I have only lost interest in reading fiction books. I used to read all types of books, but now I am not interested in reading fiction, because to me it is a waste of time just like watching TV. On the other hand, I am now reading more non-fiction books.
- I have also been more productive in my science interests over the past two years too. I have learned the subtleties of quantum mechanics that were not apparent to me even two years ago. Mind becomes much more clear as one gets rid of *kilesa*.
- So, it is important to realize that one is not supposed to lose all interests. **One loses interest in only those activities related to greed, hate, and ignorance.** That is a must, and that should be fairly obvious when one looks back. One loses interest in all worldly affairs only upon attaining the *Arahanthood.*

8. My point is that it is desirable for one to first get into this stage of X, where X can see the difference between sensual pleasures (*amisa sukha*) and the *nirāmisa sukha* that arise by at least temporarily suppressing the desire for sensual pleasures via a meditation program.

- Even more critical than a meditation program is living a moral life, staying away from *dasa akusala* as much as possible.

9. Many people try to attain "*Nibbānic* pleasure" just because they tend to think in terms of sensual pleasures, i.e., that *Nibbānic* pleasure is like the pleasure of music, good food, etc. This is why the account of X is so a good an example in pointing out the difference between the two.

- Actually, this is good place to discuss the differences in *amisa, nirāmisa*, and *jhāna sukha* and the *Nibbānic suva*.

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- I reserved the name "*suva*" for *Nibbāna* because it is even different from the *nirāmisa sukha*. It is an overall state of "well-being." I have no idea what that is like at higher stages, but right now it is an ever-present calming effect on the body and mind.
- Sense pleasures lead to *āmisa* (or *sāmisa*) *sukha*. So, we are all familiar with *amisa sukha*.

10. *Nirāmisa sukha* can arise due to a few different causes. They are all beneficial for the Path and to comprehend the *anicca* nature.

- Those *citta* that bring us *amisa sukha* are burdened with *kilesa* or *akusala cetasika* (which we will discuss in the next post). **These give rise to an agitated mind that is under incessant distress; see,** "The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca." This is what X described in the previous post as, ".. I stopped my formal meditation for a few weeks and I found that I began to get agitated and anxious as before." When one gets rid of this incessant distress, one feels the *nirāmisa sukha*.
- One can also feel the *nirāmisa sukha* for short times when engaged in moral activities, for example, helping others or giving food to hungry people or animals. Again, this feeling comes because those *kilesa* are not present in *citta* (thoughts) that arise during such activities.
- Another is engaging in *Ariya* or *anāriya* meditations. Here also one's mind is mostly devoid of *kilesa* (depending on the strength of the *samādhi*).

11. There is also a higher *nirāmisa sukha* that was recommended by the Buddha. That is the *sukha* arising due to *jhānā*. When one is in a *jhāna*, one has *citta* running through one's mind that belong to *rūpa* or *arūpa loka*.

- By definition, those *citta* are also devoid of *kilesa* or mental impurities.
- *Jhānā* arise when *samādhi* is intensified (cultivated) to a certain level.

12. "*Nivan suva*" or "*Nibbānic suva*" or "*Nibbānic* bliss" is due to *citta* that are even more pure. There is not a trace of incessant agitation or stress left in those *citta*.

- These *citta* are also called *pabhasvara* (bright) *citta*; see, "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?."
- Also, *Sotāpanna* will not be able to experience the *Nivana suva* for that stage, unless he/she can get into *Sotāpanna phala samāpatti* via cultivating *jhānā*. Still, he/she will not have the *nirāmisa sukha* going away. Whatever relief gained from the "incessant distress" is permanent.

13. We will discuss the *kilesa* (*akusala cetasika*) that give rise not only to incessant agitation and stress — but eventually to all *sansāric* suffering — soon in this series.

- The incessant distress can be considered as "immediate *kamma vipāka*" due to *citta* burdened with *kilesa* or *akusala cetasika*. The "delayed effects" of such *citta* will bring more *kamma vipāka* at later times, and the more potent ones can bring rebirth in the *apāyā*.
- Thus the key step to the *Sotāpanna* stage is in experiencing *nirāmisa sukha* by cleansing the mind via moral behavior (*sīla*) and a good meditation program. Then the mind is open to grasping the *anicca* nature, i.e., *pancanivara* could be suppressed for days.
- However, when one is living a moral life and is engaged in contemplating pure Dhamma, that transition may happen quickly and may be even followed by the *Sotāpanna phala* moment even without one noticing it at that time. Different people get there in different ways.
- But there is much to discuss before discussing the *Sotāpanna* stage.

Next in the series, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth", …..

4.2.3 Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth

August 19, 2016

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1. After publishing two posts in a subsection entitled "New Approach to Meditation", I started realizing more aspects of the importance of this approach. So, I have started a whole new section, "Living Dhamma" which lays out a step-by-step Path from fundamentals. Please read the first two posts there before reading this post.

- There are many people, including some Buddhists, who have difficulty in connecting with the idea of rebirth.
- Rather than making the idea of rebirth as a prerequisite to start the practice, one can start practicing by comprehending another type of suffering that the Buddha revealed to the world.

2. The Buddha revealed at least two types of suffering that are unknown to the world (and taught how to get rid of both PERMANENTLY).

- Even though the future suffering associated with the rebirth process is the one that is mostly highlighted in the literature, there is a suffering that we all experience in this life, without even knowing about it.
- That first type of suffering that we all experience is the incessant distress that we all feel (but may not be even aware of). One starts feeling the *nirāmisa sukha* when one temporarily suppresses this incessant distress.
- In a way, it is necessary to first to realize the existence of this **first type of suffering**, at least suppress it, and experience the *nirāmisa sukha* that results from it (as X did).
- That will provide the initial faith in Buddha Dhamma, and also enable the mind to get to *samādhi*, and help comprehend the *anicca* nature. That will lead to the next step of comprehending the **second type of suffering** associated with the rebirth process.

3. Rather than writing a few more posts on this, I decided to present this idea in the audio format. I have never delivered a "*desanā*" previously, but hopefully, you will be able to grasp the concept. You need to adjust thevolume control on your computer:

"**The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand**"

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 1 - The Hidden Suffering That We All Can Understand

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 1 - The Hidden Suffering That We All Can Understand (Original - Larger file size)

4. Here are the links to the posts mentioned in the above *desanā*:

Posts on the fundamentals of meditation:

1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

2. The Basics in Meditation

3. The Second Level

Posts on the "incessant distress":

The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca

Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it?

Post on the five hindrances (*pancanivarana*):

Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances

***Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*:**

6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)

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***Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā*:**

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure

Step-by-Step Progression in the Path:

Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart

Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)

Next in the series, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika."

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4.3 Dhamma with Less Pāli

November 14, 2017

This new subsection is now the second subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section.

- Initially, I had "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals" as the second subsection after the "Living Dhamma – Overview" subsection.
- Now I realize that it was to much of a jump, even for many who have had exposure to Buddha Dhamma, but are not familiar with *cetasika* and other key Pāli words. So, in this new subsection, I plan to close that gap.

Posts:

- Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind – Part I
- "Root of All Suffering – Ten Immoral Actions" (with the *desanā* "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering?
- Dhamma, Saṅkhāra, Sankata, Rūpa, Viññāṇa, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya
- Complexity of the Mind – Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra
- Citta, Mano, Viññāṇa – Stages of a Thought

4.3.1 Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind – Part I

April 12, 2018

This is going to be a series of posts that looks at Buddha Dhamma from a "bottoms up" approach. Today, Dhamma is hidden under a lot of incomprehensible Pāli words. I can see that many people just use Pāli words without knowing their true meanings. If one has a good understanding of the "basics" or the "framework", it is easier to understand and remember the meanings of key Pāli words.

- This will be in summary form, since it is not possible to describe even the outline in several posts. One can find relevant posts by using the "Search" box at top right. Furthermore, one can ask questions at the discussion forum ("Forum") where opinions of others can be seen too. I encourage any opposing to views, as long as one is providing evidence from the *Tipiṭaka*.
- This website is based solely on the *Tipiṭaka* and only the three Commentaries included with it. The reasons for that are discussed in the section "Historical Background."

Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) – What Happens After Death?

1. The majority of people in the world today belong to one of the following two camps:

- The next life is going to be forever, in the heaven or hell.
- This life is all one has. When one dies, it is over. No rebirth or hell or heaven.

2. The first theory has been handed down from generation to generation for many, and there are obviously many "holes" in that theory. It seems illogical in many ways (it is one thing to create the Earth, but to create billions of galaxies with billions of planets like Earth? And how did the Creator come about?), but just think about this:

- If a baby dies within a few months will it go to heaven or hell (it has not done anything good or bad)?

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- Furthermore, how come some people are born wealthy and thus have a better chance to go to heaven than one who is born poor and thus may be tempted to do immoral things to survive (and thus go to hell)?

3. The second theory appears more logical to many "scientifically-oriented" people with a "materialistic" view.

- But even if just one of the rebirth stories is believable or proven to the satisfaction of someone, then that person has to throw away that theory.
- More importantly, there is no explanation available for how consciousness arises from inert matter. Our bodies are made of the "same stuff" that a tree or a house is made of.

4. In contrast, Buddha Dhamma says that there will be future lives as along as there are causes for future lives to arise.

- We can learn a lot about Buddha Dhamma by looking at what those causes are. **Those causes arise in one's mind.**
- One's Creator is oneself. And, as long as one perceives that ultimate happiness can be found in this world, **one will be** reborn in this world.

The Four Noble Truths

1. In simple terms, Buddha Dhamma is based on the following four truths about this world, called the Four Noble Truths:

- The Noble Truth about suffering.
- The causes for such suffering.
- Those causes can be eliminated and thus it is possible to stop future suffering from arising.
- The way to eliminate those causes and to attain ultimate happiness (*Nibbāna*).

2. The Buddha said that when one understands the First Truth, one will automatically understand the other three as well. Therefore, let us discuss the First Noble Truth.

- The key and critical issue here is to understand what is meant by "suffering" in Buddha Dhamma.
- It is important to realize that "suffering" and "the Truth about suffering" are two different things.

3. Suffering as a feeling everyone knows very well. One does not have to be a Noble Person or even a Buddhist to know what suffering is. Actually, even animals know what suffering is, and they don't like that either. We all have seen dogs cry with pain when hit.

- So, what is the Noble Truth about suffering? **The Buddha said that this Truth is unknown and is hidden from the humans until a Buddha teaches what it is.**

4. Understanding the truth about suffering requires an understanding of the wider world of 31 realms, and that **most of that future suffering** would be in the four realms or the *apāyā* (of which animal realm is one). But suffering is associated with all realms.

- There are causes for that suffering, i.e., causes for leading to rebirth in the *apāyā* or in any realm in general. The worst suffering can be stopped from arising by eliminating the causes for births in the *apāyā*, and that is where one should first focus on.
- There is a Noble Eightfold Path that one can follow to achieve that goal (a procedure to remove those causes). So, now we can beginning to see why one will know all four Truths, when one understands the First Truth.

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Mind – Where Root Causes for Suffering Arise

1. We know that we are conscious because we can think. We think via thoughts. We can think about many types of things.

- When we are very sleepy, we are just aware that we are alive.
- On the other hand, if one is about to be run over by a car, one will generate enough power to jump a long distance away from that car or, if being chased by a lion, can probably beat a world record for sprinting.

2. One's actions and speech are also controlled by one's mind via thoughts or *citta* that arise in the mind.

- We cannot even lift a finger without a *citta* or a thought arising in the mind. We may not even think about lifting that finger, but we do. It is easy to figure out this way: We can fold that finger any time we want to.
- You may not realize that speech comes via thinking or *citta*. Again, it is easy to see that we can stop that speech any time we want to.

3. One's actions, speech, and thoughts have consequences. In fact, one's conscious thoughts determine the level of future suffering.

- **Future suffering arises due to our conscious thoughts or *citta*, and they are also called *saṅkhāra* in some contexts.**

4. There is a difference between *citta* and *saṅkhāra* (the English word "thought" does not translate exactly as either).

- Normally, the word *citta* is used in *Abhidhamma* to denote the smallest mental activity that lasts only a fraction of a billionth of a second.
- The word *saṅkhāra* is used to represent the overall effect of billions of *citta*.
- In that sense the word thought is more closer to *saṅkhāra*.

5. Those thoughts that are used to move the body (lifting that finger) are called *kāya saṅkhāra*, because those *saṅkhāra* control the body or *kaya*.

- Those that lead to speech are called *vacī saṅkhāra*, which are two types: We can speak out loudly or just "talk to ourselves" (thinking consciously); both are *vacī saṅkhāra*.
- However, the word "*vācā*" is used only for speaking out loud.
- Other thoughts that arise are called *mano saṅkhāra*, which are those thoughts that arise without us even thinking about it consciously.
- So, I hope it is clear what those three types of *saṅkhāra* are. It is important to be able see the differences. But they all arise in the mind.

6. Those *mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically even without us being aware of it until they arise. They arise based on our *gati* (or character or habits).

- Immediately after *mano saṅkhāra* arise, we become aware of them and if we are not paying attention we may just keep generating *vacī saṅkhāra* along the same lines.
- For example, when an alcoholic sees a bottle of alcohol at a party, his/her first reaction is to have a drink. But if that person has will power, he/she can think about the bad consequences and forcefully move the mind to some other matter.
- Both *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpāna bhāvanā* are based on understanding how *vacī saṅkhāra* arise based on *mano saṅkhāra* that arise according to one's *gati* (and that we have control over *vacī saṅkhāra*).

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7. Another important observation from the above discussion is that our physical bodies are "inert shells." It is controlled by a mental body (called "*gandhabba*") where all thoughts (and thus *saṅkhāra*) arise.

- This is why in many confirmed Out of Body Experiences (OBE), the body becomes lifeless when the *gandhabba* comes out of the body.
- These are all key concepts that we have discussed in detail at the website. One can use the "Search" box to find details as needed.

Importance of Javana Citta

Not all thoughts are the same. In order to get a better idea about thoughts or *saṅkhāra*, it is good to know some basic facts about *citta*.

1. *Citta* can be of 89 types and that analysis is very complex. We don't need to know all those. **We just need to know that some of those 89 types is called a "*javana citta*" and those are very powerful *citta*.**

- The word "*javana*" comes from the root "*ja*" meaning "birth." Thus *javana citta* are the root for all births. *Javana* can also means "running", or "spear" that can penetrate, to indicate the power.
- The opposite of *javana citta* would be "*ati parittārammana citta*" that we don't really even feel. Those *citta* arise when we are asleep and are responsible for breathing.
- Breathing involves movement of body parts (lungs), and is thus a "*kāya saṅkhāra*." This is an excellent example of a *saṅkhāra* that is not defiled. It is an essential action to maintain life.

2. **On the other side of the spectrum, we have powerful *javana citta*, which CAN lead to strong *saṅkhāra* called *abhisaṅkhāra*.**

- *Javana citta* generate energies that is the root cause of future *vipāka* (results) that can give rise to various types of *vipāka* during a lifetime. Strong ones can lead to future rebirths. **Thus, the key to future suffering is hidden in *javana citta*.**
- However, not all *javana citta* lead to *abhisaṅkhāra*. For example, *kusala kamma* (wholesome deeds) done by *Arahants* are not called *abhisaṅkhāra*. They are called *kriya*. They don't have *kammic* energy to fuel rebirths or bring *pavutti vipāka*.

3. A very strong *kāya saṅkhāra* would be to kill a human, say by stabbing. That requires a very strong impulse, a high *javana* power. One can do that only when one's mind is very agitated and is full of hate. These are called *apuññabhi saṅkhāra* (*apuñña abhi saṅkhāra*, meaning "bad strong *saṅkhāra*").

- However, high *javana* power does not necessarily mean a bad action. When someone does good deeds (*kusala kamma*), they are done with *puññabhi saṅkhāra* (*puñña abhi saṅkhāra*, meaning "good strong *saṅkhāra*").
- High *javana* power may involve neutral actions too. For example, lifting a heavy object requires high *javana* power. But if that is done while cleaning house, for example, that is a neutral action (no *kammically* good or bad intention), therefore is not called good or bad (*puñña* or *apuñña*). Such *javana citta* are not included in *Abhidhamma* because they do not have *kammic* consequences.

4. There are 12 types of *javana citta* corresponding to the 12 types of *akusala citta* and 8 types of *javana citta* corresponding to the 8 types of *kusala citta*.

- These are the *javana citta* of importance to us.
- The 12 types of *akusala citta* with *akusala javana* can bring bad *vipāka* during a lifetime or rebirth in "bad realms."

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- The 8 types of *kusala citta* with *kusala javana* can bring good *vipāka* during a lifetime or rebirth in "good realms." We need to do *kusala kamma* in order to avoid rebirth in the *apāyā* and to attain *Nibbāna*.
- However, "good" and "bad" in the above are relative. It is just that "bad realms" have obviously harsh suffering. But no realm out of the possible 31 realms is free of suffering.

5. **Now we are beginning to see why *dasa akusala kamma* or the ten immoral deeds (that are done with those 12 types of *akusala citta*) are at the heart of Buddha Dhamma.**

- When one is engaged in such immoral deeds, they generate "energies" called "*bhava shakti*" to fuel future *kamma vipāka* (bad results), including rebirths in the *apāyā*.
- Thus it is unfruitful and dangerous to engage in *dasa akusala*; this is why such activities are of *anicca* nature (do not lead to what one expects and only lead to more stress and suffering), one of the three characteristics of this world (*Tilakkhaṇa*).
- Obviously, such activities leads to suffering or *dukkha*, the second of the *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Once one gets a rebirth in the *apāyā*, it is very hard to get out and thus one becomes "helpless." Furthermore, clearly such actions are fruitless in the long run even if born in "good realms." This is the key to understand "*anatta*," the third characteristic of this world.

So, that is the first part of a highly-condensed outline of Buddha Dhamma. We will continue this outline in the next post.

Ongoing discussion on this topic at the discussion forum: "Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind."

4.3.2 Root of All Suffering – Ten Immoral Actions

November 14, 2017

1. This new subsection of "Dhamma with Less Pāli" is now the second subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section.

- In the first *desanā* of the "Living Dhamma – Overview" subsection, we talked about how one's mind get agitated when one is engaged in *dasa akusala* or the ten immoral actions.

2. After that "Living Dhamma – Overview" subsection, I had "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals" as the next subsection, where I started discussing the connection between those *dasa akusala* and *cetasika* or mental factors in our thoughts.

- Now I realize that it was to much of a jump, even for many who have had exposure to Buddha Dhamma but are not familiar with *cetasika*.
- So, in this new subsection — "Dhamma with Less Pāli" — I plan to close that gap. This subsection will have much less Pāli words, and I will try to introduce only the essential Pāli words as I proceed.

3. Here is the first *desanā*: **"Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."** Here we discuss the ten immoral actions (*dasa akusala*) and how avoiding them helps calm the mind; in fact, this is the key to avoid depression.

WebLink: Download "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"

WebLink: Download "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" (Original - Larger file size)

4. **Posts relevant to the *desanā*:**

Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)

How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma

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Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra

Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits

The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)

Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)

How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View

Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis

Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage

Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism

- In the first *desanā* of the "Living Dhamma – Overview" subsection, I talked about how one's mind get agitated when one is engaged in *dasa akusala* or the ten immoral actions. Here is that *desanā:*

"**The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand**"

WebLink: Download "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"

I recommend reading the three posts in that "Living Dhamma – Overview" subsection.

4.3.3 Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering?

The main goal of meditation before the *Sotāpanna* stage is to understand the message of the Buddha. Before following the Path, one needs to comprehend what it is about. It is better to get into *satipattāna bhāvanā* after one fully understands what is going to be done in *satipattāna bhāvanā*. Many people waste a lot of time doing what they perceive to be *satipattāna bhāvanā*, and do not get much benefit.

I will have several posts here that one could use for contemplation in meditation. When the mind calms down some, one should think about validity of what is discussed; understanding itself lead to getting rid of defilements. One can even reach the *Sotāpanna* stage just via "*dassanena pahatabba*" or "removal via clear vision."

1. Many people have misconceptions about the First Noble Truth on Suffering or *Dukkha Sacca* (pronounced "sachchā). In one of the internet forums, I was asked two questions that embody many of such misconceptions about Buddha's message.

- "I understand what the Buddha meant by suffering because I came down with this ailment. How do other people understand Buddha's message and how do they find out about his message?"
- Then there was this question from apparently by a young person, "With so many pleasurable things around us with the innovations from science and technology, why do people need to think about suffering? Isn't Buddha's message kind of outdated?"

2. Before discussing them, it is clear that they both have good and bad implications.

- People at least search the internet and find out about Buddha Dhamma because of the first, and those who are "enjoying life to the fullest" may not even hear about Buddha Dhamma at all because of the second.
- On the other hand, the assertion is wrong in the first question, and is correct in the second at least on the surface.

3. **The Buddha never said** that "there are no sense pleasures to be had in this world." On the contrary, he said people are unable to SEE the hidden suffering BECAUSE of the apparent sense pleasures they are enjoying OR those that are within reach even if not available to one right away.

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- Even a poor person can see all the sense-fulfilling offers all around; even if he cannot access them at the moment, his thinking is "if I work hard, I can access all these pleasures at some point." Thus whether rich or poor, all are "under the illusion of a sea of apparent pleasures" to be had.

4. Buddha Dhamma needs to be understood with wisdom. Wisdom (*paññā*) is a mental factor (*cetasika*) that needs to be cultivated mostly by reading (or listening) about the Buddha's world view first.

- Most people just PERCEIVE suffering through the mental factor (*cetasika*) of feeling (*vedanā*), like the person who asked the first question above. One can experience suffering, but that is NOT the Noble Truth ON suffering.
- The second questioner had not EXPERIENCED much of suffering, and does not think he needs to pay any attention.
- **Both need to look at world with wisdom within the worldview of the Buddha to see the HIDDEN suffering.** This CANNOT be done without understanding what the Buddha was saying about a more expansive and more complex world than what we experience with our six senses (of course one will not BELIEVE it unless one is convinced; the real conviction will come only if one gets familiar with the whole message).

5. In his first sermon, *Dhamma Cakka Pavatta Sutta*, the Buddha said this about his new message to the world: "*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*" or "a Dhamma that has never been known to the world."

6. Everyone can and will experience suffering during this life; there in nothing NEW in that.

What is new in the message of the Buddha can be briefly stated as:

- There is a wider world out there with many more beings living in 29 more realms than the human and animal realms that we experience, AND the real suffering is in the lower four realms.
- This life is only a brief stop in our long journey through the cycle of rebirths called *saṃsāra*.
- Even in this life, there is hidden suffering even when one seems to be enjoying life, AND there is real suffering at old age and death that is inevitable for everyone. This last part of course is apparent to anyone, but is not thought about much at all. As one gets old, when the real suffering starts the mind could be too weak to learn Dhamma.
- MOST IMPORTANT part of the Buddha's message is the one that is least heard about; That there is permanent happiness to be had, and that CAN be attained during this very life.

7. I have several posts on the "bigger worldview of the Buddha" and also on rebirth, nature of *kamma*, etc. Also, there are several posts on the *nirāmisa sukha* which is a happiness of permanent nature to be had during this very life by following the Path advised by the Buddha.

- Let us take a brief look at the third point on the 'hidden suffering" with a couple of examples next.

8. **Example 1:** When a fish bites the bait, it does not see the suffering hidden in that action. Looking from the ground we can see the whole picture and we know what is going to happen to the fish if it bites the bait. But the fish is unable to see that whole picture, and thus does not see the hidden suffering. It only sees a delicious bit of food.

- In the same way, if we do not know about the wider world of 31 realms (with the suffering-laden four lowest realms), and that we have gone through unimaginable suffering in those realms in the past, we only focus on what is easily accessible to our six senses.

9. **Example 2:** Suppose someone makes you an offer. He says, "I will put you in one of the best resorts with all amenities paid for a month. But there is a catch. The food will taste great but will have traces of poison that will become effective in a few months and will lead to death within the year."

Will anyone take the offer, knowing that it will lead to suffering and death? Of course not.

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- But if the host did not tell them, they would not know, and will have a good time, but will have the same consequences.
- In the same way, we are enjoying the sense pleasures without knowing the consequences of them, especially if we did immoral things to get those pleasures.

10. Here is another thing to contemplate: We all have seen how a parent, a grandparent, or even an unrelated celebrity from past years transforms from a dynamic, self-confident, and sometimes imposing character to a feeble, helpless person in the latter years. Sometimes they die under pathetic conditions that would have been unimaginable for them when they were young. **But this change is gradual, and even they do not realize it until it is too late.**

- When one becomes too old, it may be too late to start thinking about these facts; one needs to spend even a little time contemplating on these "facts of life" now. Not to get depressed about this inevitability, but to DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT; this will enable one to enjoy the latter days of life with *nirāmisa sukha*, even if no stage of Nibbāna is attained.

11. Now, this DOES NOT MEAN one should get away from all sense pleasures even if one becomes convinced of the core message of the Buddha. Abandoning everything may have even worse consequences if it is not done with true understanding. And it takes time to digest the whole message. It has taken me several years to come to the stage where I am now. I have not given up anything with remorse; I do not "miss" anything that I have given up. The only things one may want to "forcefully give up" are things that directly hurt other beings like killing, stealing, etc which most people don't do anyway.

- Giving up sense pleasures comes gradually with understanding, when one sees the benefits of giving up.
- There is no need to rush into taking drastic actions. The urgent task is to GET STARTED. Allocate a little time each each day to learn Dhamma, preferably when the mind is a bit calmer so that one can focus and contemplate. As the Buddha said, this Dhamma is really different from what we are used to.

12. As one begins to understand the message of the Buddha, the learning process will become easier. What I hope to do with this site is to basically present all the background material that I have gone through, so others do not have to repeat it all. Of course you may want to do additional research; each one may be looking at things a bit differently. I will be happy to address any issues that are not discussed on the site yet.

13. In summary, the First Noble Truth on suffering is NOT to be EXPERIENCED as a feeling (*vedanā*), but needs to be UNDERSTOOD with wisdom (*paññā*). Actually, when one is experiencing any form of suffering that makes it HARDER to grasp the meaning of the First Noble Truth. One needs a clear, calm, and healthy mind to grasp it.

A not-so-deep analysis of Dukkha Sacca is given in the post, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?"

A deeper analysis of the Dukkha Sacca is given in the next post, The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca.

4.3.4 Dhamma, Saṅkhāra, Sankata, Rūpa, Viññāṇa, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya

July 22, 2018

1. I recently realized that it would be a good idea to explain what is meant by key Pāli words like the above in one place.

- This information could be there spread over hundreds of posts on the website, but not many people have read even a fraction of what is at the web site.
- Since it is critical to understand these key terms, I will try to provide another condensed "big picture" in terms of these key words. In the last post we analyzed the big picture in terms of root causes; see, "Six Root Causes – Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."

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2. One way to look at this is to start with how the Buddha described "everything in this world." We have two worlds to begin with: physical world (*bhautika loka*) and the mind world (*mano loka*).

- Everything that is in the physical world is detected by the five physical senses of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body: *vaṇṇa rūpa* (visible objects), *sadda rūpa* (sounds), *gandha rūpa* (smells), *rasa rūpa* (tastes), and *pottabba rūpa* (touchable objects).
- **Therefore, everything that is in our physical world are called *rūpa*, and are included in the five types mentioned above.** Those *rūpa* are all above the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.
- For example, we can see *vaṇṇa rūpa* with eyes: "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*." Similarly for other four.
- Some objects in the physical world can be detected with more than one sense faculty, and the more information we get the more knowledgeable we become of the object: we can see and touch an apple; if we can also smell it, the apple is probably ripe; if we taste it, we can confirm that it is ripe.

3. **We have a sixth sense faculty: *mana indriya*, which basically detects everything else in our world, and they are called *dhammā*:** "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*." These *dhammā* are in our *mano loka* (mental world).

- These *dhammā* include everything that is not detected with the five physical senses. They include, for example, *kamma bīja*, *nāma gotta* (memory records or memories), mathematics, philosophy, Buddha Dhamma, etc.
- Those are also called *rūpa*, but those *rūpa* are different from the *rūpa* in the physical world: Some have energies that lie below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage (*kamma bīja*), and the rest of them are either just memories (*nāma gotta*) or concepts.
- These fine *rūpa* are described as, "*anidassanaṃ, appaṭighaṃ, dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rūpaṃ*" or "*rūpa* that cannot be seen, touched, and only detected via *dhammāyatana* (*mana indriya*)."

4. **When one of our senses detects something in our physical world or the mental world, one of the six types of *viññāṇa* arise**, and we become aware of that "thing", whether it is a *vaṇṇa rūpa*, *sadda rūpa*, or a *dhammā*.

- *Viññāṇa* is a very complex entity: it includes or encompasses the following: our feelings (*vedanā*), perceptions (*saññā*), and a set individual mental factors (*cetasika*). They all arise together, and the set of *cetasika* that arise is dependent on each person's *gati*.
- For example, totally different sets of *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra* (i.e., *cetasika*) arise when a famous politician is seen by one of his supporters and a person from the opposition party.
- But in addition, ***viññāṇa* also includes one's hopes for the future. That is important.**

5. The initial response in one's mind upon subjected to an external sense input (whether it is seeing, hearing or just a memory coming to the mind), is called a ***mano saṅkhāra***. Of course, that is part of *viññāṇa*.

- Now, we can see why different people generate different types of *viññāṇa* when exposed to the same sense input. Those *mano saṅkhāra* — that is generated instantaneously — depends on one's *gati* or set of *kilesa* (*lobha, dosa, moha*).
- Each person has a set of *kilesa* called *āsava*, and one's *gati* (and therefore those *mano saṅkhāra*) closely follow those *āsava*; we will discuss that below.

6. If that sense input is an interesting one (a like or a dislike), then immediately one starts thinking about it. This is called "generating ***vacī saṅkhāra***" or basically "talking to oneself." Now one is fully aware that one is thinking about that sense input, whether it is a picture, sound, a memory, or anything else.

- Furthermore, if one gets really animated about that object, one may speak about (still with *vacī saṅkhāra*), and may even take a bodily action which will involve ***kāya saṅkhāra***.

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- In contrast to *mano saṅkhāra* that arise AUTOMATICALLY, both *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* are generated consciously. This is key to *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation since we have the ability to stop or to continue with those *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- Those three types are collectively called ***saṅkhāra***.
- So, I hope you now have a better understanding of what is meant by *viññāṇa* and *saṅkhāra* and also how they are related. From #4 above, we can also see that *saṅkhāra* are part of *dhammā*.

7. By the way, *kāya kamma* are those actions done with the body, but we see that *kāya saṅkhāra* are responsible for such *kāya kamma*.

- In the same way, *vacī saṅkhāra* are responsible for *vacī kamma*, and *mano saṅkhāra* are responsible for *mano kamma*.
- All ***kamma*** (actions) are done with *saṅkhāra*. They all have origins in the mind.

8. Now, such *saṅkhāra* can be "harmless" or "dangerous" or "beneficial." Our actions, speech, and thoughts are all based on such *saṅkhāra*.

- When one gets hungry, one may generate *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* to ask for food or to go walk to the kitchen and get something to eat. Such *saṅkhāra* are *kammically* neutral, in the sense that they don't lead to "good or bad *kamma vipāka*" in the future other than getting what one wanted to satisfy the hunger.
- Of course, if one gets attached to that food while eating, one may generate strong *saṅkhāra* or *abhisaṅkhāra* that will have significant *kammic* consequences. That is an *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* since that involves the *lobha cetasika*.

9. If one is planning to kill another human, then one would be generating very strong "*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*" that involves *vacī saṅkhāra* and may lead to *kāya saṅkhāra* if one actually goes through the killing. Then one would have generated a strong *kamma bīja* that can bring a future birth in the *apāyā*.

- On the other hand, if one is studying Buddha Dhamma, one will be generating all three types of *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* (thinking, contemplating and doing things like downloading material from the internet). They will create good *kamma bīja* that will lead to good *vipāka*: either leading to *magga phala* or at least births in good realms so that one could continue on the Path.

10. Now we can begin to see how *saṅkhāra* can lead to the formation (or arising) of ***saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)**. A potent *kamma bīja* generated via a strong *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* can lead to say, animal *bhava*, and to the birth as an animal.

- Therefore, that *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (animal) came to being because of that *kamma bīja*, and many *abhisaṅkhāra* could have contributed to that *kamma bīja*.
- In the same way, a strong "good *kamma bīja*" generated via *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* (*puñña kamma*) can lead to a human or a *deva* birth. That human or *deva* is a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) too.

11. It is much more complex, but ALL material things arise in this world are due to *saṅkhāra*. I will take a simple example to show the basic idea.

- A house (a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)) comes into being as a result of many types of *saṅkhāra*. First, one needs to get the idea to build a house. Then he/she may consult an architect and after much discussion (lot of *mano* and *vacī saṅkhāra* and also *kāya saṅkhāra*), they will come up with a blueprint (plan) for the house.
- Then many people will work to build the house. Innumerable *mano, vacī, kāya saṅkhāra* are involved in bringing the house to completion (of course, most of those are not *puñña* or *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*; they are just mostly neutral *saṅkhāra*).

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- The explanation of how a tree arises is a more complex one, but also has origins in the mind. We may get to that at a future time, but it is not necessary to attain *Nibbāna*. As the Buddha said: "mind is the precursor to everything in this world."

12. **Any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) has the following universal properties:** it comes into being and eventually is destroyed, and also it undergoes unexpected change while in existence. Think about anything in this world. Those three characteristics are associated with any of them.

- **This is why ANY *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) HAS the *anicca* nature.** It is said that "*uppāda vayattena aniccā*," emphasizing those main properties: any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) arises and eventually is subjected to decay and death, whether it is living or inert.

13. However, it is important to realize that a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) WILL NOT bring suffering to anyone unless one gets attached to it. A *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) has the *anicca* nature (i.e., the potential to bring suffering), but it does not automatically lead to suffering.

- A bottle of poison sitting on a table has the potential to kill someone. But unless someone takes the bottle and drinks from it, he/she will not be affected.
- In the same way, we will be subjected to suffering ONLY IF we get attached to worldly things (*saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), whether it is a person, house, car, etc). Then why do we get attached to such things all the time? That is because we have not comprehended the real *anicca* nature of *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala). It is not easy to see the *anicca* nature.

14. Therefore, a key point is that any type of *rūpa* (or any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) in general) WILL NOT bring us *dukkha* unless we get attached to (or repulsed by it), i.e., it leads to *taṇhā* in the mind.

- This is why the Buddha said, "*..pañca upādānakkhandhā dukkhā*," and NOT "*pañcakkhandha dukkhā*."
- There could be all kinds of attractive/hateful things around us, but if we don't generate *upādāna* for them via craving (*lobha*) or hate (*dosa*), we will not be subjected to suffering.
- However, that is hard to do until one cultivates *paññā* (wisdom) by learning Buddha Dhamma and eventually grasping the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*).

15. Until then, when we experience a sense input via any of the six senses (see above), we may automatically generate bad *mano saṅkhāra* and then willingly generate *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* along the same lines, if we are not being mindful.

- As we discussed above, *mano saṅkhāra* arise AUTOMATICALLY according to our ***gati***. Those *gati* are closely associated with ***anusaya*** (mental fermentations) that cannot be removed until one comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Based on the sense input, those *āsava* may come to the surface and that is called ***āsava***; see, "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava."
- The only way to change those *gati* (i.e., to remove *āsava* from one's mind permanently) is to cultivate *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna*, by being mindful of what kind of *saṅkhāra* arise in our minds as we are exposed to such external sense inputs.
- So, it is VERY IMPORTANT to both learn Buddha Dhamma (in particular *Tilakkhaṇa*) and ALSO to practice real *Ānāpāna*/*Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.

16. **It must be clear now that the main cause of suffering is not *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), but *saṅkhāra*, specifically *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*.** This is why it is said that "*sabbe saṅkhāra aniccā*" and NOT "*sabbe saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) *aniccā*" or "*sabbe dhamma aniccā*"

- Another word for *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* is *dasa akusala*. Abstaining from *dasa akusala* is the same as stopping BAD *mano, vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*.

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- Some of that can be done via pure determination. However, that discipline becomes hard when one gets strong sense inputs. For example, one may not take a bribe, but if the offer is a million dollars one may be tempted to take the bribe.

17. That is the difference a real comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* will accomplish; one's tendency to do immoral things will naturally reduce as one's comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* increases. An *Arahant* will not be tempted by absolutely anything.

- An *Anāgāmī* will not be tempted by any "*kāma*" input, for example, seeing the most attractive person. But he/she will have a liking (craving) for Buddha Dhamma and possibly for *jhānic* pleasures.
- A *Sotāpanna* WILL NOT do any *apāyagāmi akusala* (i.e., will not generate such *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*).
- Those controls take place automatically. The mind will automatically do that by not generating even spontaneous *mano saṅkhāra* belonging to those categories. **That is done via permanently changing one's *gati* for the better via *paññā*.**

18. Finally, another thing to remember is that most of what we experience are *dhammā*, via the *mana indriya*.

- Those five physical senses are active ONLY in bringing that sensory input, which means that sense experience is very brief.
- Let us take an example of watching a person walking towards you. When the person is 100 meters away, you see a snapshot of him. Then that mental imprint immediately goes to the past. By the time he is close to you, all those visual events of him walking towards you will have gone to the past; they can now be recalled only as *dhammā*.
- The same is true for all five physical senses. We experience them only DURING the sense event, only momentarily. After that we can only RECALL those events with the *mana indriya*. Those past sense events come back to as *nāma gotta* or memories. A day after meeting that person, you can visualize the whole event with the *mana indriya*.

19. Therefore, *pacakkhandha* (except for those arising at any given moment) are really *dhammā*, that are experienced by the mind via the *mana indriya*. This is a subtle point that may not be obvious immediately; also, see "Panñakkhandha or Five Aggregates – A Misinterpreted Concept."

- We get attached to only a small fraction of *pañcakkhandha*, and that is called *panca upādānakkhandha*; see, "Pancupādānakkhandha – It is All Mental."

20. If you think deep enough you will realize the world that one experiences, is made up by one's mind to some extent (it is easy to see that our *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* are all highly personal, and are based on one's *gati*.

- The physical world around us exists for sure and is real, but what we perceive is highly personal. What we really see and experience is our own "mental picture" of the world: our own *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*.

21. This post became longer than I expected. However, it is not possible to even provide a basic outline in a short post. Still one would need to read other relevant posts to really understand this basic layout, and thereby understand those keywords better. But it is important to do if one is really interested in grasping the true teachings of the Buddha.

- As the Buddha said, "this *Dhamma* has never been known to the world, and it is not easy to comprehend." It requires a real effort. On the other hand, getting released from the *apāyā* should not be expected to be done easily. Otherwise, none of us would still be here.

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4.3.5 Complexity of the Mind – Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra

April 28, 2019; revised November 8, 2019

Vipāka Viññāṇa and *Kamma Viññāṇa*

1. Even though science has made significant progress in the understanding of the material world, science has advanced very little on the subject of mental phenomena.

- The words *viññāṇa* and *saṅkhāra* have no corresponding words in English. It is absurd to translate *viññāṇa* as "consciousness." There are two types of *viññāṇa. Vipāka viññāṇa* are only consciousness. However, *kamma viññāṇa* that arise via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" are much more than just consciousness.
- I looked up the definition of consciousness. It is usually defined as "the state of being awake and aware of one's surroundings" or "the awareness or perception of something by a person." That is not what is meant by *viññāṇa*.

2. ***Kamma viññāṇa* arises only when one acts with *avijjā***: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." Thus, *kamma viññāṇa* can occur only if one acts with *avijjā* or ignorance.

- The Buddha did not act with *viññāṇa* (i.e., did not generate *kamma viññāṇa*) after attaining the Buddhahood. But he had perfectly good consciousness.
- *Viññāṇa* is a very complicated word. Even though I have simplified *viññāṇa* as "defiled consciousness," that is also not adequate; see, "Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations."

Different Categorizations of *Saṅkhāra*

3. In WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, the term "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" in ***akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda* (that leads to suffering)** is explained as follows: "*Tattha katame avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā? Puññābhisaṅkhāro, apuññābhisaṅkhāro, āneñjābhisaṅkhāro, kāyasaṅkhāro, vacīsaṅkhāro, cittāsaṅkhāro.*"

Translated: "What is *avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*? *Puññābhisaṅkhāra*, *apuññābhisaṅkhāra*, *āneñjābhisaṅkhāra*, *kāyasaṅkhāra*, *vacīsaṅkhāra*, *cittāsaṅkhāra*." (here, *cittāsaṅkhāra* is the same as *manosaṅkhāra*).

- They are all ***abhisaṅkhāra,*** even though the verse has simplified as "*avijjā paccayā* ***saṅkhārāey***."
- There are two types of *abhisaṅkhāra* mentioned there: one kind refers to types of *kamma* accrued. The second categorization says whether it involves the body, speech, or just mind.
- Therefore, *saṅkhāra* has a much deeper meaning than just "mental formations," even though that is better than the translation for *viññāṇa* as consciousness.
- Let us discuss those two types next.

Mano, vacī, and *kāya Saṅkhāra*

4. First, let us consider *mano saṅkhāra*, *vacī saṅkhāra*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*.

- They all arise in the mind, but have differences: thoughts that appear automatically in the mind are called *mano saṅkhāra.*
- When we consciously think about something, those are *vacī saṅkhāra* (speaking out is also included).
- When we move the body with our thoughts, those thoughts are *kāya saṅkhāra.*
- Of course, those *saṅkhāra* become *abhisaṅkhāra* when immoral or moral intentions play a role. Such *abhisaṅkhāra* lead to rebirth and future suffering (see #5 below).

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4. In other words, ***saṅkhāra* in "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" in *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* are *abhisaṅkhāra* that can lead to rebirth.**

- Even an *Arahant* will generate *saṅkhāra* (all three types of *mano saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*) to live in this world the physical body dies.
- However, an *Arahant* will NOT generate any *abhisaṅkhāra*.

Apuñña, *Puñña*, and *Āneñja abhisaṅkhāra*

5. ***Abhisaṅkhāra* falls into three categories of *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*, *puñña abhisaṅkhāra*, and *āneñja abhisaṅkhāra*.**

- ***Apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*** are immoral actions leading to births in the *apāyā*.
- ***Puñña abhisaṅkhāra*** are moral actions leading births in the "good" realms of human, *deva*, and *rūpāvacara brahma* realms (via cultivation of *rūpāvacara jhāna*).
- ***Āneñja abhisaṅkhāra*** are involved in the cultivation of *arūpāvacara jhāna* leading to rebirth in *arūpāvacara brahma* realms.
- Therefore, just translating *saṅkhāra* as "mental formations" is not very useful in describing what they are; see, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

Current Scientific Knowledge of Consciousness

6. Modern science is far behind the Buddha in the understanding of mental phenomena. To understand the severity of this problem, let us examine a presentation by the philosopher John Searle, "Our Shared Condition – Consciousness."

WebLink: youtube: John Searle: Our shared condition -- consciousness

7. In my opinion, John Searle is one of few philosophers who comes even close to understanding mind phenomena. Some philosophers/scientists do not even believe that consciousness is real. They say: "..Science is objective, consciousness is subjective. Therefore there cannot be a science of consciousness." Whether there can be a "science of consciousness" or not, consciousness is real, as Searle points out.

- Some others object, "..Maybe consciousness exists, but it can't make any difference to the world. How could spirituality move anything?." In response, Searle points out: "..I decide consciously to raise my arm, and the damn thing goes up."

Consciousness Is Real

8. John Searle is also quite correct that consciousness is not an illusion. As he points out, only a conscious living being can decide to move a body part, say raise a hand.

- But to be perfectly correct, consciousness is not what moves an arm. One needs to make a "conscious effort" to move the arm, i.e., one must decide to raise the hand. Those thoughts are *kāya saṅkhāra*: conscious thoughts that lead to moving body parts.
- However, it is essential to realize that the energy to raise the hand does not come from the mind. The mind initiates the process, and the brain sends the necessary commands to the muscles to raise the hand; energy for such muscle movements comes from the food we eat.
- Just like an on-board computer carries out the commands of the pilot flying a plane, the brain acts like a computer and carries out the commands given by the mind.

Breathing Involves Basic *Kāya Saṅkhāra*

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9. The definition of *kāya saṅkhāra* is "*assāsa passāsā kāya saṅkhāra*" or "breathing in and out is *kāya saṅkhāra*." We all do such *kāya saṅkhāra* through our lives, and that is the most basic *kāya saṅkhāra*.

- Even though we do not realize it, breathing in and out involves "thinking at the lowest level" or with "*atiparittārammana citta vīthi*." Those *citta vīthi* do not have *javana citta*, and thus, we do not "feel them."
- In the fourth *jhāna samāpatti*, *kāya saṅkhāra* involved in breathing stop, i.e., breathing stops.
- *Kāya saṅkhāra* lead to any bodily movement. Unless those bodily movements lead to *kammic* effects (good or bad), they do not become *abhisaṅkhāra*, which could lead to rebirth.

Vacī Abhisaṅkhāra and *Kāya Abhisaṅkhāra* Can Lead to Rebirth

10. *Vacī saṅkhāra* also can be just *saṅkhāra* (thinking to oneself/speaking about normal activities) or *abhisaṅkhāra* with *kammic* consequences. See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

- Both *vacī* and *kāya abhisaṅkhāra* can lead to rebirth.
- *Mano saṅkhāra* — which arise automatically — do not lead to rebirths.

Some Pāli Words Should Not be Translated

11. Modern science cannot explain *saṅkhāra* (more correctly how a person moves body parts or speaks on his/her volition). The English language does not have an equivalent word for "*saṅkhāra*." Furthermore, as explained above, "consciousness" should not be used as the English translation for "*viññāṇa*."

- **We need to learn the Pāli words (*saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa*) and then just use those words.**
- That is what has been the practice in the Sinhala language. **The same words *viññāṇa* and *saṅkhāra* appear in the Sinhala translations of the *Tipiṭaka*.** Just like in English, there are no Sinhala words assigned for *viññāṇa* and *saṅkhāra*.

4.3.6 Citta, Manō, Viññāṇa – Nine Stages of a Thought

January 24, 2018; revised January 6, 2019; July 26, 2020

Citta, mano, viññāṇa – All Different

1. *Citta, mano, viññāṇa* are common words used indiscriminately in many texts on Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma). They are all related, yet different.

- A *citta* becomes "contaminated" in eight steps to become *viññāṇa* (and in another step to become part of the *viññākkhanda*.) That transformation happensin an unbelievable short. The level of "contamination" depends on one's *gati* (character/habits.)
- I hope this post will clarify some fundamental concepts, and that will be invaluable in understanding other concepts.
- I cringe when I see some online comments even say *viññāṇa* is *Nibbāna*. It is exactly the opposite. One attains *Nibbāna* when one gets rid of *viññāṇa*, or more precisely when one purifies one's mind to the extent that a thought does not contaminate to the *viññāṇa* stage.
- *Viññāṇa* is discussed at "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

Fundamentals of a *Citta*

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2. The generic term in English "thought," cannot even begin to explain the complex process that happens within a fraction of a billionth of a second when a *citta* arises. A *citta* goes through three stages (*uppāda, ṭithi, bhaṅga*) before terminated within a billionth of a second.

- When we see, hear, smell, taste, or touch, seventeen *cittā* flow uninterrupted. Such a series of *citta* is called a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi*. For example, it happens in "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*."
- If the thought object comes through the *māna indriya* ("*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*"), that *citta vīthi* is called a *manodvara citta vīthi*, and it has 10-12 *citta*. Again, many such *citta vīthi* flow even before we consciously become aware of that "thought."

A "Thought" May Have Billions of *Citta*

3. Another essential point to remember is that the word "*citta*" is used loosely, even in Buddha Dhamma. Most times, it gives the same impression as the word "thought." We just say, "a *citta* comes to the mind."

- The word "*citta*" has that "conventional" meaning, but the initial stage of a "thought" is also called a *citta*. That citta has only the seven UNIVERSAL *cetasika*. That means those seven *cetasika* are in ANY *citta*, including a that of a Buddha ora an Arahant. That mean, it is a "pure *citta*" (pabhassara citta in Pāli.)
- See, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

A Pure *Citta* Has Only Seven Universal *Cetasika*

4. A pure *citta* is analogous to a glass of purified water without any contaminant.

- If we add a bit of sugar to that glass water, the water becomes sweet. That is like adding "good" (*sobhana*) *cetasika* like compassion to a *citta*.
- But if we add a bit of dirt to that pure water, it becomes dirty. That is like adding "bad" (*asobhana*) *cetasika* like anger to a *citta*.
- Yet, we mat still call either glass of water a "glass of water."
- In the same way, we commonly refer to any thought as a *citta*. However, technically, only the first stage can be called a *citta*, Thus, "any thought" is a *viññāṇa* (a contaminated *citta*.)

The Nine Stages of the Evolution of a *Citta*

5. The initial, pure stage of a *citta* becomes contaminated within an unbelievable short time. It evolves through nine stages in the following sequence: ***citta, mano, mānasaṃ, hadayaṃ, paṇḍaraṃ, mano manāyatanaṃ, māna indriyaṃ, viññāṇa, viññākkhando***. [*Yaṃ cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ hadayaṃ paṇḍaraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññāṇaṃ viññāṇakkhandho*...]

- By the time it gets to the *viññāṇa* stage, it is a totally contaminated *citta*. How contaminated it gets, depends on the thought object and one's *gathi*, as we will discuss below.
- What we experience or what are aware is that last stage.

6. Before we proceed with the discussion, let me provide a reference to the above verse, which is in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhaṅga," in Section WebLink: suttacentral: 2.5.1. Akusalacitta : "*Tattha katamaṃ saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ? Yaṃ cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ hadayaṃ paṇḍaraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññāṇaṃ viññāṇakkhandho tajjāmanoviññāṇadhātu—idaṃ vuccati "saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ*."

- Note that "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ" happens* in different ways depending on whether it is a "good thought" or "bad thought."

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The "Nine-Stages of Evolution" Can Only be Seen by a Buddha

7. That fast process can be seen only by a Buddha. It is perceptible and discernible (*gocara*) only to the highest purified mind.

- The Buddha explained that first to Ven. Sāriputta, when he first explained the key ideas of *Abhidhamma* to Ven. Sāriputta and it took several hundred years of effort by "the *bhikkhus* of the Sāriputta lineage" to do a systematic compilation of all mental phenomena.
- That is why the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* was finalized only at the third *Sangāyanā* (Buddhist Council.) See, "Abhidhamma – Introduction."

8. It is best to describe the actual process to understand these steps. Let us go back to the evolution of a single *citta* in nine steps.

- It starts with the *citta* stage, which is the purest stage (it has only the seven universal *cetasika*, or mental factors). One is aware that one one is alive.
- These deeper aspects are discussed in "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."

9. Now that we have stated that technical point (which is not critical for this discussion), we can proceed to the next stages.

- At the first stage of *citta*, the mind just knows that the world exists. That there is a sense impression coming through either of the five physical senses (*cakkhu, sota, jivhā, ghāṇa*, or *kāya indriya*) or the *māna indriya*.

The Nine Stages of Evolution

10. Let us take a specific event: Suppose it is seeing one's mother.

As we said above, at the first ***citta*** stage, one is just aware that a thought object came to the mind via the eyes (*cakkhu indirya*).

- Then in the ***mano*** stage, the mind "measures" or "compares" (that is why it is called the "*mano*" stage) with past experiences to decide whether the object is a tree, a car, a man, a woman, etc. In this case it determines that it is a woman.
- The next "***mānasaṃ***" stage is to decide a specific connection to him/herself. In this case, it turns out that it is one's mother.

11. Now, those steps occur for any human, including an *Arahant* or even the Buddha. One cannot live without getting to this stage. The Buddha was able to differentiate between *Ven*. Ānanda, Ven. Sāriputta, Visaka, or King Kosala, and addressed them accordingly.

- In fact, in the *Karaniyamatta Sutta*, what is emphasized by "*mānasambhāva ye aparimānaṃ..*", means to cultivate "*mānasaṃ*" to the optimum level. That way, one can quickly figure out how to deal with a given situation.

12. At the next step, a average human will generate the "*saññā* of one's mother" and gets attached. See, "Saññā – What It Really Means." That is called the "***hadayaṃ***" stage. Remember that all nine steps happen in a very short time, and do not involve conscious thinking.

- However, in the case of an *Arahant*, the process stop at the *manasaṃ* stage and thus not evolve further. The mind makes decisions are made by the mind just based on recognizing a given person, regardless of the connection between oneself and that person. Even if it is someone who is trying to kill oneself, feelings towards that person will be no different from feelings towards one's own mother. That is why I say that we cannot even imagine the mind of an *Arahant*.

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13. Proceeding to the next stage of "***paṇḍaraṃ***", that feeling established at the "*hadayaṃ*" stage strengthens in the case of an especially close person like one's mother. It is like allocating more "energy" for a closer person. If it was a distant relative, for example, it might do little at the "*paṇḍaraṃ*" stage.

- It is also important to note that it may go the totally opposite way for an arch-enemy. Here, one will make very strong bad feelings about such a person.

14. Now comes the next stage of "***mano manāyatanaṃ***." Here one's mind becomes an "*āyatana*" or "be receptive" (or hateful) to that person depending on the level of attachment (revulsion) formed at the *hadayaṃ* and *paṇḍaraṃ* stages.

- That is strengthened (to a level based on the feelings generated in the previous steps) at the "*mana indriyam*" stage.
- Note that this "*mana indriyaṃ*" stage is different from the *mana indriya* involved in "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*."

15. At the ***viññāṇa*** stage, one's mind is totally removed from "*ñāṇa*" or wisdom or "the reality of nature." As long as one has worldly desires (i.e., cravings), one has not stopped the *viññāṇa* stage (i.e., until one becomes an *Arahant*).

- Then at the last stage of ***viññānakkhandha***, the mind strengthens attachments cultivated in the past, evaluates the current situation, and makes new hopes and plans for the future. That is the last stage.
- That last stage is what we actually experience. In fact, we do not experience one such "*citta*" or "*viññāṇa*." Thousands of *citta vīthi* may flow within a fraction of second before we become aware of it.

The Initial *Citta* Stage is a *Pabhassara Citta*

16. **Aṅguttara Nikāya 1; Accharāsaṅghātavagga; Sutta #51** is a very short *sutta*. Here is the complete sutta: "*Pabhassaramidaṃ, bhikkhave, cittaṃ. Tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ. Taṃ assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti. Tasmā 'assutavato puthujjanassa cittabhāvanā natthī'ti vadāmī"ti.*

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, a (pure) *citta* has *pabhassara* nature. That *citta* is contaminated by defilements (*keles* or *kielesa*). A normal human who has not heard my Dhamma (*assutavā puthujjano*) is not aware of this true nature. I do not recommend *citta bhāvanā* to them."

- This *sutta* clearly states the importance of knowing that a pure *citta* becomes contaminated to the level of *viññāṇa*.

17. Once we have those basics, now we can build on that and try to make the picture even more clear.

- For example, when seeing an attractive object, the mind may become greedy by incorporating *lobha, issa*, etc. (*asobhana cetasika*) that bends the mind in an immoral way.
- Upon seeing a helpless person, one may generate compassionate thoughts by incorporating *metta, karuna*, etc. (some *sobhana cetasika*).

Contamination of a Thought Depends on *Gati* and *Ārammaṇa*

18. Therefore, we can now see why two factors are play important roles in which way the thought process would evolve. One is one's *gati*, and the other is how strong the thought object (*ārammaṇa*) is.

- Someone with "*lobha gati*" can be easily influenced even by a slightly attractive object. One with much less '*lobha gati*" may not be perturbed by such an object or *ārammaṇa*. On the other hand, someone with less '*lobha gati*' may not be perturbed it. Possible situations are endless, depending on the sense-object and one's *gati*. That is a good *vipassanā* subject to contemplate.

Saṅkhāra Paccayā Viññāṇa

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19. Another important thing is that when one repeatedly think about a given thought object, then one's *viññāṇa* for such objects will be cultivated. That, in turn will cultivate one's *gati* in that direction, and thus it becomes a self-feeding cyclic process in that direction. A good example is how an innocent teenager who gets addicted to alcohol or drugs.

- If we thought a bit more on the above case, we could see the involvement of "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." When one starts thinking consciously (generating *vacī saṅkhāra*) about drinking and then also do it frequently (*kāya saṅkhāra*), then one's "drinking *viññāṇa*" will grow in strength.
- That is why we need to be careful about letting our thoughts "go wild" or about 'day-dreaming." See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sankhāra."
- One should really think about one's own bad habits, or "bad *viññāṇa*" that keep popping up to the mind regularly. By being mindful, we can suppress such thoughts (by thinking about their adverse consequences or *ādīnava*), we can reduce such bad gathi. Similarly, one can strengthen one's "good *gati*" by engaging more in similar activities.
- That is the basis of *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna*.

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4.4 Living Dhamma – Fundamentals

October 27, 2016

- What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika
- Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities (with *Desana* 2)
- Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life (with *Desana* 3)
- How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (with *Desana* 4; in two parts)
- Noble Eightfold Path – Role of Sobhana Cetasika
- Getting to Samādhi (with *Desana* 5)
- Sexual Orientation – Effects of Kamma and Gathi (Saṅkhāra)

4.4.1 What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika

August 26, 2016; revised June 7, 2020

Why is It Necessary to Use Pāli Words?

1. First, on a different issue, I hope everyone will understand my reasons for emphasizing Pāli words. In many cases, it is difficult or even impossible to find a single English word to convey the meaning of a Pāli word (e.g., anicca); **these are powerful words that pack a lot of content**. Here, there is no equivalent word in English for *kilesa*.

- It is best to use Pāli words (and some Sinhala words like "*niveema*" or "*suva*"), but with an understanding of what they mean. See, "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?." So, don't be discouraged by these Pāli terms; keep reading to the end, and you will see it start making sense. You can "fill-in-the-gaps" by reading relevant posts afterward.
- Furthermore, this post is mainly on introducing some fundamental concepts involving many Pāli words. In the upcoming weeks, I will be discussing them and simplifying these concepts in the new "Living Dhamma" section, which used to be called "New Approach to Meditation." This post is going to be our reference.

Kilesā Make a Mind Corrupt

2. ***Kilesa* in Pāli** or ***Keles* in Sinhala** (where "*kelesanava*" means "make something impure") are related to *gati* and *āsava* (in both Pāli and Sinhala.) They are the main reasons why we do things (*saṅkhāra*) to perpetuate the *sansaric* journey. The closest English translation for kilesa is "accumulated impurities in mind."

- ***Kilesā* give rise to immoral thoughts or *akusala citta* via *asobhana cetasika*, as we discuss below.** *Asobhana cetasika* listed in "**Cetasika (Mental Factors)**."
- *Sobhana or asobhana cetasika* (moral or immoral mental factors) are what makes a given *citta* a moral (*kusala*) or corrupt (*akusala*); for details, see, "Citta and Cetasika"."
- As you can guess, *sobhana* and *asobhana* mean "beautiful" and "non-beautiful," respectively, in Pāli and Sinhala.

Kilesā Are Related to "*San*"

3. There are several posts on related critical concepts of *san*, *saṅkhāra*, *saṃsāra,* etc. See, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."

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- Also, repeated bad habits cultivate *gati* and *āsava* (cravings.) All these are related to *kilesa* and lead to a set of unique *kilesa* for each living being. Of course, they keep changing.
- When one removes all these mental impurities or *kilesa* (or *keles*), one attains ***kilesa parinibbāna*** or *saupadisesa Nibbāna.* That person is still "in this world of 31 realms". That is the state of a living *Arahant*; he/she has removed all mental impurities from the mind.
- When that *Arahant* dies, there is no rebirth, and *Nibbāna* is "complete." That is *anupadisesa Nibbāna*.

Kilesā And *Upakilesā*

4. *Kilesa* are of different types:

- *Lobha* (excess greed), *dosa* (ill will), and *moha* (delusion) are of course, the main mental impurities or *kilesa* or *asobhana cetasika.*
- **The others arise because of the primary three and are called *upakilesa*** ("*upa*" means "close to"). The *Upakkilesa Sutta* lists them as the remaining *asobhana cetasika.* Also, in *Vibhanghapakarana*-II of the *Tipiṭaka, kilesa* are listed as the *asobhana cetasika*.
- Thus *kilesa* and *upakilesa* are included in the 14 immoral mental factors (*asobhana cetasika*). This important observation that will help us "quantify" these *kilesa* or mental impurities.
- The other 11 *asobhana cetasika* are the following. *Diṭṭhi* (wrong views), *vicikicchā* (inability to sort out moral from immoral), *thīna* (dullness of mind), *middha* (trapping of the mind somewhere and losing focus), *issā* (jealousy), *maccariya* (tendency to hide wealth), *kukkucca* (do lowly acts), *ahirika* (shamelessness in doing immoral), *anatoppa* (fearlessness in doing immoral), *uddacca* (tendency to become offended), *mana* (self-importance).

Kilesā And *Upakilesā* Are *Asobhana Cetasika*

5. **With the identification of *kilesa* as *asobhana cetasika*, it becomes easier to see how *kilesa* (mental impurities) are systematically reduced and removed at each stage of *Nibbāna*.**

- The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* of the *Tipiṭaka* was not formalized during the time of the Buddha. So, in the *Sutta Piṭaka*, mostly, the term *kilesa* was used.
- The Buddha succinctly described *Abhidhamma* to Ven. Sāriputta, and it took several generations of *Bhikkhus* of "Sāriputta lineage" to fully assemble the *Abhidhamma* structure. It was finalized only at the third Buddhist Council; see, "Abhidhamma – Introduction."

Four Universal *Asobhana Cetasika*

6. There are four universal *asobhana cetasika* that are in ALL *akusala citta.* They are *moha* (delusion), *uddhacca* (restlessness), *ahirika* (shameless of wrongdoings), and *anottappa* (fearlessness of wrongdoings). It is easy to see that these four *asobhana cetasikā* or mental impurities are completely removed only at the *Arahant* stage. However, all *akusala cetasikā* reduce in strength at each stage of *Nibbāna*.

- The following *asobhana cetasika* removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage: *diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, thīna, middha, issā, maccariya, kukkucca.* Furthermore, *lobha, dosa, moha* reduce in strength to *rāga, paṭigha, avijjā.*
- The above clarification could help one decide whether one has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage. (See the meanings of those Pāli terms in #4 above): for example, one should have lost jealousy, tendency to hide wealth from others, etc.). What this means is that one has realized the worthlessness of material things to a significant extent; that comes with comprehending the *anicca* nature to some extent.
- At the *Sakadāgāmi* stage, *kāma rāga* (which is a part of *rāga*) and *paṭigha* reduce in strength (they still keep the same names). At the *Anāgāmi* stage, both *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are entirely removed.

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- The remaining *asobhana cetasika* (*avijjā, ahirika, anatoppa, uddacca, mana*) are entirely removed at the *Arahant* stage.

Many Mental Impurities Removed at *Sotāpanna* Stage

7. Thus, we can see that many "mental impurities" or *kilesa* or *asobhana cetasika* are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage. Still, a *Sotāpanna* abstains entirely from only one *akusala kamma* as discussed in "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."

- The Buddha said that the *kilesa* leftover for a *Sotāpanna* is equivalent to a thumb-full of sand, compared to sand on Earth for an average human. Now we can see why. Many *asobhana cetasika* are removed, and others are reduced in strength at the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Note that *akusala kamma* (immoral deeds) are different from *akusala citta* (immoral thoughts). There are ten *akusala kamma* and 12 *akusala citta*. See, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." The mind is a very complex entity, and all these different parameters are needed to describe what happens in mind entirely. But they are all inter-consistent. With time, one will be able to grasp various aspects of the mind with these parameters.
- All different types of defilements removed or reduced at each stage of *Nibbāna* are listed in "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna." That table provides a complete summary in one place.

Abhidhamma Analysis

8. Now that we have taken care of the technicalities let us discuss some practical things that are of use when figuring out how different types of *cetasika* influence our thoughts.

- As we can see from #6, *moha* (or the reduced form of *avijjā*) is in all *akusala citta*. There are only 12 types of *akusala citta*, and 8 of them have *lobha* (or a reduced form of *kāma rāga, rūpa rāga*, or *arūpa rāga*). When one is attracted to a sense object, one of these eight *akusala citta* arises.
- *Lobha* and *dosa* do not arise together. There are only two *akusala citta* with the *dosa cetasika*. When repulsed by a sense object, one of these two *akusala cittā* arise.
- The other two *akusala citta* do not have either *lobha* or *dosa*, but only the *moha* as a root. These two *cittā* arise not due to greed or hate, but purely due to *moha* (or the reduced form of *avijjā*).
- I hope this helps in getting a sense of the types of *akusala citta* that we generate each day. More details can be found in the post, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

Kilesā, *Asobhana Cetasika*, and Immoral *Gati*

9. Each person's *kilesa* are thus some combination of the 14 *asobhana cetasika*, but keep changing. The goal is to remove them gradually. **In practice, this is done by changing one's *gati* (habits) and *āsava* (cravings);** see, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

- Up until the *Sotāpanna* stage, none of the *asobhana cetasika* is removed in the *citta* (thoughts) that arise in a person. They may be temporarily subdued or even lessened in strength temporarily, but never removed.
- Of course, these *kilesā* (or *asobhana cetasika*) do not show up all the time. When they are triggered by an external stimulus (like when seeing an attractive person or an enemy), they can come to the surface. This "bubbling up to the surface" is called *anusaya*.
- When one is in a comprehensive *anāriya* meditation program (like a meditation retreat), these *kilesā* (or *asobhana cetasika*) do not get a chance to come to the surface. The environment at a retreat is such that "temptations" would be minimal. Thus one could be enjoying *nirāmisa sukha* at such a retreat.
- However, when one comes back from the retreat, one is exposed to all kinds of sensory inputs. That WILL re-awaken same old *akusala citta* burdened with *asobhana cetasika*.

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Once Removed at a *Magga Phala*, *Kilesa* Cannot Return

10. However, when one removes a set of *kilesa* (*asobhana cetasika*) at each stage of *Nibbāna*, they are PERMANENTLY removed or reduced per #6 above. At that point, no external stimulus can trigger those *asobhana cetasika* that have been permanently removed.

- This is the difference between the temporary relief many have experienced at meditation retreats and the permanent relief upon becoming a *Sotāpanna*, i.e., between the *anāriya* and *Ariya* Paths.

An Analogy

11. Since all these Pāli words could make you somewhat confused at the first read, let us take an analogy to clear up what *kilesa* (*asobhana cetasika*) do to our thoughts. Here we compare *citta* (or thoughts) to a glass of pure water. Most of our thoughts are like clear water. They are not immoral or moral, just neutral. We see, hear, etc. millions of things a day, but generate moral or immoral thoughts only in relatively few cases.

- In this analogy, immoral thoughts are like dirty water. Just like added dirt makes the water dirty, *asobhana cetasikā* make a *citta* contaminated. But how do these *asobhana cetasikā* get incorporated into a *citta*?
- Since a *citta* arises in a billionth of a second, **there is no way for us to control** what kinds of *cetasikā* get into a *citta*. It happens automatically!
- We can get an idea of how that happens by looking at glass water with some dirt in it.

Anusaya Can Be Compared to Mud at the Bottom of the Glass

12. Even though the glass of water has dirt, that dirt gets settled at the bottom, if the water is left undisturbed for a while. Then the water becomes relatively clear. Our minds are like that too. Most of the dirt (mental impurities, *kilesa*, or *asobhana cetasika*) remain hidden most of the time. They remain as *anusaya*; see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)." Thus *anusaya* can be thought of as "the dirt accumulated" at the bottom of the glass of water.

- However, if the water is stirred with a straw, the dirt comes up and makes the water dirty.
- In the case of the mind, the stirrer is a desired (attractive) or an undesired (repulsive) sense event. Mainly the *asobhana cetasika* of greed and hate come to the surface (always accompanied by the four universal *cetasika* mentioned in #6, but could be accompanied by a few more of the other 11 *asobhana cetasika,* depending on the situation.
- The other two related parameters of *gati* and *āsavā* contribute in setting up the exact *asobhana cetasika* that will arise based on a given sensory input. For example, an alcoholic only has to see a bottle of whiskey to get the urge to have a drink. Only a person with ingrained habits of a thief will be tempted to steal an item from a shop just on impulse.

Connection to *Pañcanīvaraṇa*

13. Another related point is that glass with dirt in it ALWAYS has some dirt in the water, even though most of the "heavy stuff" goes to the bottom. This "ever-present" muddy color can be compared to the *pañcanīvaraṇa* (five hindrances), that makes our minds "covered" almost at all times.

- Just like the dirty water prevents us from seeing what is in the water, a mind covered with *pañcanīvaraṇa* is unable "see-through."
- These "ever-present" *pañcanīvaraṇa* are responsible for the "sense of agitation" or "sense of unfulfillment" that is there with us most of the time. This is what X experienced when she got into a regular meditation schedule: "Introduction to a New Approach to Meditation."

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- It was like getting rid of the dark color of the water (while the dirt still remains at the bottom). The mind can become relatively purer for a considerable amount of time when engaged in a mediation program. This is called *vikkhambhana pahāna* (or *prahāna.*) That is in contrast to *tadaṅga pahāna* (suppressing only for a short time) and *ucceda pahāna* (permanent removal). See, "Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities."
- By the way, while listening to a discourse or reading a Dhamma post, one could get into *tadaṅga pahāna.* Then the content may become easily understood, and one could momentarily feel the *nirāmisa sukha* too. This is why one should read these posts at a time when the mind is relatively calm. That makes conditions for *tadaṅga pahāna* optimum and even extends to *vikkhambhana pahāna,* i.e, for a day or longer.

Nirāmisa Sukha Appears With Removal/Suppression of *Kilesa*

14. Now we can see how *nirāmisa sukha* comes during meditation sessions per question raised in a previous post, i.e., "*Nirāmisa sukha* is felt by which *citta*?"

- *Nirāmisa sukha* appears when the *asobhana cetasika* (or *kilesa*) and *pañcanīvaraṇa* are SUPPRESSED.
- In the next post, we will address the issue of how a Sotāpanna's mind automatically blocks certain types *asobhana cetasika* arising, via PERMANENTLY removing *pañcanīvaraṇa* and also by completely removing some of the *kilesa* or *asobhana cetasika*.

15. Above is a self-consistent, condensed summary. In the upcoming discussions, we will go into details and discuss the two types of hidden suffering in simple terms.

Next in the series, "Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities."

4.4.2 Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities

September 2, 2016

1. In the post, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" in this series ("Living Dhamma"), we introduced two types of hidden suffering revealed to the world by the Buddha, and discussed the first type of suffering that we experience in this life.

- Here we continue that discussion, and figure out ways to relieve that suffering.

2. In the previous post, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika," we discussed how *asobhana cetasika* represent the mental impurities or *kilesas*.

- In this and a few more *desanās*, we will discuss that highly condensed post, in order to simplify and clarify the main ideas relevant to practice.

3. Here is the *desanā* (You may need to adjust volume control on your computer):

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 2 - Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 2 - Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities (Original - Larger file size)

Relevant posts mentioned in the *desanā*:

2. The Basics in Meditation

Cetasika (Mental Factors)

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Citta and Cetasika

Next in the series, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

4.4.3 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life

September 10, 2016

1. This is the sixth post in this series. It is important to follow the series from the beginning. All posts are at: "Living Dhamma."

- Here I want show that what we have been discussing in this section is exactly what is recommended in the beginning of the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.*
- Here we will discuss the key verse, "*ātāpī sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam*" that appears in the *sutta* numerous times. It is also the basis of the *Ānāpāanasati bhāvanā.*

2. Many people believe that the *Sutta* is basically a *kammattana* that one recites or "meditate on." But it is much more than a *kammattana*. I will provide more evidence in future posts, but here is the audio on the basics of the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* (you may need to control the volume in your computer):

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 3 - Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 3 - Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life (Original - Larger file size)

3. **Links relevant to the *desanā***:

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure

What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)

More posts on "*san*": San

1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

Kamma, Debt, and Meditation

Prerequisites for the Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā

Next post in the series, "How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."

4.4.4 How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?

September 22, 2016

In this post, we will discuss why *mano saṅkhāra* are different from *kaya* and *vacī saṅkhāra*. Understanding this will help one to realize how our *gathi* can AUTOMATICALLY give rise to immoral thoughts.

- It will also help one understand how such initial immoral thoughts can be overcome by purposefully generating moral thoughts. This is actually the basis of the *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā*.
- Furthermore, we will discuss the issue of where our *gathi, kilesa*, or *cetasika* are "stored."

This is the seventh post in this section: "Living Dhamma." To get full benefits, one should start from the first post. I am using a combination of text and audio files to convey a lot of information in this section.

Here are the audio files :

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 4 - How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?

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WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 4 - How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (Original - Larger file size)

October 22, 2017: I just listened to the above audio after one year. They are good and provide solid basis for understanding *gati* and how they can be changed by controlling *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* that we have control over.

- It is important to realize that many *citta vīthi* flow in a second. But each subsequent *citta vīthi* is influenced by the previous one. So, they can take one on a downward path very quickly unless we intervene by being mindful.
- It is very important to realize that: *mano saṅkhāra* are generated AUTOMATICALLY based on our *gati. Vacī saṅkhāra* are generated when we "talk to ourselves, without getting the words out." Both such "internal speech" and actual speech are associated with *vacī saṅkhāra;* bodily actions are *kāya saṅkhāra.*
- **July 26, 2019:** Reader Siebe just pointed out that at 14.30 mins I had defined speech as 'kāya saṅkhāra. That is not correct, as explained in more detail in "Correct Meaning of Vacī saṅkhāra."
- We become CONSCIOUS about both *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* quickly and thus have control over them; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī saṅkhāra."

Posts mentioned in the *desanā*

1. Suicide statistics: WebLink: Suicide and Depression
   - I know that most readers of this site do not have suicidal tendencies. But the point is that we underestimate the severity of mental suffering compared to our physical suffering.

2. If one has a hard time comprehending the *Tilakkhaṇa*, starting with *anicca*, one needs to first follow the mundane Eightfold Path, remove the first type of suffering, and experience the *nirāmisa sukha* as explained in the previous posts in this section.
   - This is also pointed out in the "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)" and "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

3. More details on how our minds control our physical bodies are in the sections: "Citta and Cetasika" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
   - In particular, the following post illustrates how we perceive our external world: "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises."
   - *Citta Vīthi* are discussed in "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

4. How thoughts can affect other people: "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How Does it Happen?."

5. The brain architecture of humans and animals: "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."

6. The post mentioned in the discussion on the question "Where are these *gati* or *kilesa* or *cetasika* are maintained or stored?": "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

Next in the series, "Noble Eightfold Path – Role of Sobhana Cetasika."

4.4.5 Noble Eightfold Path – Role of Sobhana Cetasika

September 30, 2016; revised December 5, 2017 (#5)

1. In previous posts in this section, we have discussed how *nirāmisa sukha* or "peace of mind" arises due to both removal of *asobhana cetasika* (non-beautiful mental factors) or *kilesa* AND cultivation of *sobhana cetasika* (beautiful mental factors).

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- In this post, I will point out that 7 of the 8 factors in the Noble Eightfold Path are in the set of *sobhana cetasika.*

2. The most important fact that one needs to comprehend from the posts in this series up to this point, is that our minds are heated/agitated by the presence of *asobhana cetasika* or *kilesa* or defilements.

- On the other hand, our minds are soothed and comforted and made joyful by the presence of *sobhana cetasika.*
- One may not realize this until one comprehends this fact and actually practice cultivating *sobhana cetasika* while suppressing/removing *asobhana cetasika*.

3. As explained elsewhere at the site, *Abhidhamma* with its methodical analysis of *citta* and *cetasika* was not finalized for a few hundred years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha at the Third Buddhist Council. This enlarged Canon completed at the Third Council was committed to writing in Sri Lanka in the first century BCE (29 BCE) at the Aluvihara Monastery at the Fourth Buddhist Council. This was the last Buddhist Council attended by *Arahants*.

- Soon after that the decline of the pure Dhamma of the Buddha started its decline with the simultaneous rise of the Mahayana; see, the section "Historical Background."
- When Buddhaghosa wrote the *Visuddhimagga*, which was presumed to be a summary of the *Tipiṭaka*, even *Theravadins* stopped using the *Tipiṭaka* for convenience.
- Therefore, no one seemed to have realized some important possible usages of *cetasika*: First, *kilesa* are the same as *asobhana cetasika*. Second, components of the Noble Eightfold Path are in the set of *sobhana cetasika*. This makes it easier to comprehend how one could systematically follow the Path, and that is focus of this post.
- I will discuss the details in upcoming *desanās*, but here I would like to provide a summary that we can use for that discussion. Another such summary post that will used in these *desanās* is a summary given in one of the previous posts: "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika."

4. Let us start by continuing from the last *desanā*, where we discussed how **INITIAL thoughts in response to a sense event arises without us even being conscious about it.** These initial thoughts arise AUTOMATICALLY due to the set of *sobhana/asobhana cetasika* or *gathi* that we have. Any *akusala* thoughts arise due to our *kilesa* which are the same as *asobhana cetasika.*

- However, because our speech and bodily actions are much slower than the rising of those initial thoughts, it is possible for us to keep vigilant and reverse any such reactive *akusala* thoughts that are AUTOMATICALLY generated.
- This is the basis of both *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā*. Please listen to that previous *desanā* on "How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?" and fully comprehend this important concept. Here is the link to that *desanā* in two parts (there is volume control on the right, but for the second *desanā*, you may need to turn up volume in your computer):

  WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 4 - How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?

  WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 4 - How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (Original - Larger file size)

- We also discussed the evidence for such *gathi* to be associated with any given person, and addressed the question of where they are "stored."

5. We also saw in the above *desanās* that those initial thoughts that arise in response to a sense event are called *mano saṅkhāra*. Therefore, we do not have conscious control over *mano saṅkhāra*, AND they arise within a fraction of a second DUE TO our *gathi* (set of *sobhana/asobhana cetasika*).

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- **December 5, 2017**: Such *akusala mano saṅkhāra* CAN then lead to the generation of *vacī saṅkhāra* (silent speech in our heads *and speech*), and *kaya saṅkhāra* (speech and bodily actions). This is different from the *desanā*, and I have discussed the reasons for this revision in "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."
- But, if we are mindful (*sati*), we can catch any such *akusala mano saṅkhāra* and make sure they do not lead to *akusala vacī* and *kaya saṅkhāra*.
- In the Eightfold Path, such deliberately generated *vacī saṅkhāra* are called ***sammā saṅkappa* or *sammā sankalpa*.**
- And those *sammā saṅkappa* were generated because one acted with ***sammā sati*.**

6. In the above *desanās*, we discussed an example of a person X finding a lost ring. If X had strong greedy *gathi*, The initial thoughts (*mano saṅkhāra*) could be to keep the ring for himself. However, if X knows about being mindful, X has time to evaluate the situation with *vacī saṅkhāra* (in his head), and to come to conclusion that it is immoral to keep the ring for himself.

- If he made that correct decision, even after thinking about it, he can prevent an *akusala kamma* of stealing. Not only that, he can do a *kusala kamma* by making sure to get that ring returned to the rightful owner.
- So, now we can see the critical roles of *sammā sati* and *sammā saṅkappa* in the Eightfold Path. We have the opportunity (unlike animals) to rationally think about our initial REACTIVE decisions, and to reverse them if they are immoral.

7. If X acted with *sammā sati* and realized the problem with the initial reaction and made the right decision with *sammā saṅkappa*, then he can take next steps to ***sammā vaca*** (moral speech) and ***sammā kammanta*** (moral actions) to implement that decision. He can walk over to the counter, hand over the ring, and tell the office personnel to return the ring to the owner.

- This is just one possible example. We come across many such instances during a day. In another example, one may get annoyed by someone accidentally stepping on one's foot in a crowded place, and start yelling at that person without thinking about the consequences. That person obviously did not intentionally do that, especially since it is likely to be a stranger.
- Even if one started getting the words out, one could quickly stop oneself and smile at the person indicating that it is no big deal. That would make that person to be relieved, because most likely he/she felt bad about it.
- This simple act of kindness would lead to a "cooling down" on both sides. The other person will feel a relief and will thank for the kindness. Furthermore, it could have escalated into a shouting match and could have led to "heated minds" on both sides.

8. When one sees the benefits of such mindful behavior, one will start doing more. One will start living a moral life. This is ***sammā ajiva*** or moral livelihood.

- Not only that, one will make an extra effort to be mindful and catch any reactive thoughts that could lead to such *akusala kamma*. This is ***sammā vayama***, or moral effort.
- In a few weeks of months, this will start changing one's ingrained *gathi*. When one stops using those *asobhana cetasika*, their power will diminish with time. At the same time, one is cultivating *sobhana cetasika* (i.e., *sammā sati, sammā saṅkappa, sammā vaca, sammā kammanata, sammā ajiva, sammā vayama*). Thus bad *gathi* will diminish and good *gathi* will grow.

9. Now, X was able to think rationally about the bad consequences of his initial decision (*mano saṅkhāra*) to keep the ring, because he had ***sammā diṭṭhi*** or moral vision, to some extent. Deep down he knew that such an act of stealing is immoral, and was able to fight off the tendency to keep it.

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- *Sammā diṭṭhi* is related to the *sobhana cetasika* of *paññā*, which is loosely translated as "wisdom." This "wisdom" cannot be cultivated by reading books, even just by reading Dhamma. The *paññā cetasika* is cultivated by both learning Dhamma and by living it (i.e., by following the Eightfold Path), thereby getting rid of *moha.*

10. Now let us examine the connection between the other factors in the Eightfold Path (here the mundane version) and some of the *sobhana cetasika*.

- First, three factors in the Eightfold Path have exactly the same names in the list of *sobhana cetasika*: *sammā vaca, sammā kammanata, sammā ajiva;* see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."

11. *Sammā sankalpa* are the *vacī saṅkhāra* that we deliberately generate even if we have *akusala mano saṅkhāra* arising due to sense inputs. *Vacī saṅkhāra* are described in the *suttā* as *vitakka* (pronounced "vithakka")and vicara (pronounced "vichaara"). *Vitakka* is turning the mind towards a thought object and *vicara* is keeping the mind around that thought object.

- Those who are familiar with *jhānā* know that, *vitakka* and *vicara* are two *jhāna* factors in *anāriya jhānā*. In the first *anāriya jhāna*, one can for example turn the mind to a *kasina* object (*vitakka*) and keep it there (*vicara*). In *Ariya jhānā*, they are called *savitakka* and *savicara* because one is focused on *Nibbāna*.
- So, you can see that maintaining *sammā sankalpa* is the same as generating "moral" *vitakka* and *vicara* or *kusala vacī saṅkhāra*. Remember that these are generated in the head, not spoken out. They are called "*sankalpana*" in Sinhala.
- Also, we note that *vitakka* and *vicara* could be used in immoral path too. A master thief planning a robbery will focus on that task and spend many hours thinking about the plan. So, those two *cetasika* fall under the category called particulars or *pakinnaka;* they can appear in *kusala* or *akusala* thoughts as needed.

12. Now, *sammā vayama* arises from another of these particulars or *pakinnaka cetasika,* the *viriya cetasika*.

- When one is making an effort to live a moral life, that *sammā vayama*. If one is making an effort towards an immoral life, like that master thief, then he is making *micchā vayama*.
- Of course the *sati cetasika*, which is a *sobhana cetasika*, is *sammā sati.*

13. Now we are left with ***sammā samādhi***. This is the only factor that is not related to a *cetasika* directly. Most people have the idea that *samādhi* is *jhāna* or at least is attained only in formal meditation. But it is much more deeper. In the next *desanā*, I will discuss *samādhi*, together with the implications of what is summarized in this post.

- We are trying to comprehend and reinforce the FOUNDATION of Buddha Dhamma: How one can remove the "*thaapa*" or "heat" from the mind by getting rid of *asobhana cetasika* (*kilesa*) and SIMULTANEOUSLY "cool down" the mind and bring joy to it, by cultivating *sobhana cetasika*.

This was discussed in the first *desanā* in this series:

"The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 1 - The Hidden Suffering That We All Can Understand

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 1 - The Hidden Suffering That We All Can Understand (Original - Larger file size)

- More details were given in the following two *desanās*:

"Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities"

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 2 - Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities

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WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 2 - Suffering in This Life - Role of Mental Impurities (Original - Larger file size)

"Satipattana Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life"

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 3 - Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 3 - Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life (Original - Larger file size)

14. As discussed in the above *desanās*, *akusala* thoughts that arise with *asobhana cetasika* make our minds clouded and keep us in the dark. *Moha* is darkness; it leads to *lobha* and *dosa*. That darkness can be temporarily lifted (*tandanga pahāna*) during listening or reading Dhamma.

- The next step is to keep that "light on" for days and weeks by being mindful and stopping *akusala* thoughts that lead to *akusala kamma* for an extended time. This is *vikkhambana pahāna*, and that is what we are trying to achieve now. It is done by being mindful, i.e., with *sammā sati*.
- The ultimate goal is to permanently remove those *asobhana cetasika*, and to make that "cooling down" permanent (*ucceda pahāna*), even for future lives. We will get to that in future posts. But we need to establish a good foundation and actually experience the *nirāmisa sukha* for extended time periods (*vikkhambana pahana*) first.

15. In order to get rid darkness (*moha*) one has to bring light in. Light is *paññā* or "wisdom", a *sobhana cetasika*. The Noble Eightfold Path is designed to optimize the *paññā cetasika* — via *sammā samādhi* — and to eliminate the *moha cetasika*.

- Other *sobhana cetasika*, like *karuna* and *mudita* (or *muduta*) also help with this process.
- In the end one will be able to see how different pieces of the puzzle (including *paṭicca samuppāda*) all fit together to make an easy-to-see picture of the whole process. That will make it easier to grasp the *Tilakkhaṇa,* and advance to the next stage.
- All these can be shown be consistent with the scheme of *sīla, samādhi, paññā*. In the *Cetana Karaneeya Sutta*, the Buddha has detailed how *sīla* (moral conduct) leads to *nirāmisa sukha*, and *nirāmisa sukha* leads to *samādhi*, and *samādhi* in turn leads to *paññā*. We will discuss all these in the upcoming *desanās*.

Next in the series, "Getting to Samādhi."

4.4.6 Getting to Samadhi

October 7, 2016

1. In the post "Noble Eightfold Path – Role of Sobhana Cetasika," it was discussed how 7 of the 8 factors in the Noble Eightfold Path are related to some of the *sobhana cetasika* or moral mental factors.

2. In the following *desanā*, we discuss how the cultivation of those 7 factors lead to the 8th factor in the Noble Path, *Sammā Samādhi*, or at least the mundane version of it first (volume control will appear on right when you start playing):

"**Getting to Samādhi**"

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 5 - Getting to Samādhi

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 5 - Getting to Samādhi (Original - Larger file size)

Links mentioned in the *desanā*:

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3. Before one can comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), one needs to get to mundane *Sammā Samādhi*. There are two kinds of *Sammā Samādhi* and also a *micchā samādhi*:

- What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness
- Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi

4. The role of the brain in changing one's *gathi*:

- Brain – Interface between Mind and Body

5. Two types of suffering discussed in:

- Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth

6. Suppressing and eliminating the *pancanivarana* in stages:

- Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities

Next in the series, "Micchā Diṭṭhi – Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect)", …

4.4.7 Sexual Orientation – Effects of Kamma and Gathi (Saṅkhāra)

January 14, 2017

This post will be helpful in not only clarifying Buddha's teachings on sexual orientation, but also that there can be many varieties of *saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*, and corresponding *bhava* and *jathi* arising according to *paṭicca samuppāda*.

1. In this beginning-less rebirth process, it is likely that we all had switched between male or female many times, just as we are likely to have been born in most of the 31 realms in the past.

- It is said that the *Bodhisattva* — before becoming Buddha Gotama — was a female when the *paramita* process to become a Buddha was initiated.
- However, once the *paramita* process progressed, and the *Bodhisattva* became a male, it never switched back to female.
- Only a male can actually be a Buddha.

2. Whether one is male or female is predominantly determined by one's *saṅkhāra*, and not due to a past *kamma*.

- But in some cases, *kamma* could be the direct cause. For example, if one intentionally severed or mutilated another's sexual organs, it is possible that one may be born without a sexual organ. Such a person is called a "*napunsaka*" in Sinhala (*pandaka* in Pāli), but I am not aware of a corresponding English word.
- An eunuch is a person who is castrated, so that also could be due to a *kamma vipāka* of a past *kamma*.

3. Male/female distinction is there only in the *kāma loka*. In the *brahma* realms (higher 20 realms), there is no such distinction. *Brahmā* do not have dense physical bodies or sexual organs.

- One is born in either the 16 *rūpa loka* realms or the 4 a*rūpa loka* realms (*brahma* realms) because one has given up all desires for bodily pleasures, including sex, because one has seen the value of *nirāmisa sukha* (and *jhānic* pleasures) that can be achieved by giving up bodily pleasures.

4. One is born in *kāma loka* because one likes bodily pleasures, especially those associated with taste, smell, and sex. Of course, vision and sound that help satisfy those three bodily pleasures also come into play here.

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- One is born in human or *deva* realms in the *kāma loka* because one has done meritorious deeds (*puñña kamma*). There are female *devas*, who have attained those births because of their *puñña kamma* just like male *devas*. One is born a female *deva*, because one has cultivated "*iththi saṅkhāra*"; see #5 below.

- One is born in the four *apāya* realms in the *kāma loka* because one has done immoral deeds (*pāpa kamma*). Here the corresponding *saṅkhāra* are *apuññabhi saṅkhāra*.

5. One is born male or female due to whether one cultivates "*purisa saṅkhāra*" or "*iththi saṅkhāra*" by thinking, speaking, and doing things accordingly. One does not do either *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* or *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* here.

- Such *saṅkhāra* (*kaya, vacī,* and *mano*) are not necessarily meritorious (*puññabhi saṅkhāra*) or immoral (*apuññabhi saṅkhāra*). Those are in line with pure habits based on "*purisa gathi*" and "*iththi gathi*."

- This can be compared to cultivating habits for playing a certain musical instrument. They are called "*vāsana keles*," *keles* that do not have good or bad *kamma vipāka*, but more like ingrained habits.

6. *Purisa* is the Pāli or Sinhala word for a male and the word comes from "*pirī*" or "full." A male is likely to give more (especially to the wife) than to take from the wife. *Iththi* is the Pāli (and old Sinhala) word for female, and means "*ithirī*" or "left over space to be filled." For example, if a cup is full that is "*pirī*"; if it is not full, it needs more to become full, it has "*ithiri*."

- So, a male is likely to willingly buy things for the wife, but does not care much about his appearance. Most wives expect gifts and sustenance.
- However, these "*purisa gathi*" and "*iththi gathi*" can have large variations. A male has more "*purisa gathi*" than "*iththi gathi*." But we do see "alpha males" with close to 100% "*purisa gathi*" as well as females with very high "*iththi gathi*."
- On the other hand, we also see females who like to act and dress more like males, and also males who like to act and dress more feminine. If they cultivate those *gathi* more, a sex change is possible in future lives (in rare cases even in this life).

7. In most families, if one examines the wardrobes of the husband and wife, one is likely to find many more items in the wife's wardrobe (in particular, the man may have a couple of pairs of shoes but the wife will have many!). Females wear much more jewellery too.

- Furthermore, a female is more concerned about the appearance of her (and her husband). A guy usually grabs something to wear, but a woman is likely to pay much more attention. I know by experience that I have been "instructed politely" to change into something better many times when going out.
- Thus females constantly think about theirs (and their spouses and children's) appearance. This is not necessarily due to greed, but mainly due to *sansāric* habits.

8. Therefore, as far as attaining *Nibbāna*, it does not matter whether one is a male, female, or somewhere in between (with mixed *gathi*).

- One is born in the *deva* realms due to good *kamma vipāka*, and there are male and female *devas*, just like in the human and animal realms. The type of sex is not determined by *kamma vipāka*.

- All *brahma* realms are "*unisex*." They do not have *bhava dasaka*, which determine the sex type. Brahmā do not have dense bodies to experience touch, taste of foods, or smells. **They have very fine bodies with just the *hadaya vatthu, kaya dasaka, cakkhu dasaka, and sota dasaka.***

- Therefore, a *brahma* "body" has only a few *suddhaṭṭhaka*, and is much much smaller than an atom in modern science. So, it is clear why sense pleasures are absent in *brahma loka*.

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9. It is important to realize that there are moral *gathi* due to *puññābhisaṅkhāra* (*puñña abhisaṅkhāra*), immoral *gathi* due to *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* (*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*), and "*kammically* neutral" *gathi* due to *saṅkhāra* that are not *abhisaṅkhāra*.

- While one is born in the human *bhava*, one would also have a "*iththi bhava*" (as a female) or "*purisa bhava*" (as a male).
- Not only that, one could be born in an "angry *bhava*" for a given period of time that would be triggered by a sense event such as seeing an enemy — if one has cultivated angry *gathi* by thinking, speaking, and acting with an angry mindset.
- One could be born in a "greedy *bhava*" the same way. If we start acting mindfully to think, speak, and act with less greed, those greedy *gathi* will reduce over time.
- The more one thinks, speaks, and acts in a "female way", one will be cultivating "female *gathi*"; but these are not moral or immoral *saṅkhāra* as we discussed above.

10. In any of these cases, the more *saṅkhāra* one makes, one builds up the corresponding *viññāṇa* (*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*) and so on until it gets to strengthening *upādāna* and thus strengthening *bhava* (*upādāna paccayā bhava*).

- Therefore, *paṭicca samuppāda* explains not only how *bhava* in the rebirth process, but also in *bhava* that last only for short periods of time, like getting into an "angry state of mind" or "angry *bhava*."

11. Another possibility that may come into play in a transgender person (a person whose sex is changed during the lifetime) can be understood of one understands the role of the *gandhabba* (mental body) that dictates the functioning of the physical body. *Gandhabba* is not a Mahayana concept: "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipitaka."

- When a *gandhabba* goes into a womb, it is not firmly attached to the zygote (the cell formed by the union of the father and the mother) during the first several weeks.
- Sometimes, the *gandhabba* just leaves the womb if it turns out to be not a good match with the parents. This is the reason for a miscarriage.
- If a *gandhabba* leaves the womb within such a short time period, in some cases another *gandhabba* can enter the womb and take possession of the partially formed physical body that was abandoned by the previous *gandhabba*. Now, it may happen that the second *gandhabba* is of opposite sex.
- For example, suppose the first *gandhabba* was a male and the second a female. So, this female is thus taking hold of a physical body that was taking shape to be a male and thus continue to form a male body. Once born as a male baby, and while growing the female character may start to convert the physical body to that of a female. This is what happens to a transgender person.

12. One is bound to the *kāma loka* because one has craving for bodily pleasures, whether it is tasting good food, watching movies, listening to music, smelling nice fragrances, or in engaging in sexual activities. If one does those activities without engaging in immoral activities, then the only harm done is to be eligible to be born in the *kāma loka*.

- One cannot be freed from even the higher realms in the *kāma loka* (human and *deva* realms), if one has desires for such bodily pleasures. However, it becomes relevant only at the *Anāgāmī* stage. A *Sotāpanna* or a *Sakadāgāmī* has not given up desires for sensual pleasures.
- I have not seen anything in the *Tipiṭaka* that distinguishes between sexual activities based on who the partners are. So, it seems to me that homosexual or bisexual activities are not that different from heterosexual activities as far as *kammic* consequences are concerned. They are all done to achieve bodily pleasures.

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- However, if one engages in any immoral activities — in particular breaking the five precepts — then one would be eligible to be born in the lowest four realms of the *kāma loka,* the *apāyā.*
- I specifically made the comment on the homosexuality in answering a specific question by a reader. The main point is to make sure that any pleasurable activity at the expense of hurting someone will have bad consequences, and depending on the nature, could make one eligible to be born in the *apāyā*.

13. One way to understand the *anicca* nature is to take a good look at the transient nature of our physical body and that it can provide only temporary bodily pleasures, even though they are enjoyable.

- The *gandhabba* is the more long-lasting entity; a human *bhava* can last many hundreds to many thousands of years; a physical body is a temporary shell used by the *gandhabba* for about 100 years.
- The bodily pleasures that one experiences with this "physical shell" can last only part of that maximum 100 years. As one gets old, those pleasures go away, and there is no way to keep them the same.
- On the other hand, the *jhānic* pleasures — or at least *nirāmisa sukha* — can be enjoyed even at old age, as long as one keeps steps to maintain the brain in good condition. The *gandhabba* — since it is trapped inside the physical body — needs the brain to in order to be mindful and to cultivate good *vacī* and *mano saṅkhāra*; this is what is emphasized in the earlier posts in this section, and analyzed in detail (for those who need to go deeper) in the *Abhidhamma* section.

14. Finally, it is important to emphasize the point that it will take a concerted effort to understand these concepts fully. The more one reads, the more one will understand. It is not possible to gain insight by reading a few posts. One has to spend time and read relevant posts in order to "fill in the gaps."

- A simple introduction to the concept of *gadhabbaya* is given in this section: "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba."
- A section is the *Abhidhamma* is devoted to the concept of *gadhabbaya:* "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)." There are posts in other sections too, in relation to the material in those sections.

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4.5 Mundane Sammā Samādhi

October 27, 2016

- Micchā Diṭṭhi – Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect) (with *Desana* 6)
- Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda (with *Desana* 7)
- Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II (with *Desana* 8)

4.5.1 Micca Diṭṭhi – Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect)

October 18, 2016

1. The main reason for many people having various types of *micchā diṭṭhi* (or wrong views) can be traced back to the fact that the workings of cause and effect involving living beings — and in particular the mind of the sentient beings — is complex.

- Science has been able to have much success in the material realm, simply because it is easier to see how cause and effect work in the material realm.

2. In the discourse (*desanā*) below, we will talk about cause and effect (*hethu-pala*) in Buddha Dhamma, and how **conditions (*paccaya*)** play a critical role in mental phenomena. The complex relationship between causes and effects in relation to the mind is the reason why it is hard for many to comprehend how and why *kamma* lead to *kamma vipāka*. As we discuss in the *desanā*:

- Nothing in this world can come to existence without suitable causes AND conditions,
- Rebirth process must be valid, in order to fully implement the principle of causality (cause and effect).

3. The critical link between *hethu-pala* and *paṭicca samuppāda* is *paṭṭhāna dhammā*, which describe the conditions under which causes (*hethu*) bring about effects or results (*phala*).

- In the near future, I will start a new section on *paṭṭhāna dhammā*. It is a deep subject, but it can be simplified to easily understand the relationship between *hethu-pala* and *paṭicca samuppāda.*

4. Here is the *desanā* (volume control on the right):

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 6 - Micchā Diṭṭhi Connection to Hethu Phala Cause and Effect

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 6 - Micchā Diṭṭhi Connection to Hethu Phala Cause and Effect (Original - Larger file size

Related Posts

1. – Getting to Samādhi

– How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?

2. Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)

3. Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya

4. – Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka

– Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Thalaya (Mind Plane)

– Another post I forgot to mention in the *desanā* is on the question of "Where are those kamma seeds stored?." It is discussed in, "How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."

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5. What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?

6. Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein

7. How Character (Gathi) Leads to Bhava and Jathi

Next in the series, "Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda", ..

4.5.2 Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda

October 28, 2016

In a previous *desanā* in this section, we discussed how suffering in this life is described in the beginning of the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. In this *desanā*, we will discuss how it is described by *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

"Suffering in This Life – According to Paṭicca Samuppada"

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 7 - Suffering in This Life According to Paṭicca Samuppāda

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 7 - Suffering in This Life According to Paticca Samuppāda (Original - Larger file size

Links mentioned in the *desanā*:

1. Posts in the "Paticca Samuppāda" can be consulted for details on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles.

2. *Taṇhā*: Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance

3. *Mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically, without conscious thoughts. And conscious thoughts — **even without speech** — are *vacī saṅkhāra*:

How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?

- In this *desanā*, I incorrectly said that speech is *vacī saṅkhāra* because the mouth and the tongue are moved during speech. However, whether one talks to oneself or actually get the words out loud, both are *vacī saṅkhāra*. There is a difference between moving body parts in general (as in walking) and moving the lips and tongues during speech: They are done with two types of *rūpa*: *kāya viññatti* and *vacī viññatti* respectively. I will discuss this in detail later.
- My thanks to the reader who pointed out my mistake in categorizing speech as *kaya saṅkhāra*. I had to dig deeper in *Abhidhamma* to find the explanation. I can and do make mistakes, and that is why I welcome your input. My goal is to have this website to be fully self-consistent.

4. Suffering in this life due to *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* done in this life:

Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life

5. Role of *asobhana cetasika* in immoral thoughts:

What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika

6. *Phassa* and *samphassa*:

Difference between Phassa and Samphassa

Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccaya Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā

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4.5.3 Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II

December 7, 2016

1. In the previous *desanā*, "Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda," we discussed one application of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS).

- Here, we will continue that discussion to gain more insights and discuss the importance in controlling *vacī saṅkhāra* during *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā*.

2. I have posted three new essays in other sections at the website since that time.

- Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra
- Asevana and Annamanna Paccaya
- Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day

They are relevant to the discussions in this section.

3. Here are the PS sequences for reference, as you go though the discussion. You may want to make a printout of this post or have this post open while listening.

- *Avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa, viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana, saḷāyatana paccayā phassa, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhava, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jara, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa, upasaya sambhavan ti.*"

The cycle ends with *marana* or death and describes the time evolution of how a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (whether it is a thought process or a living being or an inert entity) arises and eventually dies.

New *desanā*: "Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II"

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 8 - Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II

WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 8 - Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II (Original - Larger file size)

Links mentioned in the desanā:

1. Posts in the "Paṭicca Samuppāda" section can be consulted for details on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles.

2. Time evolution of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala):

- Difference between and *Vaya* (destruction of *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) that has arisen) and *Nirodha* (stopping of the arising of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)).

Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts

3. How "random thoughts" come to our minds:

Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial

What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis

4. Two types of *vedanā*:

- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways

True meaning of *taṇhā*:

- Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance

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Why suitable conditions are **necessary** to bring *kamma vipāka*:

- Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya

Cultivating good *gathi* and removing bad *gathi* through *Ānāpānasati* (and *Satipaṭṭhāna*):

- 9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)

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4.6 Transition to Noble Eightfold Path

September 2, 2017

- Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?
- Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi
- Six Root Causes – Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)
- Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and Yam Kiñci Samudaya Dhammam..

4.6.1 Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?

September 28, 2018

Introduction

1. I saw the above question raised in a discussion forum recently (with a different title). The questioner stated: "Eliminating sensual desire as a lay follower doesn't seem possible, or reasonable, especially if one plans on being in a relationship, or having motivation at work. .."

- I think this is a critical question. Most people have not understood the fact that the Noble Path of the Buddha MUST BE followed sequentially.
- **Getting rid of sense desires (including sex, craving for food, etc.) is not necessary in the beginning and even up to the *Sotāpanna* stage.**
- Getting to the final stage of *Nibbāna* (*Arahanthood*) is a step-by-step process.

Following the Path Is a Step-by-Step Process

2. The necessary INITIAL steps involved are:

(i). Be a moral person and avoid the mundane five precepts (abstain from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, outright lying, and getting intoxicated) and also gossiping, slandering, and harsh speech; see, "2. The Basics in Meditation."

(ii). Understand the correct "wider world view" of the Buddha, and get rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

(iii). Learn about the "deeper world view of the Buddha," stated by *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature); see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

3. When one starts to understand the "*anicca* nature" (*anicca* means much more than just impermanence) of this world, one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*. When that "correct vision" about "this wider world of 31 realms" sinks into the mind permanently, one becomes a *Sotāpanna*.

- **One does not need to even think about removing the desire for sex or any other sensory pleasure until one gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage.** That is a critical point that most people do not understand.

The futility of Starting at the End

4. Therefore, many people waste precious time by either first trying to suppress sense desires, and even in some cases try to eliminate the innate sense of "me" or "a self."

- But like one cannot learn algebra or advanced calculus without learning how to do addition, those people will not make any significant progress. It is impossible to do so.

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- Furthermore, while one may get a temporary relief from "stresses of day-to-day activities" by doing things like breath meditation, that will not provide the long-term release from suffering that the Buddha explained.
- Until one begins to understand *Tilakkhaṇa*, one will never get to the *Sotāpanna* stage.

Even a *Sotāpanna* Has Not Given Up Sensual Pleasures

5. Even during the time of the Buddha, there were many lay followers attained the *Sotāpanna* stage and continued to live "householder lives," too. They were married and had regular jobs. There was no need to avoid sense pleasures, including sex, at all.

- For example, Vishākā (or Visākā), who was the leading female lay disciple at the time, attained the *Sotāpanna* stage at age seven and went on to get married and have twenty plus children.
- Many others were regular lay people with families who attained the *Sotāpanna* stage and continued to live that way.
- Of course, those who desired to attain higher stages of *Nibbāna*, made an effort to get rid of the craving for sense pleasures. Most of them became *bhikkhus* who abstain from sex and other sense pleasures.

Only at *Anāgāmī* Stage One Will Lose Craving for Sensory Pleasures

6. One needs to completely abstain from sense pleasures entirely only to become an *Anāgāmī*. Even a *Sakadāgāmī* still enjoys sense pleasures, even though he/she would not have the desire to "own" things that provide sense pleasures.

- For example, a *Sakadāgāmī* would still enjoy some sense pleasures,, but there would be no desire to own "things that provide sense pleasure" (houses, cars, etc.).

Losing Craving for Sensory Pleasures Comes After a Deeper Understanding of *Tilakkhaṇa*

7. **One CANNOT just give up sense pleasures by sheer will power and become an *Anāgāmī*.** One has to comprehend the "*anicca* nature" at a higher level than a *Sotāpanna,* and then those desires will NATURALLY go away.

- That may be hard for most people to understand: how the desire for sense pleasures will naturally go away. That is why one should follow the Path SEQUENTIALLY, one step at a time.
- By the way, the sense of "me" or " a self" will go away only at the *Arahant* stage!

It is Necessary to See Harmful Consequences of Sensory Indulgences (*Kāmasukhallikānuyoga*)

8. However, it is important also to realize that one needs to stay away from both excessive sensory pleasures (*kāmasukhallikānuyoga*) as well as extreme ascetic practices of completely staying away from any comfort (*Attakilamathānuyoga*.) The Buddha recommended the "middle path." where one would live a simple, comfortable life without going to either extreme.

- Therefore, one cannot become a *Sotāpanna* by enjoying sense pleasures to the full, i.e., by maintaining a "playboy type" lifestyle.
- When one starts comprehending the *anicca* nature, one's life WILL become simple.
- Even before one gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage, one will start feeling *nirāmisa sukha,* which is due to lessened stress on the mind due to this simple lifestyle.

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9. Of course, one can speed up the process of the *Sotāpanna* stage by giving up sense pleasures. Those who take this path become *bhikkhus*. They voluntarily give up most sense pleasures, including sex.

- If one is to attain *jhāna*, one must at least SUPPRESS all sense desires. For example, in "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)": "*..So kho ahaṃ, ānanda,* ***vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*** *savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharāmi.*"
- That means one needs to have **all thoughts of sense pleasures and *akusala kamma*** removed from one's mind at the time of getting to the *jhāna*.
- That statement appears in every *sutta* describing *jhāna*.

The Wider World View

10. According to the "wider world view" of the Buddha, there are 31 realms in this world. **Suffering in those realms decreases as one goes from the lowest four realms (*apāyā*) where the suffering is intense, to the human realm (where there is both suffering and happiness). In *deva* realms and 20 Brahma realms, there is increasingly more happiness.**

- The peaceful feeling one experiences in a *jhāna* are the same sense experience of *Brahmā* in the corresponding realms. But getting to *jhāna* has nothing to do with getting to *magga phala*, even though *jhāna* can provide a better mindset to do insight meditation.
- None of those realms can provide permanent happiness, because lifetime in any realm is finite. Even though the Brahma realms have very long lifetimes, one would eventually die and can be subsequently born in any of the 31 realms.
- If one's goal is permanent happiness, one must eventually get to the *Arahant* stage of *Nibbāna*. However, if one can get to the *Sotāpanna* stage, one is guaranteed to get to the *Arahant* stage within a relatively few subsequent births.

Difference With Other World Religions

11. That is the main difference between Buddha Dhamma and other religions. Christianity and Islam promise permanent happiness in *deva* realms, and Hinduism promises lasting happiness in a Brahma realm.

- But the Buddha taught that nothing in this world is permanent. That holds for living beings and inert things in the whole universe.
- Scientists (including Einstein) believed as recently as 100 years ago that the universe is in a "steady state." Now science has accepted that everything in our universe is in constant flux.
- Therefore, one born in any realm will die from there and be reborn in another realm.

There Is Nowhere in This World Where Suffering Ends (*Anicca* Nature)

12. The above sub-title summarizes the *anicca* nature of this world. One gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage by "seeing that." When one first realizes the *anicca* nature of this world, one can immediately see the dangers in doing the strongest of *dasa akusala*. That realization will make one's mind resistant to doing "*apāyagāmi* actions," i.e., those makes one eligible to be born in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*).

- That understanding registers permanently in the mind of a *Sotāpanna* and is unbreakable. That is why he/she will never do any such immoral deed, no matter how tempting.
- At that time, one will have unbreakable faith in Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Saṅgha*. One can see at that time how valuable *Dhamma* is. Of course, the Buddha discovered that *Dhamma*. It can be conveyed accurately only by a a Noble Person.

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- That is the reason for "unbreakable faith," or "*aveccappasāda*" (*avecca pasāda*) in Buddha, *Dhamma*, and *Saṅgha*; see #4 of "Sotapatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna."
- One is also said to have "*Ariyakānta sīla*" or "unbreakable moral conduct" as a *Sotāpanna*. That does not mean one will not do any of the *dasa akusala*. But one will never again do a *dasa akusala* that would have strong *kamma vipāka* bringing rebirth in the *apāyā*. Such a mindset permanently removed.

Higher Stages of *Nibbāna* Come With Deeper Comprehension of *Anicca* Nature

13. A *Sotāpanna* would then get to the *Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī* stages by getting rid of the desire for sense pleasures in two phases.

- *Avijjā,* or the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, is totally removed only at the *Arahant* stage. That is the time when one removes the "sense of me" or the "sense of a self."
- It is a systematic long precess.
- As I said at the beginning, one cannot expect to do advanced mathematics unless one first knows how to add/subtract, then how to do algebra, etc.
- Thus, moral conduct and getting rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are REQUIREMENTS for any stage of *magga phala*. Getting rid of the cravings for sense pleasures comes after that.

There Are Dangers in Craving for Sensory Pleasures

14. Finally, one may think that all one needs to do to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage because then one would be free from the *apāyā*. That is true. However, when one gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage, one will start seeing the sufferings in the *kāma loka*, including the *deva* realms.

As stated in the WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammika sutta (Snp 2.14):

- *Abrahmacariyaṃ parivajjayeyya,*
  Aṅgārakāsuṃ jalitaṃva viññū;
  Asambhuṇanto pana brahmacariyaṃ,
  Parassa dāraṃ na atikkameyya.

Translated:

- **A wise person would live a celibate life (avoiding sex), as one would avoid falling to a pit of fire.** But if one is not yet at the stage of abstaining from sensory pleasures, one should at least not engage in sexual **misconduct**.
- Furthermore, sensual pleasures are not restricted to sex. Excessive attachment to ALL sensory pleasures come under *kāmasukhallikānuyoga* in #8 above. Also, see, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex" and "Craving for Pornography – How to Reduce the Tendency."

4.6.2 Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi

September 2, 2017; revised September 14, 2019

1. These days, it is customary to state that the Noble Eightfold Path consists of three steps: *sīla* (moral conduct), *samādhi* (Concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom). However, that sequence holds only for the **mundane Eightfold Path. It does not lead to *Nibbāna*,** but only sets up the conditions to get into the Noble Eightfold Path.

- In this initial stage, one cultivates ***sīla*** by living a moral life by **making a determined effort** not to violate the five precepts; see, "2. The Basics in Meditation."

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- *Samādhi* is much more than just concentration; see, "What is samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness." When one lives a moral life, one's mindset will gradually change to a calm state ("*sama*" + "*adhi*") as explained in that post.
- With this calm mindset, one will be able to get rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* ("Miccā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage." Then one reaches **mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi*** or the first level of wisdom.

2. One must first follow the mundane Path before one can understand *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and get into the Noble Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?." **Thus, there are three necessary steps to *Nibbāna*:**

- Follow the mundane Eightfold Path by living a moral life (*sīla*) to remove the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. Those include not believing in *kamma vipāka*, rebirth, etc. Then one get to mundane *samādhi*, and gain the first level of wisdom (*paññā*): *sīla, samādhi, paññā*.
- Then start removing a DEEPER layer of *micchā diṭṭhi* (that this world can offer lasting happiness) by learning the CORRECT versions of *anicca, dukkha,anatta* (*Tilakkhaṇa*).
- Once one grasps the basics of *Tilakkhaṇa* one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*. One then starts living with this an **unbreakable *sīla*** to attain *Sammā samādhi* and the four stages of *Nibbāna* by following *paññā, sīla, samādhi*.

3. The first level of wisdom, achieved in the mundane path, is called ***kammassakatā Sammā diṭṭhi*:** understanding that one's actions, speech, and thoughts (*kāya, vacī*, and *mano saṅkhāra*) — one's *kamma* — WILL have consequences in the future, both in this life and in future lives.

- With *kammassakatā sammā diṭṭhi*, one understands and accepts the fact that what we experience (*kamma vipāka*, good and bad) are due to our past *kamma*.
- One understands that in order to encounter good *kamma vipāka* in the future (including future lives), one needs to **cultivate** GOOD *kamma* (i.e., good *mano , vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*).
- Even more importantly, one starts **avoiding** strong BAD *kamma*. Thus one starts getting rid of the coarse levels of *lobha, dosa, moha*, which is the same as preventing *dasa akusala*).
- When one follows this "*sīla* step," one will start experiencing the early stages of *Nibbāna* of "cooling down"; see, "Nirāmisa Sukha" and "How to Taste Nibbāna."

4. Some people think that if one kills animals without knowing that will have consequences, that will not lead to *kamma vipāka.* That is not correct.

- There is no superhuman being that keeps track of what one is doing. **But when one intentionally kills an animal, one's mind knows that, and one's *viññāṇa* will adjust accordingly.** See, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."
- The more one kills animals that ***viññāṇa*** capable of killing will only grow. That will lead to a corresponding *bhava* in the *niraya* realm (hell) where similar suffering exists.
- Therefore, being ignorant of nature's laws is not an excuse, just like when one gets caught doing an illegal act, one will not be excused for not knowing that it was an unlawful act.
- There is another type of action, where one kills animals unintentionally. For example, we kill many insects every time we take a walk. That does not lead to any *kamma vipāka*.
- So, only those *saṅkhāra* (or more correctly *abhisaṅkhāra*) **done with intention** lead to viññāṇa (via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*"), and subsequently lead to births in different realms via "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*," etc to …"*bhava paccayā jāti*."

5. Most people also think that *kamma* are only bodily actions done via *kāya saṅkhāra*. But bodily actions, speech, and thoughts all contribute to *kamma*. It is the *cetanā* (intention) involved in thoughts, speech, and

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actions (i.e., *mano , vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*), that is *kamma*. That is explained in the subsection, "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals."

- When one starts comprehending how laws of *kamma* work (that causes lead to similar effects IF suitable conditions are present), one will gradually get to mundane *sammā samādhi*. Then one's ability to grasp more profound Dhamma concepts (*paññā*) will grow; see, "Mundane Sammā Samādhi."
- Future suffering can only be stopped by stopping the corresponding *abhisaṅkhāra*, i.e., "*saṅkhāra nirodho bhava (*and *jāti) nirodho*."
- But ***saṅkhāra* can be only stopped by removing *avijjā*** since *saṅkhāra* are unavoidable as long as *avijjā* is there: "*avijjā paccayā sankhārā*." That is why *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (understanding *Tilakkhaṇa*) is so important.
- One will have a good idea of how births in different realms are associated with different types of suffering. Furthermore, one would be able to see how one's actions (*saṅkhāra*) lead to such births. I have summarized them in the table below.

Realm(s)	Level of Suffering	Causes	Generation/Stopping of Saṅkhāra
Niraya (Hell)	Incessant suffering	**Dosa**: Killing (especially humans), torture, rapes, etc	
Peta (Hungry Ghosts)	Starvation	**Excess greed** (may I get all, not others)	
Vinipatha Asura (**'**demons', titans, evil ghosts**)**	Spend time aimlessly; mostly heavy bodies not movable	**Moha** : Tina middha, vicikicchā (lazy, lacking wisdom).	
Animal (**Tirisan**: "tiri" + "san" or with all 3 causes)	Combinations of above three types	Combinations of lobha, dosa, moha	
Human (**Manussa**: "mana" + "ussa" or with advanced mind)	In between lower and higher realms	In between lower and higher realms	**Almost all saṅkhāra responsible births in all realms occur here.**
Deva (similar to human bodies, but much less dense)	Mostly no physical suffering and abundant sense pleasures (kāma). But there is mental stress.	Good kamma vipāka (done with alobha, adosa, amoha). Mental stress arises due to kāma rāga.	
Rupavacara Brahma (only manomaya kāya; cannot be even seen with a microscope)	Mental stress is much reduced. Mainly jhānic pleasures. Viparinama dukha when close death.	Suppression of kāma rāga and cultivation of rupavacara jhāna (while in the human realm)	
Arupavacara Brahma (only hadaya vatthu and mind)	Only arupavacara jhānic pleasures. Viparinama dukha when close death.	Cultivation of arupavacara jhāna (while in the human realm)	
Nibbāna	Permanent release from all suffering.	Elimination of all causes for existence, i.e., rāgakkhaya, dosakkhaya, mohakkhaya.	**Mostly attained in the human realm, but possible in higher realms, especially after the Sotāpanna stage.**

6. Now it is clear how future suffering arises via one's own actions, speech, and thoughts (*saṅkhāra*). It is also clear that suffering decreases and "*nirāmisa sukha*" grows at successively higher realms.

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- When one lives a sinful life and engaging in *dasa akusala* like killing, raping, etc. one is likely to be reborn in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*) and to face much suffering. engages in extreme. Such actions involve *kāya, vacī,* and *mano saṅkhāra* with *lobha, dosa, moha*.
- One is likely to be born in *rūpa* or *arūpa Brahma loka* when one cultivates *jhānā* by even abandoning *kāma rāga* (at least temporarily).
- When one has reduced *lobha, dosa, moha* to *rāga, paṭigha, avijjā* (see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijjā") by following the mundane eightfold path, one is likely to be reborn in the human or *deva* realms. In these realms ,suffering is much less, and especially in the *deva* realms, most remaining suffering is mental.

7. However, there is suffering that we tend to ignore. They are *saṅkhāra dukha* and *viparināma dukha*; see, "Introduction – What is Suffering?" and the follow-up post.

- That suffering arises due to *kāma rāga*, i.e., craving (*upādāna*) for sense pleasures. Thus even if one is not engaged in *dasa akusala*, one would not be released from *kāma loka* as long as one has *kāma rāga*.
- At the next higher level in the rūpa and arūpa realms, *kāma rāga* is absent, and thus one enjoys *jhānic* pleasures.
- Unlike sense pleasures, *jhānic* pleasures can be sustained for longer times, and are of much-refined nature. However, that is still not permanent as the *Nibbānic* bliss arrived at by eliminating all suffering.

8. As humans, we can overcome suffering in the *kāma loka* during this life itself, by cultivating *jhānā*. That essentially means being able to "temporarily live" in rupavacara or *arupāvacara* realms.

- That is done via either REMOVAL or SUPPRESSION of *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*. Of course this is not possible if one is engaging in *dasa akusala*.
- There are Buddhist and non-Buddhist meditation techniques to achieve this. We will discuss this in detail in an upcoming series on *jhāna*.
- If one develops *jhānā*, one will be born in *rūpa* or *arūpa* realms in the next birth. However, as we can see from the above table, any future births in those rūpa and arūpa realms are temporary. One could later be reborn in the *apāyā*.
- The only permanent solution to end all future suffering is to attain *Nibbāna*, as shown in the above table.

9. When one gets to mundane *sammā samādhi* by cultivating *sīla*, one will be able to see the truth of the overall picture shown in the table above. It is at this stage – with this broader world picture — **one can take the second important step towards *Nibbāna* by comprehending the *Tilakkhaṇa*.** However, one needs to know the correct versions of *Tilakkhaṇa*; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- That is the *paññā* (wisdom) associated with the first path factor (*Sammā Diṭṭhi*) in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- It is then one will be able to comprehend the First Noble Truth about the suffering in this world, the *Dukkha Sacca*.

10. The key message of the Buddha is that one cannot find permanent happiness anywhere in this world. Any such temporary happiness would be miniscule compared to suffering in the *apāyā*, and *kāma loka*. That is very hard to be comprehend (no matter how well educated one maybe).

- This fundamental fact of nature is called *anicca* nature. It means that NOTHING in this world can bring a permanent state of happiness (and WILL only bring suffering). The only permanent state of happiness is *Nibbāna*.
- When one has the opposite perception of *nicca*, and focuses on seeking a long-term happiness in this world, one WILL face suffering (*dukha*) in the long run.

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- Thus, eventually one will become helpless in this rebirth process and that is called anatta nature.
- Those are the Three Characteristics of nature. **Therefore, the crucial second key step towards *Nibbāna* (permanent happiness) is to learn these critical characteristics of Nature from a true disciple of the Buddha.**

11. When one starts comprehending the *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent, one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* and enters the Noble Path; see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

- In this third and last step towards *Nibbāna*, one starts with a NEW mindset about the real nature of this world. One can see that unimaginable suffering in the future if one does immoral things in seeking sense pleasures.
- **Thus one starts to understand the First Noble Truth or the *Dukkha Sacca***: That there is unimaginable suffering in this world of 31 realms. At this initial stage, it is hard to see the dangers/suffering in the human and deva realms. But if one has comprehended the fact that *apāyā* (four lower realms) must exist in order for the laws of *kamma* to work, then one can see the unimaginable suffering in the *apāyā*.
- **The Buddha said that when one understands the First Noble Truth, one will simultaneously understand the other three Noble Truths.** One will be able to see that *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha* are the origins of that suffering (*Samudaya Sacca*), that one needs to remove those causes (*Nirodha Sacca*). And, the way to accomplish that is to follow the Noble Eightfold Path (*Magga Sacca*).

12. **This understanding becomes permanent forever (through future lives) when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage.** From that point onward, one will not be CAPABLE of doing a kamma that could make one eligible for rebirth in the *apāyā*. Thus, one will be free from the worst suffering in the future.

- The post, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids apāyagāmī Citta," explains how Nature enforces laws of *kamma*.
- One's mind will automatically reject any *apāyagāmī* act even on a sudden impulse.

13. **Understanding *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is critical.** It explains how future *bhava* (existences) arise due to the way one thinks, speaks, and acts (with *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*). See, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means" and "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sankhāra."

- If one is capable of hurting and killing others, then one will be subjected to similar conditions in the *niraya*.
- If one has excessive greed where one is willing to hurt others to get pleasures, then one could be born a *peta* (hungry ghost).
- Those who are lazy and depends on others cultivate *asura saṅkhāra*. That leads to *asura viññāṇa* and thus gives rise to an *asura* existence.
- And if one is capable of thinking, speaking, and acting like an animal, one is then cultivating animal *saṅkhāra*. Thus one could be born in an animal existence.

14. At this stage, one starts living by the ***ariyakānta sīla***. This sīla is different from the *sīla* in the first step.

- In the first type of *sīla*, one forcefully avoided doing *pāpa kamma* or immoral acts. But there could have been occasions where one "could not help breaking the *sīla*," because the temptations were too strong.
- However, this new ***ariyakānta sīla* is unbreakable,** no matter how intense the temptation is. One's mind has grasped the fact that it is NOT WORTH to commit *apāyagāmī* actions. That is regardless of how much wealth or pleasures they could bring.
- For example, is it not worthwhile to make a lot of money by killing animals or fish, selling drugs that can harm others, by lying, bribing, etc.
- At this stage, one could still be attached to sense pleasures. Thus one could live a normal married life, which is "moral living."

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15. It is not necessary to attain any *jhāna* to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage. These days there is too much emphasis on *jhāna*.

- **One needs to realize that *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara jhāna* are the sensory experiences of the beings in the *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms.** Therefore, such experiences still belong to "this world" of 31 realms.
- The Buddha stated that any of his lay disciples with the *Sotāpanna* stage is million times well-off than a *yogi* who had attained all *jhānā* and all *abhiññā* powers.
- While those *jhānā* and *abhiññā* powers last only during this life, a *Sotāpanna* is freed from the *apāyā* FOREVER.
- However, understanding *jhānā* is important since it confirms the wider world view of the Buddha in the above table. There are many in the world today who have experienced *jhānā*.
- But some people mistakenly believe that *jhānā* are necessary to attain *magga phala*. But as the above table shows, *jhānā* are still part of "this world" and can be attained even by following "non-Buddhist meditations." More details at "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

4.6.3 Six Root Causes – Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)

July 19, 2018; revised December 23, 2018

1. "*Loka Samudaya*" ("*san*" "*udaya*") means "arising of this suffering filled world"; "*loka nirodhaya*" ("*nir*" "*udaya*") means "stopping the arising of this world." By "this world" it is meant the 31 realms.

- As long as there are causes (*hetu*) exist for the world to arise for a given living being, that living being will be reborn and subjected much more suffering in the *apāyā* than any temporary happiness experienced in the "good realms" at or above the human realm.
- When three of those causes (*lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*) are removed, one will be released from "this world" and one would be free of suffering and would have attained *Nibbāna*.

2. There are 4 *paramatta dhammā* or "ultimate realities": *citta, cetasika, rūpa*, and *Nibbāna*. Only the first three belong to this world of 31 realms.

- When one is in "this world", his/her experience is described by *citta, cetasika, rūpa.*
- When one attains *Nibbāna*, one would be totally dissociated from *citta, cetasika, rūpa.*
- That is another way to describe *Nibbāna*.

3. **There are 6 root causes (*mūlika hetu*) that lead to the arising of one's world:** *lobha* (greed), *dosa* hate/anger), *moha* (acting with 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*) and *alobha* (non-greed), *adosa* (non-hate/anger), *amoha* (absence of *moha*).

- **When one acts with one or more of *lobha, dosa, moha*, one is giving rise to *kamma bīja* (*kammic* energy) that can lead to rebirth in the four "bad realms" or the *apāyā*.** In other words, one is generating bad *abhisaṅkhāra* or "*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*," therefore, "bad *viññāṇa*" etc, which lead to "bad *bhava*" and "bad *jāti*" (see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda").
- In the same way, when one acts with one or more of *alobha, adosa, amoha*, one is giving rise to *kamma bīja* that can lead to rebirth in the "good realms" at or above the human realm. In other words, one is generating good *abhisaṅkhāra* or "*puñña abhisaṅkhāra*," therefore, "good *viññāṇa*" etc, which lead to "good *bhava*" and "good *jāti*."
- However, those three "good root causes" cannot lead to rebirths in the "good realms" after the three "bad root causes" are completely removed; see below.

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4. It is said that *lobha, dosa, moha* are food (*āhāra*) for the *apāyā;* that is why they are called *kilesa* or "impurities." That means they are food for the *kamma bīja* that give rise to births in the *apāyā*.

- In the same way, *alobha* is food or *āhāra* for the *deva* realms.
- *Alobha* and *adosa* are *āhāra* for the *brahma* realms.
- However, *amoha* is not a *cetasika* (mental factor), and instead what one cultivates is *paññā cetasika*. One attains *Nibbāna* by cultivating *paññā*. We will discuss this below.

5. Therefore, all six root causes lead to the continuation of the rebirth process. However, one needs to work to stop only the three "bad root causes" in order to stop the rebirth process ("*rāgakkhayo Nibbānaṃ, dosakkhayo Nibbānaṃ, mohakkhayo Nibbānaṃ"*).

- **The Path to *Nibbāna* STARTS with the reducing of the 3 bad roots and cultivating the 3 good root roots.**
- In order to attain *Nibbāna*, one MUST be in a good realm. Therefore, the first objective is to avoid births in the *apāyā*. The 3 bad roots (*lobha, dosa, moha*) are also called *kilesa* (or *keles* or impure), because they can lead to rebirths in the *apāyā*.

6. Furthermore, one's *paññā* (wisdom) grows as one gets rid of the 3 bad roots and cultivate the 3 good roots. That is essential to be able to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*.

- When one comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa*, one will lose the desire to be reborn in the "good realms" too.
- **When one's *paññā* becomes optimum at the *Arahant* stage, one will not go through the "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* leading to ANY rebirth.**
- This is why it is said that after completing the eighth step of *Sammā Samādhi* in the Noble Eightfold Path, one get to *Sammā Ñāṇa* stage (when *paññā* is optimized) and one attains *Sammā Vimutti* (complete release from this world), i.e., "*dasa angehi samannāgato Arahant*."

7. Thoughts can arise in the mind with EITHER good roots OR the bad roots (as far as *kammic* consequences are concerned).

- All six roots are with a normal human as *anusaya* (hidden), **but only one set can appear at a given time.**
- This is why even the "worst person" can do *kusala kamma* sometimes.

8. It is to be noted that *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* arise in the mind when doing *dasa akusala* (i.e., when *asobhana cetasika* arise in *citta*). *Puñña abhisaṅkhāra* arise when doing *dasa kusala*, where *sobhana cetasika* arise in *citta*; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."

- Those immoral actions (*dasa akusala*) done with *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* have the three "bad roots" of *lobha, dosa,* and *moha,* and all those are *asobhana cetasika* (other types of *asobhana cetasika* can arise too). **It is to be noted that ALL *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* are done with *citta* contaminated by the *moha cetasika***; *lobha* and *dosa cetasika* are in some of those *citta* that are associated with *dasa akusala*; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."
- "*Kusala*" comes from "*ku*" "*sala*" or getting rid of immoral ("*ku*"). *Kusala kamma* are done with the three "good roots" of *alobha, adosa*, and *amoha*. **It is also to be noted that *alobha* and *adosa* are in ALL *kusala citta*, but *amoha* is NOT EVEN a *cetasika*.**

9. **Therefore, one can do *kusala kamma* without getting rid of *moha,* i.e., without cultivating *paññā:*** most people engage in giving, have compassion for others, etc. This is a key point to remember.

- Anyone who has any of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* HAS NOT removed *moha,* and thus HAS NOT started cultivating *paññā*. But such a person can still do some *dasa kusala* (like giving), even though their *javana* power is not high compared to one who has removed the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.

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- By the way, the *javana* power of *kusala citta* go up even more when one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*. In the *Abhidhamma* language, *javana* power is high in "*ñāṇa sampayutta citta*," where *ñāṇa* is wisdom (*paññā*). And *paññā* grows with increasing comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*.

10. Therefore, "*kusala*" has two levels: within the mundane eightfold path, one can do *kusala kamma* "at a lower level"; these are also called "*puñña kamma*"; see, "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā." That will keep one away from births in the *apāyā*.

- However, those *kusala kamma* are "contaminated" to some degree, and they become more powerful in the Noble Path with the increasing comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- For example, in "mundane *alobha*," one loses craving for some things and is willing to share those with others. In "*lokuttara alobha*" one just loses craving by seeing the worthlessness of things in this world.
- In the same way, mundane *adosa* and *amoha* arise temporarily. But of course, they bring their *vipāka* to make it easier to cultivate *paññā* and to get to *lokuttara* roots, i.e., comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*.

11. It is inevitable that even the most "moral normal person" WILL generate "bad *abhisaṅkhāra*" either during this life or in the future life, until one REMOVES the three bad root causes from the mind by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa.* Until then they remain as *anusaya,* and come to the surface under suitable conditions.

- For example, X may see an enticing object and greed (*lobha*) may come to the mind.
- But at another time, X may see a hungry person and may buy that person a meal with non-greed (*alobha*), non-hate (*adosa*), and *amoha*.
- An *Arahant* has removed all six root causes. But he/she may provide a meal to a hungry person out of *paññā* (wisdom) — doing the appropriate thing; it is also called a *kriya*, an action without *kammic* consequences.

12. When one removes *lobha, dosa, moha* from one's mind, that will AUTOMATICALLY lead to the removal of *alobha, adosa*, and *amoha* too, because one's *paññā* has now been cultivated to see the futility of all six causes to be born anywhere in the 31 realms.

- This is a key idea to comprehend. As one progresses on the mundane eightfold path — removing the three bad roots — one's *paññā* will start to grow.

13. At that point, IF one gets to hear the essence of the Buddha Dhamma (Four Noble Truths/ Noble Eightfold Path/ *Tilakkhaṇa*), then *paññā* will start to grow much faster, as all six root causes will fade one's mind.

- The key is to comprehend the *anicca* nature of this world of 31 realms: Because of this *anicca* nature, one will be subjected to *dukkha*, and thus one will become helpless (*anatta*)in this rebirth process.
- This is stated succinctly in the *Dhammacappavattana Sutta* in the following verse: "*yampiccam (yam pi **iccam**) nalabhati (na labhati) tampi dukkham*" or "one suffers when one does not get what one desires (*iccā*)"; see, ""Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."
- That is because even if one desires and gets a birth in a *deva* or a *brahma* realm, that lasts only a finite time, and one will eventually be born in the *apāyā* and will endure much more and unimaginably harsh suffering.

14. This fact of not getting what one desires ("*na*" "*icca*," which rhymes as "*anicca*," just as "*na*" "*āgāmi*" rhymes as "*Anāgāmi*") describes the key fundamental characteristic of "this world." This then leads to "*dukkha*" and thus to "*anatta*," as expressed by the following verse in many suttā: "*yadaniccam tam dukkham, tam dukkham tadanattā*" ("*yad aniccam tam dukkham, tam dukkham tad anattā*"); see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

- This is a special knowledge that is grasped only by a Buddha. Of course, once a Buddha discovers this knowledge, he can explain it to others.

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- It is to be noted that even when a Buddha is not in this world, there could be *yogis* who have removed the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. However, they would not have removed *avijjā*, until comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.

15. Therefore, until a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha explains the above "big picture", AND until one's mind "sees" the truth of this picture, one will be trapped in the suffering-filled rebirth process (*saṃsāra*).

- This is because one will ALWAYS believe that by "just being moral" (i.e., acting with *alobha, adosa, amoha*), one will be able to attain permanent happiness somewhere (in the heaven per most religions or in a *brahma* realm per Hinduism).
- Not believing in even the rebirth process and in the consequences of one's actions (*kamma*), as well as not believing in the *paraloka* of *gandhabba*, are included in the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- When one has those 10 types *micchā diṭṭhi*, one is more likely to do *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* (when the sense input becomes irresistible) and "become eligible" for the birth in the *apāyā*.

16. However, it must be clear that one cannot get to *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (or the correct vision) in the Noble Path (that leads to *Nibbāna*) merely by getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.

- The next and critical step is comprehending the deeper characteristics of Nature or *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), per above discussion.
- This is why the Buddha described two types of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* and two types of eightfold paths; see, "Mahā Chattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- **By following the first type of eightfold path, one stays away from the *apāyā*, and ALSO setup conditions to be able to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*.**
- Once on the first eightfold path, one can learn the true *Tilakkhaṇa* from a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha, contemplate on them, and start on the Noble Eightfold Path.

4.6.4 Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and Yam Kiñci Samudaya Dhammam..

August 16, 2018; Revised January 20, 2020

This post will analyze two famous key verses to show the interconnections among the Four Noble Truths, *Tilakkhaṇa*, *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, and the Noble Eightfold Path. These are the main concepts that must be comprehended in order to benefit from Buddha Dhamma.

Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā..

Background

"Ye dhammā hetuppabhavā,
Tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgato āha;
Tesañca yo nirodho,
Evaṃvādī mahāsamaṇo"

- From just hearing this verse uttered by Ven. Assaji, Upatissa (later Ven. Sariputta) became a *Sotāpanna*. That is the fundamental concept of Buddha Dhamma and is explained in detail in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- The correct translation is the following. "Whatever *dhammā* (which are *kamma bīja*) that give rise to the rebirth process, causes for those to arise have been declared by the Buddha; he has also explained how those causes can be stopped from arising (and thus end the rebirth process)."
- First, let us briefly discuss how we arrive at this translation.

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What Does "*Hetuppabhavā*" Mean?

1. "*Ye dhammā"* means "those *dhammā*." The compound word in the verse is *hetuppabhavā:* It is the combination of "*hetu*," "*pa*," and "*bhava*," which respectively mean causes, repeated, and existence. The combination rhymes as *hetuppabhavā,* just as *dhamma cakka pavattana* rhymes as "*dhammacakkappavattana*."

- Note that "*pa*" (meaning repeated) and "*bhava*" combine to rhyme as "*pab**b**hava*" with an additional "**b**."
- So, *hetuppabhavā* means "causes leading to repeated birth or causes to sustain the rebirth process."
- Note that both words *hetuppabhavā* and *pabhassara* have the words "*pa*" and "*bha*" embedded in them; see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."
- So, "ye *dhammā hetuppabhavā"* means "those *dhammā* that sustain the rebirth process or *saṃsāra*."

Tesaṃ and *Tesañca* Both Have "*Saŋ*"

2. *Tesaṃ* is "*te*" + "*saŋ*" or three "*saŋ*" of *lobha, dosa, moha.* These are those *hetu* or causes.

- Even though there are six root causes, they all can be eliminated by eliminating just three (*lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*); see, "Six Root Causes – Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."
- Of course "*saŋ*" are the defilements that are responsible for the rebirth process for anyone, which are *dasa akusala*; see, "San."
- Again, "*te*" and "*saŋ*" combine to rhyme as "*tesaŋ*."
- So, "*Tesaṃ hetuṃ tathāgato āha"* means "The Buddha has declared what those three causes are."

3. The next part, "*Tesañca yo nirodho"* or "*Te saŋ ca yo nirodho"* has the second complex keyword of *nirodha*, which comes from "*nir*"+"*udaya*," where "*nir*" means stop and "*udaya*" means "arise." [*te* + *saŋ* + *ca* = *tesañca*]

- Thus *nirodha* means to stop something from arising; see, "Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts."
- The easiest way to understand *nirodha* is to see that a plant can be stopped from arising (i.e., coming into being) by destroying the seed. Put in the real context of the word *nirodha*, a plant's coming into being can be stopped by **stopping the creation of that seed.**
- In the same way, a future existence (*bhava*) can be stopped by stopping the formation of the corresponding *viññāṇa* (*kamma bīja*), **i.e., *bhava nirodha* is achieved by *viññāṇa nirodha.***

How Is *Viññāṇa Nirodha* Realized?

4. By going backward further in PS, *viññāṇa nirodha* in turn is done by (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra nirodha*; see below too. Of course, *abhisaṅkhāra nirodha* cannot be done by sheer will power. One must cultivate *paññā* (wisdom) and get rid of *avijjā*. That requires comprehending of *Tilakkhaṇa* or the futility of clinging to this suffering-filled world of 31 realms that will make one helpless in the end (especially when born in the four lowest realms or *apāyā*).

- We can thus see that *viññāṇa nirodha* leads to the stopping of initiation of ***akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda*** (PS) cycles starting at the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step.

5. Now it is clear what is meant by "*tesañca (te saŋ ca) yo nirodho, evaṃvādī mahāsamaṇo*." The Buddha (*mahāsamaṇo*) has explained how those defilements can be stopped from arising."

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- *Viññāṇa nirodha* is achieved via stopping *abhisaṅkhāra* or — **to put in a practical statement — by abstaining from all *dasa akusala*.** That involves the three *akusala* done by the body (via *kāya saṅkhāra*), four *akusala* by the speech and defiled conscious thoughts (via *vacī saṅkhāra*), and three *akusala* done by the mind (via *mano saṅkhāra*).
- It is essential to understand what is meant by keywords like *saṅkhāra* and *viññāṇa;* see, "Mental Aggregates."
- It is important to realize that conscious thoughts are also vacī saṅkhāra; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra." It is not just immoral speech and deeds that matter, but immoral "daydreaming" counts too.

6. The way to achieve *viññāṇa nirodha* is, of course, the Noble Eightfold Path. When one follows the Noble Path, one's *avijjā* will be removed and thus no more initiations of PS cycles, i.e., no more suffering (there will not be "*jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka,..*).

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Petakopadesa, this verse expresses the *four* Noble Truths (*cattāri ariyasaccāni*), and we can now see why.

Yaṃ Kiñci Samudaya Dhammaṃ..

Introduction

7. The second related verse **"*yaṃ kiñci samudaya dhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodha dhammaṃ*"** is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11). [*kiŋ* + *ci* = *kiñci* ; ***kiṃ* or *kiŋ*** :[rel. or inter. pron.] what? ***ci*** : *cid*, indecl. an indefinite interrogative particle. *koci* [whoever] , *kiñci* [whatever] , *kadāci* [whenever] , *kuhiñci* [wherever] . cf. *ca*, *cana*, *ce*.]

- **Translated:** "If there are *dhammā* that give rise to suffering (i.e., any *samudaya dhammā*), all such *dhammā* can be stopped from arising (via the Noble Eightfold Path)." [*samudaya* = *san* + *udaya* = rise of *san* (that leads to suffering)]
- "*yaṃ kiñci samudaya dhammaṃ"* means "any *dhammā* that eventually lead to suffering. And, "*sabbaṃ taṃ nirodha dhammaṃ*" means "all such *dhammā"* are *nirodha dhammā,* i.e., they can be stopped from arising.

Here *Viññāṇa* Is "Defiled Consciousness"

8. But we need to get the idea embedded in this verse, instead of just translating word-by-word.

- From what we have learned so far, we know that *samudaya dhamma* (or *kamma bīja*) are created by *viññāṇa*, for which the best translation is "**defiled consciousness**."
- *Viññāṇa*, in turn, arise due to our own (*abhi*) *saṅkhāra*. And the reason that we do *abhisaṅkhāra* is that we are ignorant of the *anicca* nature, i.e., we have *avijjā*.
- That is what the *paṭicca samuppāda* states: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa, viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*," leading to "*upādāna paccayā bhava, bhava paccayā jāti*," which ends up in the whole mass of suffering: "*jāti paccayā jarā, marana,…*"

9. So, again we can see that *samudaya dhamma* arises with defiled *viññāṇa* that occur due to *abhisaṅkhāra* done with *avijjā*!

- If we do not cultivate such defiled *viññāṇa* via *abhisaṅkhāra* (i.e., if we stop doing *dasa akusala*), then we will not end up with births leading to all types of suffering. Those are *jarā* (old age), *maraṇa* (death), *soka* (unhappiness), *parideva* (long lasting state of unhappiness where *soka* keeps bubbling up), *dukkha* (physical injuries, diseases, etc), *domanassa* (long bouts of depression), *upāsāya* (extreme distress where can faint or generates suicidal thoughts)."

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- Those sufferings described above are mainly for the human realm. If one is born in the four lowest realms, it will be much worse, mostly physical suffering or *dukkha*.

Kamma Vipāka Are Not Deterministic

In the above, we have discussed how to stop the formation of *kamma bīja*. But what about those *kamma bīja* that we have already piled up during this life and from previous lives? Will not they bring *vipāka* and initiate new *bhava* and *jāti* filled with suffering?

10. The key is to understand that one gets a "second chance." *Kamma vipāka* are not deterministic, i.e., ***kamma bīja* cannot automatically bring *vipāka***.

- In an *uppatti* (rebirth) PS cycle, we saw that *kamma bīja* form with the first two steps in the PS cycle: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." This *viññāṇa* is called a *kamma viññāṇa*.
- But when those *kamma bīja* try to bring back the *vipāka* corresponding to those *kamma bīja* at a FUTURE time, they are brought back as *vipāka viññāṇa*. That means is the mind is exposed to a "sign" called a "*nimitta*" that corresponds to the same *kamma* done to make that *kamma bīja*.

11. So, it is essential to realize that in an *uppatti* PS cycle, the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step starts much later, may be even in future life.

An Example

12. We can explained that with an example. Suppose person X kills another human being in this life. That involves a lot of *mano, vacī*, and *kāya abhisaṅkhāra* and all those contribute to a defiled mindset (*viññāṇa*) that led to a *kamma bīja* which got the most contribution at the moment of killing via a *kāya abhisaṅkhāra*.

- Now, that *kamma bīja* will be there waiting to bring its *vipāka* at a later time.
- Suppose X dies a few years later, but he has more *kammic* energy for this human bhava left. In that case, that *kamma bīja* cannot bring *vipāka*. He will leave a dead body as a *gandhabba* and wait for a suitable womb.
- However, *if X had killed one of his parents, for example, that would be a ānantariya kamma*, and thus that *kamma bīja* will bring its *vipāka* at the end of this life.

13. In either case, the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step will start the rest of PS cycle leading to a new *bhava* (let us say in the *niraya*) with the following way.

- So, X is now at the deathbed, whether in this life or in a future life as a human. Just before the dying moment, that *kamma bīja* will bring a sign (called *nimitta*) of that *kamma* to X's mind. it could be a scene from that killing event or a scene from the *niraya* that he is about to be born.
- Since he had done this act with intention, that mindset will come back, and he will basically have that defiled mindset (*viññāṇa*) that was responsible for the killing. Then he will have that *nimitta* come in, and this is the "*nāmarūpa*" that comes to his mind at that time: "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*."

14. All his six sense faculties will transform according to that sign or nimitta: "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*." Of course, the *nimitta* will come through only one, let us say like a picture from that killing event or a sound.

- His mind will now make contact (*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*) just as in any sense event, and that leads to "*phassa paccayā vedanā*," i.e., now he is about to re-enact the crime in his mind, starting at the "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*" step.

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15. But a critical point in these steps occurs at the "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*," "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" steps. When one gets that *nimitta* of birth in the *niraya* appears at the moment of death, one WILL NOT grasp it if one has attained the Sotāpanna stage.

- A *Sotāpanna*'s mind has grasped the truth of the "*anicca* nature" and has a higher level of *paññā* (wisdom), so it WILL NOT grasp that *nimitta*. That is why Aṅgulimāla was able to attain the *Arahanthood*, even after killing almost 1000 people. That past *kamma bīja* did not get to germinate.

16. Therefore, that *nimitta* will be ineffective if X had become a *Sotāpanna* in the intervening time, and a different (good or bad) next in line will appear. The process will continue until a suitable new *bhava* grasped at the "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step.

- That is how a *Sotāpanna* avoids "*apāyagāmi kamma bīja*" from bringing their *vipāka*.
- Of course, if X had not attained the *Sotāpanna* stage, then he will be born in *niraya*.

Further Reading

17. Please do not hesitate to ask questions at the forum if this is not clear. *Kamma viññāṇa* are discussed in detail at: "Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter."

- The process of how past *kamma* try to bring *vipāka* with *vipāka viññāṇa* discussed in detail at, "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."
- Of course, one needs to really understand what is meant by all these terms (*vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna,* etc.) to understand these processes; see, "Mental Aggregates."
- If one can truly comprehend this post, one could get to the *Sotāpanna* stage, because this is seeing the "way to *Nibbāna*," i.e., how to stop the future suffering permanently. That is about getting to *lokuttara Sammā Diṭṭhi*.

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4.7 Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala

- Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala – Introduction
- Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra
- Jhānic Experience in Detail – Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)
- Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)
- Paññāvimutti – Arahanthood without Jhāna
- Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna
- Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti

[**Dhyāna** is a sanskrit word while **Jhāna** is a Pāli word.]

4.7.1 Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala – Introduction

October 12, 2017; revised April 28, 2018; September 13, 2018; February 11. 2020

Introduction

1. Apparently, there are a considerable number of people who have attained *magga phala* (with or without *jhāna*) recently all over the world. We are indebted to the late Waharaka *Thero* for this great awakening by clarifying the correct interpretations of Buddha's teachings; now many are working tirelessly to make those interpretations available to others; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."

- Over the years, I have seen some key issues related to *jhāna* and *magga phala* discussed at many online forums, without reaching a definitive conclusion. I hope this series of posts will be of use to settle this matter.
- I will try to put together a consistent picture solely based on material from the *Tipiṭaka*. One common problem that I see in online forums is that many people put *Tipiṭaka* on the same footing as commentaries (such as *Visuddhimagga*) written much later by people (non-*Ariyā*) like Buddhaghosa or Nagarjuna. That leads to confusion because those accounts have many contradictions with the *Tipiṭaka*.
- These posts are supposed to be read in the given sequence. Please read carefully at a quiet time.

What Is *Samādhi*?

2. *Samādhi* ("*sama*"+"*adhi*" where "*sama*" means "equilibrium" and "*adhi*" means "dominance") means turning the mind towards an equilibrium state away from distraction (especially greedy, angry, or foolish thoughts.)

- The opposite of the Pāli word "*sama*" is "*visama*." When either the body or the mind gets "away from equilibrium," that is "*visama*" and we become uncomfortable.
- A good analogy is the following. We become restless if our environment becomes too hot. Then we try to find a way to cool ourselves. We get very uncomfortable if we are in a "too cold" environment also. Then we try to be warm by turning on a heater or wrapping ourselves with blankets.
- However, if the room temperature is moderate and away from both those extremes, then we feel comfortable. We feel contended.
- A similar effect takes place when the mind stops going to the extremes. A greedy or angry mind is in a "*visama*" state and is away from *samādhi*.
- However, if the focus is a *dhamma* concept, then the mind moves toward "equilibrium."

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- *Samādhi* is essential to attain *Magga phala. Jhāna* are a special category *samādhi* and are not essential to attain *magga phala*.

Sammā Samādhi Are Two Types

3. *Samādhi* can be of many types. What is essential to attain *magga phala* is *Sammā Samādhi.* As we have discussed before, there is mundane *sammā samādhi* that is reached by getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. Then there is *lokuttara Sammā Samādhi* that is reached by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

- As discussed in the previous post, "Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi," one gets to mundane *Sammā Samādhi* via "*Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā*." Then one can comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa* and follow the Noble Path via " *Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi*," with *Sammā Diṭṭhi* taking the lead.
- There is nowhere in the *Tipiṭaka* that says one needs *jhāna* to attain *magga phala* or *Nibbāna*.
- *Magga phala* means one is starting to break the bonds (*dasa saṃyojana*) to this world; see, "Dasa Saṃyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process." One attains *magga phala* by getting into *lokuttara Sammā Samādhi* (*samādhi* to remove "*san*": "*san*" + "*mā*"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."

Jhāna Are Not Necessary to Attain *Magga Phala*

4. April 28, 2018: I found a *desanā* by Waharaka *Thero* where he presents clear evidence that *jhāna* are not necessary to attain *magga phala* (It is of course in the Sinhala language):

WebLink: Download "Are Jhāna Required for Magga-Phala"

- The main point the *Thero* makes is that we know that there are *jāti Sotāpannas* born in the human realm. But if a *jhāna* was REQUIRED to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, then that person WOULD NOT be born in the human realm, but in a *brahma* realm corresponding that *jhāna*.

Attaining *Jhāna* Has Nothing to Do With *Nibbāna*

5. **In simple terms, *jhāna* are mental states existing in the 16 *rūpa* realms and the four *arūpa* realms.** Thus by definition, attaining *jhāna* has nothing to do with *Nibbāna*. This can be easily seen in "The 89 (121) Types of Citta."

Jhāna falls into two categories *(Ariya* and *anāriya*) and — depending on the category — could be **an asset** or **hindrance**, as we will discuss in this section.

- As discussed in "31 Realms Associated with the Earth" those 20 realms lie above the realms of *kāma loka*. Those *rūpi* and *arūpi Brahmā* enjoy only ***jhānic* pleasures,** which are better than **sensual pleasures.**
- We all have been born in most of the 31 realms (except for the realms reserved for the *Anāgāmis*) an uncountable times, **and thus had attained those *jhānic* states uncountable times in previous lives.**
- As we know, **sensual pleasures** are present only in *kāma loka* (human realm, six *deva* realms, and the animal realm).
- Humans can cultivate *jhāna* by suppressing (*anāriya*) or removing (*Ariya*) the **craving for sensual pleasures (*kāma rāga*).**
- One could approach *Nibbāna* via *Ariya* or *anāriya jhāna*; see, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)."

Difference Between *Ariya* and *Anāriya Jhāna*

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6. If those *Brahmā* are born there via cultivating mundane *jhāna*, then *kāma rāga* remain with them as *anusaya* (which means deeply hidden). So, when they die and are reborn in the lower realms, those *kāma rāga* re-surface. The suppression is only during the time they live as *Brahmā* in those higher realms.

- In the same way, those humans who get into *jhānā* SUPPRESSING *kāma rāga* can lose the ability to get into *jhānā* even in this life. The best example from the *Tipiṭaka* is Devadatta, who developed not only *anāriya* (mundane) *jhānā* but also *abhiññā* powers, and then lost all that and ended up in an *apāya*. Even though Devadatta was obviously exposed to correct *Tilakkhaṇa* (he was ordained by the Buddha himself), he had apparently not grasped them.
- The ability to get into *jhāna* is also related to our *gati* (pronounced "gathi"; our habits from past lives). Those who have cultivated mundane *jhānā* in relatively recent past lives can easily get into mundane *jhāna*.
- **However, if one gets into even the first *Ariya* (supramundane) *jhāna*, one has essentially attained the *Anāgāmī* stage by removing *kāma rāga***; see, "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna."

Magga Phala Require *Sammā Samādhi*

7. ***Magga phala* (including the *Arahant* stage) can be reached via going through any of the *jhānic* states or without going through any *jhānic* state;** see, "The 89 (121) Types of Citta."

- This is also discussed in "WebLink: suttacentral: Paññāvimutta Sutta (AN 9.44)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Susimaparibbājaka Sutta (SN 12.70)."
- **Furthermore, a *Sotāpanna* may attain *anāriya jhāna*** and be born in *brahma* realms lying below the *Suddhāvāsa* realms reserved for the *Anāgāmis*. But they also do not come back to *kāma loka*; see, "Pathama Metta Sutta." Of course, those who attain *anāriya jhāna* without *magga phala*, will come back to *kāma loka* and could be born in the *apāyā* subsequently.

8. More detailed information with references to *suttā* at, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (dhyāna)," "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna," "Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti."

- There are a series of posts on *jhāna* (in simpler terms, without too many Pali words) in an older section: "Power of the Human Mind."

4.7.2 Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra

March 7, 2019; revised December 3, 2019

1. It is critically important to understand the meanings of *vitakka/vicāra, savitakka/savicāra*, and *avitakka/avicāra*. I see many discussions on discussion forums without reaching a satisfactory conclusion, and most *sutta* translations are incorrect. In particular, *savitakka* and *savicāra* are commonly translated incorrectly as "with *vitakka* and *vicāra*."

- As always, one MUST start with the basics. Trying to extract the meanings of such keywords from deep *suttā* is counter-productive.
- What we need to do is to start with the basic definitions and THEN verify that the meanings of verses in deeper *suttā* CAN BE figured out using these basic definitions. I have seen that this method ALWAYS works within the *Tipiṭaka*.
- In fact, if someone can point out a *sutta* in the *Tipiṭaka* that is not consistent with this post, please comment at the discussion forum.
- Possible inconsistencies MAY arise if one tries to make them compatible with late commentaries like the *Visuddhimagga*.

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What Are *Vitakka* and *Vicāra*?

2. The words *takka, vitakka, vicāra* (තර්ක, විතර්ක, විචාර in Sinhala), the closest English words could be "think one way", further/counter analysis, investigate in depth. They are same as *vacī saṅkhāra*.

- All those words describe conscious thinking about a thought object (*ārammaṇa*). One either silently "talks to oneself" or speaks out while analyzing the situation in the mind. [***takka*** :[m.] thought; reasoning; logic. (nt.), butter-milk. ***vitakka*** :[m.] reflection; thought. ***vicāra*** :[m.] investigation; management; planning; discursive thinking.]

A clear explanation is given in *Abhidhamma*, in the discussion on *kāma dhātu, byāpāda dhātu, vihiṃsā dhātu, nekkhamma dhātu, abyāpāda dhātu, avihiṃsā dhātu*, in the following section: "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhātuvibhaṅga."

- For example, "*Tattha katamā **kāmadhātu**? Kāmapaṭisaṃyutto **takko vitakko saṅkappo** appanā byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā **micchāsaṅkappo**—ayaṃ vuccati kāmadhātu.*"

Translated: "What is the **element of *kāma* (indulgence)**? ***takka, vitakka, saṅkappa**, appanā, byappanā* (remaining there, which is related to *vicāra*), which lead to **establishing wrong views**. That is called the element of desire/indulgence."

In other words, when one is constantly generating such thoughts, ***kāma rāga*** builds up.

3. The opposite, **element of *nekkhamma*** is defined as: "*Tattha katamā nekkhammadhātu? Nekkhammapaṭisaṃyutto **takko vitakko**, **saṅkappa**, ... pe ... **sammā saṅkappo**—ayaṃ vuccati "nekkhamma dhātu.*"

- **Translated:** "what is the **element of renunciation**? *takka, vitakka, saṅkappa, appanā, byappanā* (remaining there, which is related to *vicāra*), which lead to establishing **correct views (leading to the removal of defilements)**. This is called the element of renunciation."

  In other words, when one is constantly generating such thoughts, ***kāma rāga*** is diminished.

- Similarly for *byāpāda dhātu, vihiṃsā dhātu*, and the opposites *abyāpāda dhātu, avihiṃsā dhātu*.

Vacī Saṅkhāra Are *Saṅkappa* (Conscious Thoughts)

It is important to see the connection between *vacī saṅkhāra* and *saṅkappa* (as in *Sammā Saṅkappa*.)

4. We can now see that *kāma* (*abhijjhā*) *saṅkappa, byāpāda (or vyāpāda) saṅkappa, vihiṃsā saṅkappa* are all "bad" *vacī saṅkhāra*. They associate with greed, hate, and ignorance.

- Their opposites are associated with *Sammā Saṅkappa*: *nekkhamma, abyāpāda,* and *avihiṃsā saṅkappa.*

- Note that *Sammā Saṅkappa* comes next to *Sammā Diṭṭhi* in the Noble Eightfold Path. Therefore, we can see the importance of *vacī saṅkhāra*.

5. Now we can also see the connection to *vacī saṅkhāra* as defined clearly in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūḷavedalla Sutta (MN 44)": .." *vitakka vicārā vacī saṅkhāro*" OR "*vacī saṅkhāra* are *vitakka vicārā*."

- ***Vacī saṅkhāra*** are "conscious thoughts that we silently generate" and also those thoughts that lead to the speech by moving the lips, tongue etc. Hate speech is due to *apuññābhi vacī saṅkhāra*. Thinking about a *Dhamma* concept is a *puññābhi vacī saṅkhāra*; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

Vacī Saṅkhāra (*Vitakka Vicārā*) Are *Saṅkappa*

6. Another important *sutta* where this is discussed is, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117)":

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"*Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo? Yo kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato* ***takko vitakko saṅkappo*** *appanā byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā* ***vacīsaṅkhāro****—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo..*"

- **Translated:** "And what, *bhikkhus*, is ***Sammā Saṅkappa*** that is Noble, without *āsava*, supramundane, a factor of the Noble Path? Those are Noble thoughts (*ariyacittassa*) that are devoid of cravings (*anāsavacittassa*), belong to the Noble Path (*ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato*) with ***takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā vacī saṅkhāro***: that is *Sammā Saṅkappa* that is Noble, a factor of the Noble Path."

Vitakka Usually Reserved for "Bad *Saṅkappa*"

7. "WebLink: suttacentral: Akusala Vitakka Sutta (SN 9.11)" provides one example: "*Tena kho pana samayena so bhikkhu divāvihāragato* ***pāpake akusale vitakke*** *vitakketi, seyyathidaṃ—****kāma vitakkaṃ, byāpāda vitakkaṃ, vihiṃsā vitakkaṃ****."*

- "*Bhikkhus*, do not engage in evil unwholesome thoughts which are: sensual thoughts, thoughts of ill will, thought of harming others (***pāpake akusale vitakke vitakkeyyātha, seyyathidaṃ— kāma vitakkaṃ, byāpāda vitakkaṃ, vihiṃsā vitakkaṃ***).
- Another verse in the same *sutta*: "*Ayoniso manasikārā, so* ***vitakkehi*** *khajjasi..*" or "with the wrong mindset (*ayoniso manasikara*), he is burdened with such defiled thoughts."

8. Succinct explanations can also be found in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vitakka Sutta (SN 56.7)."

Following is the basic idea of the whole *sutta*:

- "*Bhikkhus*, do not engage in evil unwholesome thoughts which are: sensual thoughts, thoughts of ill will, thought of harming others (***pāpake akusale vitakke vitakkeyyātha, seyyathidaṃ— kāma vitakkaṃ, byāpāda vitakkaṃ, vihiṃsā vitakkaṃ***).
- For what reason? These thoughts, *bhikkhus*, are without **real substance** (*Nete, bhikkhave, vitakkā* ***attha****saṃhitā*), irrelevant to the fundamentals of the holy life, and do not lead to escape from the sense world, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to *Nibbāna.*
  When your mind starts such thoughts, *bhikkhus*, you should think: 'This will lead to suffering'.
- Instead, you should think: 'These are the causes of suffering'; you should think: 'The way to cessation of suffering by cultivating thoughts of renunciation and compassion." Such thoughts will lead to escape from the sense world, to dispassion, to cessation, to peace, to direct knowledge, to enlightenment, to *Nibbāna*."

Vitakka/Vicāra and *Savitakka* and *Savicāra*

9. In many instances, the words ***vitakka*** and ***vicāra*** specifically indicate "bad thoughts" or defiled thoughts.

- However, in some cases, they indicate "all kinds of thoughts good or bad."
- Therefore, one must be able to identify which meaning to use in the context that the words are used. The above examples illustrate that point.

10. When one generates thoughts that specifically do not involve ***kāma rāga*** **or other** ***akusala*** — but the opposites (***nekkhamma/kusala***) — those are called ***savitakka*** and ***savicāra***.

- That is how one gets into *jhāna*: By eliminating (or suppressing) ***vitakka/vicāra*** and cultivating ***savitakka/savicāra***.

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11. You can clearly see that in any *sutta* that describe *jhāna*. For example, in "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)": "..*So kho ahaṃ, ānanda,* ***vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ*** *vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharāmi.*"

- **Translated:** "Ānanda, when one stays away from ***vitakka/vicāra*** with ***kāma rāga*** **and** ***akusala*** AND cultivates ***savitakka/savicāra***, one will get into the first *jhāna*."
- However, *vitakka/vicāra* with *kāma rāga* and/or *akusala* may come to the mind once in a while.

Avitakka and *Avicāra*

12. **The absence of any "bad thoughts" is indicated by *avitakka, avicāra*.** In this case, one would only have *savitakka, savicāra* (good thoughts).

- This happens in the second *jhāna*, where only *savitakka/savicāra* remains.
- Therefore, it is important to realize that *avitakka/avicāra* DOES NOT mean "without thoughts"; it just means the absence of bad thoughts.

13. This is very clear at the end of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Upakkilesa Suatta (MN 128)": " ..*So kho ahaṃ, anuruddhā, savitakkampi savicāraṃ samādhiṃ bhāvesiṃ, avitakkampi vicāramattaṃ samādhiṃ bhāvesiṃ, avitakkampi avicāraṃ samādhiṃ bhāvesiṃ, sappītikampi samādhiṃ bhāvesiṃ, nippītikampi samādhiṃ bhāvesiṃ, sātasahagatampi samādhiṃ bhāvesiṃ, upekkhāsahagatampi samādhiṃ bhāvesiṃ..*"

- **Translated:** "Anuruddha, I systematically cultivated the following *samādhi* in this order. *Savitakka savicāra samādhi, avitakka vicāramattaṃ samādhi* (absence of *vitakka* with a trace of *vicāra* left), *avitakka avicāra samādhi* (absence of *vitakka* and *vicāra*), *sappītikampi samādhi* (with *pīti* or joy), *nippītikampi samādhi* (absence of *pīti* or joy), *sātasahagatampi samādhi* (with only *sukha* left), and *upekkhāsahagata samādhi* (*sukha* also removed to be in the *upekkhā* state)."
- What the Buddha described above is getting to the first jhāna with *savitakka savicāra,* and then to the second jhāna with the absence of *vitakka* and *vicāra* (with *pīti* and *sukha*), third jhāna with just sukha (joy removed), and the fourth jhāna with *sukha* also removed and with just *upekkhā*).
- For a description of *Ariya jhāna* with *jhānānga* removed at each successive stage, see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Rahogata Sutta (SN 36.11)," for example.

Summary

14. *Saṅkhāra* are different types, so it is necessary to get an idea of how to use these basic definitions of *vitakka/vicāra, savitakka/savicāra* and *avitakka/avicāra*, in terms of different types of *saṅkhāra*: *puññābhisaṅkhāra, apuññābhisaṅkhāra, anenjābhisaṅkhāra*; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra" and "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

- Further details in the post, "Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)."

15. Finally, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Savitakkasavicara Sutta (SN 43.3)" clearly states that *Nibbāna* is reached (*asaṅkhatagāmi maggo*) via the following sequence. *Savitakka savicāra samādhi, avitakka vicāramatta samādhi, avitakka avicāra samādhi.*

"*Katamo ca, bhikkhave, asaṅkhatagāmimaggo? Savitakkasavicāro samādhi, avitakkavicāramatto samādhi, avitakkaavicāro samādhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, asaṅkhatagāmimaggo.*"

4.7.3 Jhānic Experience in Detail – Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)

March 2, 2019; revised January 3, 2021

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Introduction

1. The *jhānic* experiences in the first four *jhāna* are clearly described by the Buddha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."

- There are many conceptions about what it feels like to be in different *jhānic* states. Therefore, it is good to have a description by the Buddha himself in order to get a good idea about the experience.
- It is a long *sutta*, and I will just provide the English translation for the *sutta's* relevant sections. The Pāli version can be found in the link above.

2. *Jhānic* experiences in *Ariya* and *anāriya jhānā* may have some common features, since these *jhānā* correspond to mental states of *rūpāvacara brahma* realms. However, the Buddha clearly stated that *anāriya jhāna* are "burdened" and not as peaceful as *Ariya jhānā*; see, "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)– Akuppā Cetovimutti."

- To get into *jhāna*, one must transcend (elevate one's mindset above) the sensual realms (*kāma loka*).
- This means one's mind needs to be devoid of any sensual thoughts (*kāma rāga*) and *dasa akusala* AND focused on thoughts of renunciation and compassion (*savitakka/savicāra*). In any *sutta* describing the *jhānic* experience, there is this phrase: "*So* ***vivicceva kāmehi, vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ*** *vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati...*"
- **Translated: "Withdrawn from sensuality, withdrawn from *akusala* thoughts, and engaged in thoughts of renunciation and compassion**, he enters and remains in the first *jhāna...*"

Experience in the First *Jhāna*

3. "Withdrawn from sense pleasures, withdrawn from *akusala* thoughts, he enters and dwells in the first *jhāna*, which is accompanied by ***savitakka*** and ***savicāra*** (applied and sustained **moral** thoughts). His mind is filled with joy (*pīti*) and the whole body is suffused and filled with bodily happiness (*sukha*) born from withdrawal from sense pleasures (***kāma***) and ***akusala*** thoughts. This rapture and happiness suffuse his entire body. (It should be noted that ***vitakka/vicāra*** or ***kāma*** and ***akusala*** thoughts are not completely removed in the first *jhāna*).

- "Great king, suppose a skilled bath attendant or his apprentice were to pour soap powder into a metal basin, sprinkle it with water, and knead it into a ball so that the ball of soap-powder be pervaded by moisture, encompassed by moisture, suffused with moisture inside and out, yet would not trickle. Similarly, the great king, the *bhikkhu*, drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses his entire body with the rapture and happiness born of seclusion. **This, great king, is a visible fruit of a life abstaining from *kāma* and *akusala*.**

Experience in the Second *Jhāna*

4. "Further, great king, with the **removal of *vitakka/vicāra*** (**but *savitakka/savicāra* remain**), the *bhikkhu* enters and dwells in the second *jhāna*, which is accompanied by internal confidence and unification of mind, is without applied and sustained thought, and is filled with the rapture and happiness born of concentration. He drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses his body with this rapture and happiness born of concentration, so that there is no part of his entire body which is not suffused by this rapture and happiness.

- "Great king, suppose there was a deep lake whose waters welled up from below. It would have no inlet for water from the east, west, north, or south, nor would it be refilled from time to time with showers of rain; yet a current of cool water, seeping through underground channels, would maintain the water level, so that the entire lake is filled to the brim. Similarly, the great king, the *bhikkhu*, drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses his body with the rapture and happiness born of concentration, so that his entire

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body is suffused with this rapture and happiness. This too, great king, **is a visible fruit of a life abstaining from *kāma* and *akusala*.**

Experience in the Third *Jhāna*

5. "Further, great king, with the fading away of rapture (***pīti* or joy is lost**), the *bhikkhu* dwells in equanimity, mindful and clearly comprehending, and experiences happiness with the body. Thus he enters and dwells in the third *jhāna*, of which the noble ones declare: 'He dwells happily with equanimity and mindfulness.' He drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses his body with this happiness free from rapture so that his entire body is suffused with this happiness.

- "Great king, suppose in a lotus pond there were blue, white, or red lotuses that have been born in the water, grow in the water, and never rise above the water, but flourish immersed in the water. From their tips to their roots, they would be drenched, steeped, saturated, and suffused with cool water, so that there would be no part of those lotuses not suffused with cool water. Similarly, the great king, the *bhikkhu*, drenches, steeps, saturates, and suffuses his body with happiness free from rapture so that this happiness suffuse his entire body. This too, great king, **is a visible fruit of a life abstaining from *kāma* and *akusala*.**

Experience in the Fourth *Jhāna*

6. "Further, great king, with the abandoning of bodily pleasure (***sukha***), the *bhikkhu* enters and dwells in the fourth *jhāna*, which is neither pleasant nor painful and contains mindfulness fully purified by equanimity. He sits suffusing his body with a pure bright mind so that there is no part of his entire body not suffused by a pure bright mind (**one's physical body no longer is felt, and only a "white light" is discerned; that white light is the only "*rūpa*" left to be cognized**).

- "Great king, suppose a man were to be sitting covered from the head down by a white cloth so that there would be no part of his entire body not suffused by the white cloth. In the same way, great king, the *bhikkhu* sits suffusing his body with a pure bright mind, so that there is no part of his entire body not suffused by a pure bright mind. This, too, **is a visible fruit of a life abstaining from *kāma* and *akusala*.**

The *sutta* now proceeds to describe what could be further accomplished by the *bhikkhu*.

- "With his mind thus concentrated, purified, and bright, unblemished, free from defects, pliant, malleable, steady, and attained to imperturbability, he directs and inclines it to knowledge and vision. He discerns: 'This body of mine is endowed with form, composed of the four primary elements, born from mother and father, nourished with rice and porridge, subject to inconstancy, rubbing, pressing, dissolution, and dispersion. And this consciousness of mine is supported here and bound up here.'
- In other words, the *bhikkhu* can now see the *ādīnava* (drawbacks) and the burden of carrying one's own physical body.

Essential Background to Attain *Jhāna*

7. *Sāmaññaphala Sutta* is an excellent *sutta* which also discusses **in detail** how one can setup the necessary background to attain *jhāna*.

- It is too long a *sutta* to be discussed in a post. One could read *Bhikkhu* Bodhi's English translation to get a good idea: "WebLink: PDF Download: The Sāmaññaphala Sutta." It is a pdf file that one can download.

8. Also note that while the abandonment of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* is needed for even *anāriya jhānā.*

- *Ariya jhānā* require a level of comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* also, and thus only *Ariyā* (Noble Persons) can attain them; see, "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)– Akuppā Cetovimutti."

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Eventual Outcomes of *Ariya* and *Anariya Jhāna*

9. Both types of *jhāna* lead to rebirth in corresponding *Brahma* realms. However, those with *anāriya jhāna* will come back to the human realm at the end of their lifetime, and could be born in the *apāyā* in the future.

- On the other hand, those who have cultivated *Ariya jhānā* will never come back to *kāma loka,* let alone *apāyā*. They will attain *Nibbāna* (*Arahanthood*) in *Brahma* realms.

10. This is clearly explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamanānākaraṇa Sutta (AN 4.123)" and several other *suttā*.

For example, regarding those who have cultivated the first *anāriya jhāna*: "*Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco puggalo vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. So tadassādeti, taṃ nikāmeti, tena ca vittiṃ āpajjati. Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālaṃ kurumāno brahmakāyikānaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjati. Brahmakāyikānaṃ, bhikkhave, devānaṃ kappo āyuppamāṇaṃ.* ***Tattha puthujjano yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati****."*

- **Translated:** "An individual, withdrawn from *kāma rāga*, withdrawn *akusala*, enters and remains in the first *jhāna* filled with joy (*pīti*) and the whole body is suffused and filled with bodily happiness (*sukha*). If he does not lose the *jhāna* at death, he is born among the *Brahmakāyika devas*, who have a life span of an eon. **These normal humans (*puthujjano),* having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, may go to hell (*niraya*), to the animal realm, and the state of the hungry ghosts (*peta*).**"

On the other hand, those who have attained the first *Ariya jhāna*: " *Bhagavato pana sāvako tattha yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā tasmiṃyeva bhave parinibbāyati.*"

- **Translated:** "But a disciple of the Blessed One, having stayed there, attains *Nibbāna* from there."

11. The same is stated about those who have attained the second, third, and fourth *anāriya jhāna*. None of them is free from the *apāyā*.

- On the other hand, those who have cultivated *Ariya jhāna* attain *Nibbāna* from those corresponding *Brahma* realms.

12. Finally, this discussion about getting rid of (or at least suppressing) any sensual thoughts or *kāma rāga* may discourage those new to Buddha Dhamma.

- That should not be the case; see, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?" and "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth."

4.7.4 Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)

October 4, 2017; #14 revised on October 5, 2017; November 15, 2017; November 30, 2018 (including #8)

1. There are three categories: One can attain *magga phala* without *jhāna*; one can attain *jhāna* and not have *magga phala*; one can attain *magga phala* and then cultivate *jhāna.* In order to sort these out, one needs to understand the difference between *Ariya* (supramundane) and *anāriya* (mundane) *jhāna*, and whether (and how) they are related to *magga phala*.

- In a series of posts based on material from the *Tipiṭaka*, I will try to put together a consistent picture. Please let me know (lal@puredhamma.net) if I make any mistakes, because this is of great importance to everyone.

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- Even before the Buddha, ancient *yogis* cultivated *jhāna* and attained what they believed to be ***cetovimutti*** (liberation via calming the mind). But the Buddha showed that such *cetovimutti* is temporary; one would not attain ***akuppā cetovimutti*** (true and unshakable liberation) until *Nibbāna* is realized; see, "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)– Akuppā Cetovimutti."

2. *Nibbāna* can be approached two ways via *jhāna*: (i) through any of the *rūpavacara anāriya* (mundane) *jhāna*, (ii) first attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage and then through *Ariya* (supramundane) *jhāna*.

- Of course there is another way attain *Nibbāna*, without any *jhāna*, in ***paññāvimutti*** (liberation with wisdom); see below.
- If one takes the path via *Ariya jhāna*., then one would attain *cetovimutti* and *paññāvimutti* at the same time, and is said to be an ***ubhatovimutti*** *Arahant*. This is also called ***akuppa cetovimutti*** or unshakable/unbreakable *cetovimutti.* That is what the Buddha attained on the night of the Enlightenment. [***ubhato*** : [ind.] in both ways or sides; twofold.][It is also called 'unshakable deliverance of mind' （***akuppa-cetovimutti***）][***akuppa*** : [adj.] steadfast； unshakable.]
- Those *yogis* who attain *cetovimutti* via *anāriya jhāna* have not removed *avijjā anusaya*; that is why they are not liberated. The they can be reborn in the *kāma loka*; see #4 below.

3. As the table below shows, the level of suffering decreases AND levels of both mundane and *nirāmisa sukha* increases as one moves successively to higher realms.

- In the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma – Introduction," we described a model that consisted of 31 concentric "shells." The actuality is pretty much close to that analogy, with some additional features. I have compiled a summary of the 31 realms in the table "31 Realms of Existence."
- From those posts, it is clear that as one goes from the *apāyā* through higher *kāma loka* to *rūpa loka*, and finally to *arūpa loka*, attachments to "this world" get weaker AND actual suffering decreases too.
- **It seems that the highest *arūpa* realm is quite close to *Nibbāna*. In a way it is — but technically it is far away too.**

4. *Yogis* like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddakarāmaputta, who had attained highest *arūpa jhānā* at the time of the Buddha, believed that the highest *arūpavacara* state was *Nibbāna* (or final release, *vimutti*). Indeed, at that highest realm of *Ne'va saññā nā saññā,* connection to "this world" is ALMOST cutoff, and one can experience the "highest bliss" that can be attained without realizing *Nibbāna*.

- The Buddha (or rather the *Bodhisattva*), who learned to attain those highest *jhānā* from those *yogis*, realized that all living beings had attained those state many times in the rebirth process, and that is not the end of suffering.
- He realized that until one completely removes all ten *saṃsāric* bonds (see, "Dasa Samyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process "), one will never be free of ANY of the 31 realms. As discussed in that post, one SUCCESSIVELY and PERMANENTLY leaves the lowest realms (*apāyā*), higher *kāma loka* realms, and then *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms by breaking those bonds (*saṃyojana*) few at a time (by following the Noble Path).

5. However, one can TEMPORARILY enjoy the highest *arūpa* realms existence by cultivating even the corresponding MUNDANE *jhāna,* i.e., those attained without removing ANY *saṃyojana*.

- For example, while we live in this human realm we are not subjected to the harsh sufferings in the *apāyā*, and we can enjoy the sense pleasures, mixed in with some suffering.
- In the same way, when one is born in the *rūpa* realms, one will not be subjected to the sufferings in the human realm, and the suffering is even less going from *rūpa* to *arūpa* realms.
- However, since no *saṃyojana* are broken, one can be reborn in any of the realms in the future (just like a normal human can be born in the *apāyā* in the future).

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6. The easiest way to understand *jhānic* states is to examine the properties of the *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms, in comparison to those of the lower realms. The following table can be useful here.

Realm(s)	Level of Suffering	Causes	Generation/Stopping of Saṅkhāra
Niraya (Hell)	Incessant suffering	**Dosa**: Killing (especially humans), torture, rapes, etc	
Peta (Hungry Ghosts)	Starvation	**Excess greed** (may I get all, not others)	
Vinipatha Asura	Spend time aimlessly; mostly heavy bodies not movable	**Moha** : *Thina middha*, *vicikicchā* (lazy, lacking wisdom).	
Animal (Tirisan: "tiri" + "san" or with all 3 causes)	Combinations of above three types	Combinations of *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*	
Human (Manussa: "mana" + "ussa" or with advanced mind)	In between lower and higher realms	In between lower and higher realms	**Almost all saṅkhāra responsible births in all realms occur here.**
Deva (similar to human bodies, but much less dense)	Mostly no physical suffering and abundant sense pleasures (*kāma*). But there is mental stress.	Good *kamma vipāka* (done with *alobha*, *adosa*, *amoha*). Mental stress arises due to *kāma rāga*.	
Rupavacara Brahma (only manomaya kāya; cannot be even seen with a microscope)	Mental stress is much reduced. Mainly jhānic pleasures. Viparinama dukha when close death.	Suppression of kāma rāga and cultivation of rupavacara jhāna (while in the human realm)	
Arupavacara Brahma (only hadaya vatthu and mind)	Only *arupavacara jhānic* pleasures. *Viparinama dukha* when close death.	Cultivation of *arupavacara jhāna* (while in the human realm)	
Nibbāna	Permanent release from all suffering.	Elimination of all causes for existence, i.e., *rāgakkhaya*, *dosakkhaya*, *mohakkhaya*.	**Mostly attained in the human realm, but possible in higher realms, especially after the Sotāpanna stage.**

7. If you look at any *sutta* describing ***Ariya jhāna***, it always starts with verse, "*..bhikkhu* ***vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi*** *savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ* ***paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ*** *upasampajja viharati..*"

We can see why the above table is helpful in understanding how one gets to *jhānā* by first **abstaining from *akusala kamma*** (***vivicca akusalehi dhammehi***) and then ***kāma rāga*** (***vivicceva kāmehi***).

- Until one abstains from *akusala kamma,* one has no hope of escaping the *apāyā*. Here abstaining does not mean complete removal.
- Until one overcomes *kāma rāga,* one has no hope of escaping the *kāma loka* and ascending to the *rūpavacara* realms.

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- However, one does not need to REMOVE *kāma rāga* (with *anusaya*) in order to attain mundane (*anāriya*) *jhāna*, even up to the highest in the *arūpa loka*. This is why Alara Kalama and Uddaka Rama Putta, who are in the *arūpa* realms right now, could be even reborn in the *apāyā* in future lives.
- All one needs to do is to have the mind focused on a neutral object in order to make it free of *akusala* thoughts and *kāma rāga* while in the *jhāna*.

8. We can summarize the above conclusions in the following way:

- One who is frequently engaged in *akusala kamma* is LIKELY to be born in the 4 lowest realms (*apāyā*).
- One who is frequently engaged in *kusala kamma*, AND avoids *akusala kamma*, but has *kāmacchanda*, is LIKELY to be born in the human or the *deva* realms.
- One who abstains from *akusala kamma* and *kāmacchanda*, can cultivate *rūpavacara* or *arūpavacara jhāna.* With those ***mahaggata kusala kamma*** (*mahaggata* means higher)**,** one WILL be reborn in *rūpa* or *arūpa loka* **at the next *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition.**
- However, one must not lose that *jhāna* until that moment, which means through possibly more births as a human within the current human *bhava*.
- **This also explains why some people can easily get to *jhāna*. Those had cultivated *jhāna* in recent human births within this human *bhava*.**
- However, if it is an *anāriya jhāna*, one has not been released from the *apāyā,* since one has not removed *avijjā* by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.

9. **If one can stay away from *akusala* and also suppress *kāma rāga,* then one's mind AUTOMATICALLY moves to higher mental states.** In other words, one starts feeling *jhānic* pleasures ("*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*").

- When one is striving to discard *kāma rāga*, one is said to be cultivating ***mahaggata kusala kamma***. Here one goes beyond mundane moral actions (*puñña kamma*) of giving, helping, etc, and lose (or suppress) craving for *kāma rāga*.
- Therefore, while *kusala kamma* lead to rebirth in higher *kāma loka* (human and *deva* realms), *mahaggata kusala kamma* lead to rebirth in *rūpa* and *arūpa loka*. One of course experiences those *jhānic* states in this life as well.
- The *jhānic* experiences experienced by *yogis* correspond to various *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms; see, "31 Realms of Existence." It is like one is born in the corresponding *brahma* realm for the duration of the *jhānic* experience.

10. *Mahaggata kusala kamma* can be cultivated using *Ariya* (supramundane) or *anāriya* (mundane) meditation techniques, and get to the same mental states (the difference is in how one gets there and how permanent those states are).

- Now it is easy to see that the key to cultivating the first mundane *jhāna* is to stay away from *akusala* and also to suppress sense cravings. Then one's mind will automatically pointed to the first *rūpavacara* mental state, i.e., first *jhāna*.

11. One can get to the ***first anāriya jhāna*** by maintaining one's attention on a fixed **mundane object (breath or a *kasina* object).**

- When one does this for long periods of time and also abstains from sensual pleasures (like ancient *yogis* did), one can get in to the first *jhāna*, followed by successively higher *jhāna*, when one practices for longer times.
- The conventional breath meditation is a form of *kasina* meditation, since it focuses on the breath.

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12. In fact, this is how all living beings in the lower realms get into the *Abhassara Brahma* realm when our world system (*Cakkavata*) is destroyed in a "*loka vināsaya*." When the Sun starts heating up, fine sense objects start being destroyed, and with time less and less sensual objects will be there to trigger *kāma rāga*. All humans and animal will move to higher realms (over an *antakkappa* which lasts billions of years).

- When the human and animal realms are destroyed, all those beings would be reborn in the first *rūpa* realms. When that is gradually destroyed, they will be reborn in the next higher realm and so on, until they are all in the *Abhassara* realm.
- Even though all dense material realms are all destroyed at the end of the *loka vinasaya*, all *rūpa* and *arūpa* realms at or above the *Abhassara* realm remain intact. When the Solar system is "re-formed" after billions of years, they all gradually come down to lower realms. I will discuss this in more detail when I start explaining the *Agganna Sutta*.
- **Just like none of those living beings had removed their *anusaya* (or broken the *saṃyojana*), one engaged in mundane *jhānā* has not removed them either.**

13. On the other hand, one gets to the **first *Ariya jhāna*** by **focusing on the "cooling down" (*Nibbāna*)** that one has seen. This is normally done by reciting/contemplating the verse "*etan santan etan paneetan*…", and also recalling one's own experience of *Nibbāna* (cooling down).

The best example from the *Tipiṭaka* is Ven. Moggallana. We all know that Ven. Moggallana (who was Kolita before becoming a *bhikkhu*), attained the *Sotāpanna* stage upon hearing a single verse uttered by Ven. Assaji and then conveyed to him by Upatissa.

- Then Kolita (and Upatissa) went to see the Buddha and were ordained. It took them a week to two weeks to attain the *Arahanthood*. The WebLink: suttacentral: Moggallana Saṃyutta in the Saṃyutta Nikāya has 9 *suttā* that describe step-by-step how Ven. Moggallana attained *Ariya jhānā* one by one **starting with the first *Ariya jhāna*. Thus it is quite clear that the *Sotāpanna* stage comes before any *Ariya* (supramundane) *jhāna*.**
- In particular, the very first *sutta* there describes how the Buddha came to him by *iddhi bala* and encouraged him to cultivate the first *Ariya jhāna* (WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamajhāna Pañhā Sutta; SN 40.1): "*..Atha kho maṃ, āvuso, bhagavā iddhiyā upasaṅkamitvā etadavoca: 'moggallāna, moggallāna. Mā, brāhmaṇa, paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ pamādo, paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ saṇṭhapehi, paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ ekodiṃ karohi, paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ samādahā'ti..*" OR "..the Buddha came to me by *iddhi bala* and told me: Moggallana, Moggallana, Brahmana, do not become delayed, cultivate the first *jhāna*..."
- The subsequent *suttā* in the *Moggallana Saṃyutta* describe how the Buddha instructed him through each successive *rūpavacara* and *arūpavacara jhāna* all the way up to *nirodha samāpatti,* where Ven. Moggallana developed all *iddhi bala* and became second only to the Buddha in supernormal powers.

14. Thus, one needs to be at least a *Sotāpanna* in order to start cultivating *Ariya jhāna*. However, one will truly be in the first *Ariya jhāna* only when one has REMOVED *kāma rāga;* see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Jhāna Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 9.36)." We will discuss this in detail in the next post.

- This means one is essentially an *Anāgāmī* by the time one is fully absorbed in the first *Ariya jhāna.* But a *Sotāpanna* could be in the vicinity of the first *Ariya jhāna*. There are three levels for a given *jhāna*: *hīna* (weak), *majjima* (middle), and *panīta* (strong).
- After that one gets to higher *Ariya jhānā* by doing *vipassana* (insight meditation) on the *anicca* nature of that *jhāna* that one is already in, i.e., by **eliminating successive *jhāna* factors** OR one may be able to attain *Nibbāna* directly form there; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Sallekha Sutta (Majjhim Nikāya 8)."
- Since any *jhāna* is associated with either a *rūpa* realm or an *arūpa* realm, those states are subject to the *anicca* nature, just like everything else that belong to this world of 31 realms.

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15. Those who have higher wisdom can attain even the *Arahant* stage **before** getting to any *jhāna* **or** from lower *Ariya* or *anāriya jhāna*; they are called *paññāvimutti Arahants*. They may cultivate (*Ariya*) *jhāna* after the *Arahanthood*, in order to seek relief until the end of the current life. *Jhānic* pleasures are the only "pleasures" recommended by the Buddha; of course, they are not sense pleasures belonging to *kāma loka*.

- It is said that those *Arahants* can cultivate all *Ariya jhāna* (and become *cetovimutti* as well) and then get into *nirodha samāpatti*, where full *Nibbānic* bliss can be experienced for up to 7 days at a time.
- Such *Arahants* are called "liberated both ways" or *ubhatovimutti*.

16. A question arises as to whether one can get into *anāriya jhāna* while cultivating *Ariya jhāna*, i.e., while following *kammatthana* that are based on contemplating the *Tilakkhaṇa* and taking *Nibbāna* as the *ārammana*. The unknown factor here is whether the meditator is really focused on those things.

- **Therefore, that is a question that can be answered only by the person in question.** Just because one is reciting *Ariya kammatthana* does not necessarily mean one will get to *Ariya jhāna*. What really matters is whether one has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage first, because one needs to keep *Nibbāna* as the *arammana*, not a worldly object (even light).
- We know that Devadatta, who had cultivated *anāriya jhāna* AND attained *iddhi* powers, finally ended up in an *apāya*. This was despite the fact that he had been exposed to the correct interpretation of *Tilakkhaṇa*; apparently he had not grasped them.
- I will discuss more on this in the next post, where I will present evidence from the *Tipiṭaka* itself to make things clear.

17. However, *anāriya jhāna* cannot be labelled as "bad." They are higher mental states, and those who have cultivated *anāriya jhāna* will have an easier time attaining *magga phala*. One needs to contemplate the *anicca* nature of *jhānic* states.

- One can attain any *magga phala* up to full *Nibbāna* (*Arahanthood*) **from the vicinity of ANY of the *anāriya jhāna*.** This is how the 89 *citta* become 121 *citta*; see, "The 89 (121) Types of Citta."
- When it is said, "**from the vicinity of ANY of the *anāriya jhāna***," that includes the vicinity of the first mundane *jhāna*, i.e., just *upacara samādhi*. This is why *jhāna* are not NECESSARY to attain *magga phala,* and it is "*Sammā Samādhi*" in the Noble Eightfold Path that gets to *Sammā Ñāṇa* and *Sammā Vimutti* (i.e., Arahanthood).

18. The key question is "If mundane and supramundane *jhāna* seem to have the same characteristics that one feels, then how does one determine whether one has attained mundane or supramundane *jhāna*?

- As we saw above, one gets to the first *Ariya jhāna* by REMOVING *kāma rāga*, not just by suppressing as in *anāriya jhāna*, i.e., one is essentially an *Anāgāmī* if one can be fully absorbed in the first *Ariya jhāna*.
- While it may not be straight forward to determine whether one is a *Sotāpanna* or not, it is fairly easy to determine whether one is an *Anāgāmī*, who has removed all *kāma rāga:* one's CRAVING for ALL sense pleasures (food, music, sex, etc) should not be there anymore. This DOES NOT mean, for example, one should not eat tasty foods, or that one will not taste the sweetness of sugar. But one will not have the urge to drink or to engage in sex, for example.

19. Finally, a common problem is that some people get attached to mundane *jhānic* pleasures, and get trapped there (for some people even a state of calmness is enough!). They need to realize that *anāriya* (mundane) *jhānic* states also belong to this world, and until those bonds to a given realm in this world are removed, one would remain in the rebirth process (and thus future suffering in the *apāyā* is not eliminated). **We all have attained highest *anāriya jhānā* numerous times in our deep past.**

- Those who can easily get into *anāriya* (mundane) *jhāna,* can do so most likely because they had cultivated *jhāna* in recent past lives, possibly in the current human *bhava*.

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- Furthermore, those who are unable to get into even *anāriya* (mundane) *jhāna*, should not be concerned. It could just be that they had not cultivated *jhāna* in recent births. As discussed above, *jhāna* are not necessary to attain *magga phala*. **Thus there could be some people who have even attained the *Sotāpanna* stage, but may be stressed unnecessarily because of their inability to get in to *jhāna*.**

The basic layout was presented in this post. We will get into details in the upcoming posts.

4.7.5 Paññāvimutti – Arahanthood without Jhāna

September 12, 2018; revised February 24, 2019

[***paññāvimutti*** : [f.] emancipation through insight.][WebLink: suttacentral: Paññāvimutti Sutta (AN 9:44)]

1. One could get to *magga phala* without ever going through *jhāna*. The Noble Eightfold Path, at its completion, takes one to *Sammā Samādhi*. Then one becomes an *Arahant* by completing the next two steps — *Sammā Ñāna* and *Sammā Vimutti* — to become an *Arahant*.

This is stated clearly in the WebLink: suttacentral: Maha Cattarisika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 117): "..*Tatra, bhikkhave,* ***sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti****. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti?* ***Sammādiṭṭhissa, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo pahoti****, sammāsaṅkappassa* ***sammāvācā*** *pahoti, sammāvācassa* ***sammākammanto*** *pahoti, sammākammantassa* ***sammāājīvo*** *pahoti, sammāājīvassa* ***sammāvāyāmo*** *pahoti, sammāvāyāmassa* ***sammāsati*** *pahoti, sammāsatissa* ***sammāsamādhi*** *pahoti, sammāsamādhissa* ***sammāñāṇaṃ*** *pahoti, sammāñāṇassa* ***sammāvimutti*** *pahoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave,* ***aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgato sekkho****,* ***dasaṅgasamannāgato Arahā hoti****. Tatrapi sammāñāṇena aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā vigatā* ***bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchanti..***"

- Thus the Noble Path starts with *Sammā Diṭṭhi* and gets to *Sammā Samādhi*, at which point one is said to have completed **8 steps and is still a *sekkha* (in training): *aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgato sekkho.***
- Then one fully comprehends the real nature with ***Sammā Ñāna*** and attains full release or ***Sammā Vimutti*** (*Arahantship*). Now, one has completed all 10 steps and is no longer in training (***dasaṅga-samannāgato Arahā hoti*).**

2. **Each and every one of us have had attained *anāriya jhāna* in many births during our deep past.** Thus attaining a *jhāna* is insignificant compared to attaining a *magga phala.*

- It is also clear that even a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* is million-fold better than one with not just the ability to get into *jhāna*, but even *abhiññā* powers, including the ability to travel through the air, create things by mind power, etc.
- Attaining *jhānā* can sometimes become a hindrance since many people get attached to *jhāna* and stop making an effort towards *magga phala,* which is sad to see.

3. It takes time to cultivate *jhāna*, **especially for those who had not cultivated them in recent past lives.** People who have high wisdom (*paññā*) may attain *magga phala* (even *Arahanthood*) within a very short time, and they are called ***paññāvimutti Arahants*** or "wisdom-liberated." Bahiya Daruchiriya, who attained *Arahantship* upon listening to a single verse by the Buddha is a good example; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahiya Sutta (Udana 1.10)."

- There are many who got to *magga phala* without ever getting to a *jhāna*. Alavaka Yaksa, Upatissa, Kolita, Aṅgulimāla, minister Santati, and many others attained various stages of *Nibbāna* by just listening to a single *desanā.*
- The *Susima Sutta*, also called "WebLink: suttacentral: Susimaparibbājaka Sutta (Samyutta Nikāya 12.70)" discusses a group of *Arahants* who were *paññāvimutti Arahants.*

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- In that *sutta*, the Buddha explained to Susima that there are *Arahants* without any supernormal (*iddhi*) powers, because they were *paññāvimutti Arahants.* Once attaining *Arahanthood*, they have no desire to cultivate *iddhi* (*abhiññā*) powers, since they have seen the *anicca* nature of those powers too.

4. In some exceptional cases, one may simultaneously gain *abhiññā* powers together with the *Arahanthood*, within a very short time.

- There are many who got to *magga phala* without ever getting to a *jhāna*. Alavaka Yaksa, Upatissa, kolita, Aṅgulimāla, minister Santati, and many others attained various stages of *Nibbāna* by just listening to a single *desanā.* The account of Santati can be found at*: "*WebLink: tipitaka.net: Dhammapada Verse 142."
- Another prominent example in the *Tipiṭaka* is the story about the Culapanthaka Thero. He almost disrobed because he could not even memorize a single *gāthā* after trying hard for months. But with Buddha's help, he was able to attain the *Arahanthood* in a day, and simultaneously achieved *abhiññā* powers as well: "WebLink: suttacentral.net: Cūḷapanthaka."

5. Some argue that WebLink: suttacentral: Sacca Vibhanga Sutta (MN 141) states that *Sammā Samādhi* is attained ONLY WHEN one attains the first four *jhānā*. This is not correct. All one needs to do is to get to the vicinity of to ANY of those four *jhānā* (thus one could get to the *upcāra samādhi* for the first *jhāna,* for example), and attain *magga phala* from there.

- Here is the relevant verse from the above *sutta*: "*..Katamo cāvuso, sammāsamādhi? Idhāvuso, bhikkhu vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ* ***paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati****, vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā ajjhattaṃ sampasādanaṃ cetaso ekodibhāvaṃ avitakkaṃ avicāraṃ samādhijaṃ pītisukhaṃ* ***dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati****, pītiyā ca virāgā upekkhako ca viharati ... pe ... tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ ... pe ...* ***catutthaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati****, ayaṃ vuccatāvuso: 'sammāsamādhi'..."*
- The key is "***upasampajja viharati***," which means one stays close to any one of those *jhāna* ("*upa*" means close or in the vicinity), which means one can either get to that *jhāna* or can get to *upcāra samādhi* for that *jhāna.* This is why it is not labelled as "*Sammā Jhāna*" but "*Sammā Samādhi.*"
- This becomes clear when you analyze how 89 types of *citta* become 121 *citta*, as explained below.

6. The 89 (or 121) *citta* existing in the 31 realms are discussed in "The 89 (121) Types of Citta."

- There are 54 *citta* that could arise mainly in the *kamavacara* realms; 15 and 12 *citta* respectively mainly arise in the *rupāvacara* and *arupāvacara* realms respectively. The total so far is 81 *citta.*
- **Without going through any *jhāna* at all**, there are 8 *citta* associated with the attainment of the four stages of *Nibbāna* (4 *magga citta* and 4 *phala citta*). Then the total number of *citta* is 81 +8 = 89.
- Now, one can attain each *magga phala* **from the vicinity** of 5 *rupāvacara jhāna*. For example, the *Arahanthood* can be reached from the vicinity of each of those five *jhāna*. Thus in this case, the total number of *citta* becomes 81 + 40 = 121.
- **It is to be noted that the five *jhāna* in the terminology of *Abhidhamma* are the same as 4 *jhāna* in the terminology of the *suttā*; the first *jhāna* in *sutta* terminology is split into two in *Abhidhamma*.**

7. In *Anhidhamma*, the above explanation becomes even more clear when one looks at the *citta vīthi* to attain a *magga phala*):

B B B B B "BC BU MD P **U A G M** P P" B B B B B…..

where, B = *bhavaṅga*, BC (*bhavaṅga calana*), BU (*bhavaṅga upacceda*), MD = mind door, P = *parikamma*, **U = *upacāra*, A = *anuloma*, G = *gotrabhu* (change of lineage), M = *magga citta***, P = *phala citta.*

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- **So, there is no *jhāna citta* preceding the *magga* or *phala citta* in the *citta vīthi* for a *magga phala*.** Once one gets to the *upacāra samādhi*, it goes through *anuloma* and *gotrabhu* (change of lineage) to the *magga* and *phala citta*. This is why *upacāra samādhi* (which is *Sammā Samādhi*) is enough to attain even the *Arahanthood*.

8. On the other hand, a *citta vīthi* to attain a *jhāna*:

B B B B B "BC BU MD P **U A G J**" B B B B B…..

where, **J = *jhāna citta.***

- Note that *upacāra citta* for *jhāna* is different from *upacāra citta* for *magga phala*, even though they are represented by the same symbol normally. *upacāra* means "close", either to the *jhāna* or to *magga phala*, which are two different attainments. As we discussed earlier, *jhāna* are associated with "this world" and *magga phala* are associated with *Nibbāna*.
- ***Gotrabhu* (change of lineage) *citta* is the one that induce either a *magga phala* or a *jhāna*, and those are two very different changes: *jhāna* is just change of lineage to one of the 31 realms, whereas *magga phala* is to be dissociate from the 31 realms.**
- For a discussion on *citta vīthi*, see, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

9. **There is another piece of strong evidence from the *Tipiṭaka* that one does not need to attain even the first *Ariya jhāna* in order to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.** We all know that Ven.Moggallana (who was Kolita before becoming a *bhikkhu*), attained the *Sotāpanna* stage upon hearing a single verse uttered by Ven. Assaji.

- Then Kolita (and Upatissa) went to see the Buddha and were ordained. It took them a week to two weeks to attain the *Arahanthood*. The WebLink: suttacentral: Moggallana Saṃyutta in the Saṃyutta Nikāya has 9 suttā that describe step-by-step **how Ven. Moggallana attained *Ariya jhānā* one by one starting with the first *Ariya jhāna*.** This is conclusive evidence that one does not need to attain any *Ariya jhāna* before attaining even the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- In particular, the very first *sutta* there describes how the Buddha came to him by *iddhi bala* and encouraged him to cultivate the first *Ariya jhāna* (WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamajhāna Pañhā Sutta; SN 40.1): "*..Atha kho maṃ, āvuso, bhagavā iddhiyā upasaṅkamitvā etadavoca: 'moggallāna, moggallāna. Mā, brāhmaṇa, paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ pamādo, paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ saṇṭhapehi, paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ ekodiṃ karohi, paṭhame jhāne cittaṃ samādahā'ti..*" OR "..the Buddha came to me by *iddhi bala* and told me: Moggallana, Moggallana, Brahmana, do not become delayed, cultivate the first *jhāna*..."
- The subsequent *suttā* in the *Moggallana Saṃyutta* describe how the Buddha instructed him through each successive *rupāvacara* and *arupāvacara jhānā,* where Ven. Moggallana developed all *iddhi bala* and became second only to the Buddha in supernormal powers; see, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)."

10. Therefore, one could get to the higher stages of *Nibbāna* via two paths.

- One could cultivate *jhānā* and attain successively higher *jhānā* by comprehending the *anicca* nature of those *jhānā* (as we mentioned above, they still belong to this world), and REMOVING successive *jhāna* factors.
- I will write more about this in the future, but the point is that those *jhānic* states are still subjected to both the *saṅkhāra dukkha* and the *viparināma dukkha*, even though exempt from *dukkha dukkha* temporarily.
- The second path does not require *jhāna*; *Sammā Samādhi* is enough. For those with higher levels of wisdom (*paññā*), higher stages of *Nibbāna* can be arrived without going through *jhāna*.

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11. The second path is discussed in the WebLink: suttacentral: Kimatthiya Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 11.1). Here one can start with comprehending *dukkha*, which leads to *Nibbāna* via the following steps: *saddhā, piti, passadhi, sukha, samādhi, yathabhutananadassana, nibbida, viraga*, and to *vimutti*; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Upanisa Sutta (Saṃyutta Nikāya 12.23)."

- When one starts with *lokuttara Sammā Diṭṭhi* and follows the ***ariyakānta sīla*** (*Sammā Vaca, Sammā Kammanta, Sammā Ajiva*), one will automatically get to *Sammā Vāyāma, Sammā Sati* and *Sammā Samādhi* (these three path factors constitute *Samādhi*). By the way, *Sammā Diṭṭhi* and *Sammā Saṅkappa* constitute *paññā*. So, the sequence is *paññā, sīla, samādhi.*
- That *Sammā Samādhi* is all one needs to get to *Sammā Ñāna* (ultimate wisdom) and *Sammā Vimutti* (ultimate release) and thus to attain the *Arahanthood*; fulfilling all ten factors lead to the *Arahanthood* ("*dasahangehi samannagato*").

12. **One time a *bhikkhuni* asked Ven. Ānanda**: "..*'yāyaṃ, bhante ānanda,* ***samādhi*** *na cābhinato na cāpanato na ca sasaṅkhāraniggayhavāritagato, vimuttattā ṭhito, ṭhitattā santusito, santusitattā no paritassati. Ayaṃ, bhante ānanda, samādhi kiṃphalo vutto bhagavatā'ti?*," OR

"*bhante ānanda,* I have this ***samādhi*** which is stable, without defilements, contented, joyful, and without agitation. What did the Blessed One call this ***samādhi***?"

Ven. Ānanda replied: "..*'yāyaṃ, bhagini,* ***samādhi*** *na cābhinato na cāpanato na ca sasaṅkhāranig-gayhavāritagato, vimuttattā ṭhito, ṭhitattā santusito, santusitattā no paritassati. Ayaṃ, bhagini, samādhi aññāphalo vutto bhagavatā'ti. Evaṃsaññīpi kho, āvuso,* ***tadāyatanaṃ*** *no paṭisaṃvedetī"ti*," OR,

"Yes, *bhikkhnuni*, there is such a ***samādhi***. The Blessed One called it ***Arahant phala samādhi*** that is without any defilements."

- This is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 9.37). She was an *Arahant* and she did not even realize that!
- That ***samādhi***, is ***tadāyatana*** or *Nibbāna*; see, "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."

4.7.6 Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna

October 12, 2017; revised February 9, 2018; June 8, 2018

Here we will discuss three key *suttā* from the *Tipiṭaka* to resolve some controversial arguments about mundane (*anāriya*) and supramundane (*Ariya*) *jhāna*. I would appreciate any comments (lal@puredhamma.net) pointing out any errors in my analysis or any suggestions.

- **February 28, 2019:** I have found several *Tipiṭaka* references so far to *anāriya jhāna*, and a short one is discussed at the end. The post, "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)– Akuppā Cetovimutti" clearly explains the difference between *Ariya* and *anāriya jhāna.*
- It is interesting to note that some *suttā* do not specifically label *jhāna* as *Ariya* or *anāriya*. One has to read a given sutta carefully to figure out which jhāna are discussed, but the conclusion always is that *anāriya jhāna* are worthless by themselves unless used as a platform to attain *magga phala*; see, "Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala – Introduction." As can be clearly seen in this *sutta*, a *Sotāpanna* can cultivate *anāriya jhāna* (i.e., without removing *kāma rāga*), and be born in lower *Brahma* realms. However, unlike those with *anāriya jhāna* without *magga phala*, that person will not come back to *kāma loka*.
- **June 8, 2018**: There are *suttā* that discuss the **critical differences**; see, "Pathama Mettā Sutta."

1. The main characteristics and purposes of *Ariya* (supermundane) *jhāna* are described in detail in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Jhāna Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 9.36)." The English translation (WebLink: suttacentral: Mental Absorption) at that site is not good, so I will translate most of the *sutta* here. However,

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the Sinhala Translation (WebLink: suttacentral: සඞ්ඛාරුපපත්ති සූත්‍රය) is much better; of course *anicca* and *anatta* are translated incorrectly there too.

- I will use key Pāli terms without translating, since anyone who is reading the post is likely to understand them. I think that would make it easier to read.

2. Now, I will translate the *sutta*, and the numbers below correspond to the paragraphs in the Pāli version: "WebLink: suttacentral: Jhāna Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 9.36)."

#1. *Bhikkhus*, **I surely declare the removal of *āsava* (mental fermentations)** via the first *jhāna*, second *jhāna*, third *jhāna*, fourth *jhāna, ākāsānañcāyatana, viññāṇañcāyatana, ākiñcaññāyatana, nevasaññānāsaññāyatana, saññāvedayitanirodha* (the last four are the *arūpavacara jhānic* states). Also, I have minimized wording to keep the paragraph short, just giving the meaning. [***āsava***: mental effluent, pollutant, or fermentation, （lit: influxes）, 'cankers', taints, corruption's, intoxicant biases. There is a list of four （as in D. 16, Pts. M. , Vibh.）: the canker of （wrong） views （***diṭṭhāsava***）, of sense-desire （***kāmāsava***）, of （desiring eternal） existence （***bhavāsava***）, and of ignorance （***avijjāsava***）.]

- Thus the main purpose of ***jhānic* states** is **to do insight meditation** and **remove *āsava***, not to enjoy that *jhānic* "pleasure" or relief. *Nibbāna* is attained via the removal of *āsava:* **"**The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas."

- There is a lot of important information in the next paragraph.

#2. *Bhikkhus*, I surely declare removal of *āsava* (mental fermentations) via the first *jhāna*. On account of what do I say that? A *bhikkhu* abstaining from sense pleasures (*vivicceva kāmehi*), abstaining from *akusala*, arrives in the vicinity of the first *jhāna* and dispels cravings (*upasampajja viharati*). He thus contemplates on the ***anicca* nature (*aniccato*), *dukkha* nature (*dukkhato*)**, disease-ridden nature (*rogato*), cancer-like nature (*gandato*), arrow-like nature (*sallato*), painful (*aghato*), danger-ridden (*ābādhato*), alien (*parato*), subject to destruction (*palokato*), an empty (*suññato*), **not-fruitful and leading to helplessness (anatto)** OF *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa* (*rūpagataṃ vedanāgataṃ saññāgataṃ saṅkhārāgataṃ viññāṇagataṃ*). He turns his mind away from those phenomena, and having done so, inclines his mind to *Nibbāna*: '*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan*'*ti.* ["It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all *saṅkhāra*, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; *Nibbāna*"] Thus he gets rid of *āsava*. If he does not complete the removal of *āsava*, he would remove the first five *saṃyojana* and thus will be born *opapātika* (in *brahma loka*) and attain *parinibbāna* there, and will not return to this world (*No ce āsavānaṃ khayaṃ pāpuṇāti, teneva dhammarāgena tāya dhammanandiyā pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātiko hoti tattha parinibbāyī anāvattidhammo tasmā lokā*).

- Thus one cannot attain *Ariya jhāna* without comprehending ***anicca, dukkha, anatta*** nature of the *pañcakkhandha*.

- The common verse, "..(*pathamam*) *jhānam upasampajja viharati*.." is commonly translated as, "..enters and remains in the (first) *jhāna*..." However, "*upasampajja viharati*" ("*upa*" + "*san*" + "*pajja*") means "abiding in the vicinity of clarifying and removing '*san*'"; of course '*san*' are *lobha, dosa, moha* or *āsava*. The prefix "*upa*" means "near or close." For example, "*upasampadā*" ("*upa*" + "*san*" + "*padā*") means a *bhikkhu* has advanced and is getting close to "sorting out '*san*'" and thus to *magga phala*.

- **Now, let us recapture the three important steps in the above paragraph**: First, one gets to the *jhāna* by contemplating on a long list of faults (*ādīnava*) of the five aggregates *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa* that make up one's world; see, "The Five Aggregates (Pañnakkhandha)." [***ādīnava***: m. 過患, 患難, 過失, 危難. bad consequences (suffering), difficult and dangerous situation (trouble), fault (inadvertent [not resulting from or achieved through deliberate planning] mistakes), danger and disaster (distress)]

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- Once one gets to the vicinity of the first *jhāna*, one could intensify it and be fully absorbed in it, by contemplating on the relief that is already seen: '*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti.* **This is the extra effort involved in cultivating *jhāna*, versus *paññāvimutti* path.** [It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all *saṅkhāra*, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; *Nibbāna*]
- Thirdly, one can get to the higher *jhāna* by again contemplating the faults (*ādīnava*) of the five aggregates.

#3. "*Bhikkhus*, an archer or archer's apprentice were to practice on a straw man or mound of clay, after a while he would become able to shoot long distances, to fire accurate shots in rapid succession, and to pierce great masses; in the same way, a *bhikkhu* abstaining from sensuality, abstaining from *akusala*, arrives in the vicinity (*upasampajja*) of the first *jhāna*."

- The rest is essentially the same as in #2 above from that point onward about how *āsava* are removed by contemplating on those faults (*ādīnava*) of the five aggregates, to the following confirmation statement at the end of paragraph to emphasize the following: "*Bhikkhus*, I surely declare removal of *āsava* (mental fermentations) via the first *jhāna*."

#4. This paragraph essentially repeats the same paragraph of #2 above, for the second, third, and fourth *jhāna*. It is interesting that even at the fourth *jhāna*, one could only be guaranteed to become an *Anāgāmī*. However, as mentioned in #2, one could attain the *Arahanthood* even from the first *jhāna*, if all *āsava* are removed, and that of course will apply to any *jhāna* through the fourth.

#5. Same verse as #3 repeated for the second, third, and fourth *jhāna*, with the paragraph ending, "..*Bhikkhus*, I surely declare removal of *āsava* (mental fermentations) via the fourth *jhāna*."

#6 , #7. The paragraphs in #2 and #3 for the first *jhāna* are now repeated for the first *arūpāvacara jhāna: ākāsānañcāyatana*.

#8 , #9. The paragraphs in #2 and #3 for the first *jhāna* are now repeated for the second and third *arūpāvacara jhāna: viññāṇañcāyatana* and *ākiñcaññāyatana*. Again, it is interesting that even at these higher *arūpāvacara jhānā,* one could only be guaranteed to become an *Anāgāmī*.

#10. "As for the two *saññāsamāpatti āyatana – nevasaññā nā saññāyatana samāpatti* and *saññāvedayitanirodho* – they remove *āsava* and will lead to the faultless state of *Nibbāna*."

- Thus if one gets to the highest *arūpāvacara Ariya jhāna,* one will definitely attain the Arahantship, and also will be able to get to *nirodha samāpatti* (*saññāvedayitanirodho*).

3. That is, in essence, the complete *sutta,* which provides many key insights that have been hidden surprisingly. I almost fell off my chair when I first read it. I am not sure how and why modern translators failed to understand the importance of this *sutta*.

- Then I started reading more *suttā* and realized that these key pieces of information are in many other *suttā* as well. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūḷa Vvedalla Sutta (MN 44)" AND "WebLink: suttacentral: Kāyagatāsati Sutta (MN 119)."

4. We can learn a lot of key aspects of *Ariya jhāna* from this important *sutta.* Let us begin with the fact that one gets to the vicinity (*upasampajja*) of the first *jhāna* **by contemplating the faults (*ādīnava*) of *pañcakkhandha* (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*); once getting there, one further removes *āsava* by the same process.**

- Thus, one gets to *jhāna* with insight meditation (*Vipassanā*) on the unsuitability (faults of) *kāmāvacara* states, and then once getting to *jhāna*, starts doing *Vipassanā* on the unsuitability of any *jhānic* state in order to transcend that state.
- There is a long list of such faults (*ādīnava*) (**from #1**): *anicca* nature (*aniccato*), *dukkha* nature (*dukkhato*), disease-ridden nature (*rogato*), cancer-like nature (*gandato*), arrow-like nature (*sallato*),

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painful (*aghato*), danger-ridden (*ābādhato*), alien (*parato*), subject to destruction (*palokato*), an empty (*suññato*), not-fruitful and leading to helplessness (*anatto*).

5. Therefore, the main goal at any given *Ariya jhāna* is to contemplate on all those faults (*ādīnava*) of that state — thus move to the next higher state — and to finally arrive at *Nibbāna* at the last (8th) *jhāna*. Of course, one could completely remove all *āsava* and attain *Nibbāna* from any lower *jhāna*.

- If one attains *Nibbāna* from a lower *jhānic* state (below the highest *arūpāvacara jhāna*), one is said to attain *paññāvimutti*. If one goes through to that highest *jhāna* and attains *Nibbāna*, one is said to have attained *akuppā cetovimutti*. I will have a separate post on this.
- While the word "*jhāna*" has come to common use, a better word is "*dhyāna*" (ධ්‍යාන in Pāli and දැල්ම in Sinhala, meaning "burning").
- We will stick with the word "*jhāna*" instead of "*dhyana*" since it is in common use. It is just useful to know where the meaning comes from.

6. It is obvious that one can think clearly in any *jhāna*. Even intermittent *vitakka/vicāra* ("wheeling around" with stray thoughts) will be absent after the second *jhāna*, i.e., one is in the *avitakka/avicāra* (free of *vitakka/vicāra*) mode after the second *jhāna*; I will discuss *jhānanga* or *jhāna* factors in a future post.

- This is why *Ariya jhāna* are helpful in insight (*Vipassanā*) meditation. The mind becomes clear when more and more *saṅkhāra* are removed as one proceeds to higher *jhāna* states.

7. Even though the relief experienced in *Ariya jhāna* is the only "enjoyment" recommended by the Buddha, that is not the main purpose of *Ariya jhāna*. That is because if one gets attached to a *jhāna*, one is not able to move up to the higher one. In any case, it is mainly those who get to *anāriya jhāna*, get attached to them **(however, it is possible to attain any stage of *magga phala* even with *anāriya jhāna* or even without any *jhāna*)**. If one has seen the *anicca* nature, one would not get attached to a *jhāna*.

- In that context, in a previous post it was discussed that any *jhānic* state is a mental state corresponding "this world"; see, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)."

8. *Pancanīvarana* are also completely removed at the first *Ariya jhāna*. From the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāvedalla Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 43): ".. *Idhāvuso, **paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ samāpannāssa** bhikkhuno kāmacchando pahīno hoti, byāpādo pahīno hoti, thinamiddhaṃ pahīnaṃ hoti, uddhaccakukkuccaṃ pahīnaṃ hoti, vicikicchā pahīnā hoti...*"

- There are many *suttā* that clearly state such conditions for the first **supramundane** *jhāna*.
- In contrast, neither the five *saṃyojana* nor the *pañcanīvaraṇa* are removed in any **mundane** *jhāna*. The reasons are obvious: none of the *kilesa* (*klesha*/defilements) can be removed by taking a neutral object as the *ārammaṇa*.

9. This is why the Buddha told Ven. Saddhā: "..*"**Ājānīyajhāyitaṃ** kho, saddhā, jhāya; mā khaḷuṅkajhāyitaṃ*..", OR "Saddhā, cultivate the ***ajānīya* (thoroughbred horse) *jhāna***, not the ***khalunka* (mule) *jhāna***": WebLink: suttacentral: Saddhā Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 11.9).

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Sutta Central translation, *khalunka* is translated as a colt (a young horse). But the correct translation is a mule. As described in the *sutta*, a mule is lazy and useless, compared to a thoroughbred horse.
- As described in the *sutta*, one who cultivates mundane *jhāna* takes worldly objects (*kasina*, breath) as *ārammaṇa*, and even though can attain *jhāna*, will not have the respect of the *devas* who can see the *ārammaṇa*.
- On the other hand, *devas* cannot see the *ārammaṇa* (*Nibbāna*) of those who have cultivated *Ariya jhāna*, and they pay to him from a distance.

10. Therefore, there is a HUGE difference in HOW one on arrives at a given *jhāna*.

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- One using the *anāriya* path gets to *jhānā* by focusing one's mind on a mundane object, i.e., an object belonging to this world (for example, one's own breath or a *kasina* object) and/or by contemplating on mundane moral thoughts (benevolent, kind, etc); we will discuss this in the next post.
- One on the Noble Path, on the other hand, arrives there by contemplating on *Nibbāna*, i.e., the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature of this world of 31 realms. One may or may not get to *Ariya jhāna* that one can get into *samāpatti* (meaning uninterrupted *jhāna*, where the *jhāna citta* runs continuously without break), before getting to the *Arahanthood*.
- However, *jhāna sukha* is the only *sukha* recommended by the Buddha, since sense pleasures will bind one to the *kāma loka*. It is said that some *paññāvimutta Arahants* cultivate *jhāna* after attaining *Arahanthood.*

11. Also see the previous post where it is discussed how Ven. Moggallana cultivated the first *jhāna* **after** attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage: "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)."

- One who can get fully absorbed in the first *Ariya jhāna* will be born in the *Suddhāvāsa* realms of the ***rūpa loka,*** and will not come back to the *kāma loka*, i.e., one is an *Anāgāmī*, as clearly stated in the *Jhāna Sutta* and several other *sutta* (REF).
- On the other hand, one who cultivates **mundane first *jhāna*** will be born in the **first *rūpāvacara Brahma* realm in the next birth**, but in later rebirths could be even born in the *apāyā* (since *kāma rāga* was only suppressed, not removed).

12. One can get into mundane (*anāriya*) *jhāna* via such breath or *kasina* meditation, and one could do *Vipassanā* from such mundane *jhānic* states.

- But the problem is, in many cases, people get addicted to those states and are unable to see the *anicca* nature of them.

13. In contrast to the above *suttā* (and more that I found) on *Ariya jhāna*, I found other *suttā* that discussed *anāriya jhāna*. In none of these *suttā*, there was a specific label saying *Ariya jhāna* or *anāriya jhāna*. However, one can clearly see which is which when reading text.

- In the following reference, it is clearly stated that *kāma raga* is only suppressed (***vikkhambhanato***) in all *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara jhāna*. On the other hand, it states that *kāma raga* is removed (***samucchedato***) in stages via *magga phala*.
- The difference between ***vikkhambhana pahāna*** and ***samuccheda pahāna*** is discussed in, "Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities."

The following are the two relevant passages from the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, *Mahāniddesa*, *Aṭṭhakavagga*: WebLink: suttacentral: 1. Kāmasuttaniddesa . There is no English translation there, but the Sinhala translation is given: WebLink: suttacentral: කාම සූත්‍රනිර්දේශය .

Paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ bhāventopi vikkhambhanato kāme parivajjeti *... pe ... dutiyaṃ jhānaṃ bhāventopi ... tatiyaṃ jhānaṃ bhāventopi ... catutthaṃ jhānaṃ bhāventopi ... ākāsānañcāyatanasamāpattiṃ bhāventopi ... viññāṇañcāyatanasamāpattiṃ bhāventopi ... ākiñcaññāyatanasamāpattiṃ bhāventopi ... nevasaññānāsaññāyatanasamāpattiṃ bhāventopi vikkhambhanato kāme parivajjeti. Evaṃ vikkhambhanato kāme parivajjeti.*

- Translated: "*kāma*" is suppressed (***vikkhambhanato***) in the first *jhāna*, …to *nevasaññānāsaññāyatana* (highest *arupavacara jhāna*). As we saw above, *kāma* is removed even before getting to *Ariya jhāna.* Thus, only *anāriya* (mundane) *jhāna* are meant here.
- I hope to discuss in detail the "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)" as another example.

Kathaṃ samucchedato kāme parivajjeti*? Sotāpattimaggaṃ bhāventopi apāyagamanīye kāme samucchedato parivajjeti, sakadāgāmimaggaṃ bhāventopi oḷārike kāme samucchedato parivajjeti, anāgāmimaggaṃ bhāventopi anusahagate kāme samucchedato parivajjeti, arahattamaggaṃ*

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bhāventopi sabbena sabbaṃ sabbathā sabbaṃ asesaṃ nissesaṃ samucchedato kāme parivajjeti. Evaṃ samucchedato kāme parivajjetīti—yo kāme parivajjeti.

- Translated: "*kāma*" is removed (***samucchedato***) in stages via the *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmī* stages and is removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage; it is removed without a trace at the *Arahant* stage.

14. The following *sutta* clearly state the difference between *Ariya* and *anāriya jhānā*.

WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamanānākaraṇa Sutta (AN 4. 123): " *Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco puggalo vivicceva kāmehi vivicca akusalehi dhammehi savitakkaṃ savicāraṃ vivekajaṃ pītisukhaṃ paṭhamaṃ jhānaṃ upasampajja viharati. So tadassādeti, taṃ nikāmeti, tena ca vittiṃ āpajjati. Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahula-vihārī aparihīno kālaṃ kurumāno brahmakāyikānaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjati. Brahmakāyikānaṃ, bhikkhave, devānaṃ kappo āyuppamāṇaṃ. Tattha puthujjano yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati. Bhagavato pana sāvako tattha yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā tasmiṃyeva bhave parinibbāyati. Ayaṃ kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayaṃ adhippayāso idaṃ nānākaraṇaṃ sutavato ariyasāvakassa assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidaṃ gatiyā upapattiyā sati.*"

Translated: "There is the case where an individual, withdrawn from sensuality (*kāma*), withdrawn from *akusala*, enters & remains in the first *jhāna*: rapture & pleasure born from withdrawal, accompanied by directed thought & evaluation. He savors that, longs for that, finds satisfaction through that. Staying there—fixed on that, dwelling there often, not losing the *jhāna*—then when he dies he is born with the *devas* of Brahma's retinue. The *devas* of Brahma's retinue, monks, have a life-span of an eon. **A run-of-the-mill person having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, goes to hell, to the animal realm, or to the state of the hungry ghosts. But a disciple of the Blessed One, having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, attains *Parinibbāna*.** This, monks, is the difference, this the distinction, this the distinguishing factor, between a Noble disciple and a normal person who had not heard the Noble Truths (*assutavatā puthujjanena*), in regards to the *gati* and birth."

- When one attains the first *Ariya jhāna*, one has become an *Anāgāmī*. He/she will be born in that *Brahma* realm and will attain *Parinibbāna* there, as clearly stated in the above *sutta*.
- In other words, *kāma rāga* is to be completely REMOVED to get to the first *Ariya jhāna*. It is only temporarily suppressed (*vikkhambana pahāna*) for the *anāriya jhāna*.
- Even some followers of Waharaka *Thero* in Sri Lanka do not seem to understand this point. However, Waharaka *Thero* has clearly explained this in the following short *desanā* (in Sinhala): "WebLink: Ariya and Anariya Jhāna (Audio)."

4.7.7 Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti

February 13, 2018

1. *Nirodha samāpatti* and various *phala samāpatti* are different, and they are very different from *jhāna* and *jhāna samāpatti*.

- The first two are related to *Nibbāna*. *Jhāna* belong to "this world." *Jhānā* are basically the mindsets that *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara brahmā* enjoy.

2. Before starting the discussion, I would like to emphasize the following. Concepts that deals with in this post, as well as that of *Nibbāna* (*Arahanthood*, in particular), are virtually impossible to imagine for most people. However, there could be a few people who have studied these concepts in detail and have some "nagging questions", and hopefully this information will be helpful.

- These concepts are contrary to ideas that normal humans are familiar with. Normal humans crave for things in the material world so much, it is almost impossible to rationalize why one would want to stop the rebirth process (i.e, to attain the *Arahanthood*). Therefore, it is a waste of time to spend too much time

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thinking about such abstract concepts, at least until one gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage; these concepts really start making sense only when one gets closer to the *Anāgāmi* stage.

- In the same way, it is hard to imagine for a normal human how *nirodha samāpatti* (where all thoughts are stopped) can provide happiness. This is why I have explained in the "*Nibbāna*" subsection that *Nibbānic* bliss is NOT a feeling of a pleasure (that would involve the *vedanā cetasika*, and thus would belong to this world). It is more like the sense of relief one would feel when a long-lasting migraine headache goes away.
- With that out of the way, let us start the discussion.

3. First, it is important point to remember is that life is maintained by *kammic* energy, not via *citta vīthi*. Therefore, *kammaja kaya* is present at ALL TIMES. *Kammaja* ("*kamma*" +"*ja*") means "*kamma* created."

- The *kammaja kaya* or the *gandhabba* (*hadaya vatthu* plus the five *pasāda rūpa*) is created at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. The blueprint for our physical body is in the *kammaja kaya* (*gandhabba*), and thus the physical body grows according to the *kammaja kaya* (*gandhabba*).
- When one's *kammaja kaya* for the present *bhava* runs out of *kammic* energy, a new *kammaja kaya* matching the next *bhava* is initiated by *kammic* energy for the new *bhava*, at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.

4. Therefore, each of us has had a *kammaja kaya* corresponding to most of the realms in this world from a time that cannot be traced to a beginning!

- For those who are not familiar with those terms can use the "Search box" to find relevant posts. For example, we have four types of "*kaya*": *kammaja, cittaja, utuja*, and *karaja kaya*. That last one is our physical body. Such a physical body is absent in *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara* realms (basically just the *gandhabba*).

5. *Cittaja kaya* means the flow of *citta vīthi*. *Citta* arise in the *hadaya vatthu* in the *kammaja kaya*.

- *Citta* always run in "packets" or *vīthi*. Each *pancadvara citta vīthi* ALWAYS has 17 *citta*.
- A *manodvāra citta vīthi* normally has 10-12 *citta*. However, as we mentioned above, when in a *samāpatti*, *manodvāra citta vīthi* can run continuously. Therefore, there is no set upper limit to the number of *manodvāra citta* running continuously when in a *samāpatti*.
- The mind could be in different types of *bhavaṅga* states in between *manodvāra/pañcadvāra citta vīthi*.

6. While the *kammaja kaya* is active AT ANY TIME, there CAN BE GAPS in the *cittaja kaya*.

- *Bhavaṅga* is a "state of mind" other than *bhavaṅga citta* that sometimes come inside a *citta vīthi*; see, "Bhava and Bhavaṅga – Simply Explained!"
- When in a *bhavaṅga* state, there are no *citta vīthi* running, so there are not even universal *cetasika* present. One just knows that one is living, but there is no thought object (*ārammana*).
- So, when the mind is in a *bhavaṅga* state, there are no *citta vīthi* running. But the mind is "on" and one knows that one is living. It is just that no *citta vīthi* running inside a *bhavaṅga* state.
- A crude analogy of the *bhavaṅga* state is a TV set that is not tuned to a station. We can see flickering of white dots on the screen and hear a background "hum." But there is no picture. So, the mind is "on" but has no thought object.
- When an *ārammana* comes to the mind, the mind captures that sound, picture, smell, etc. That is like that TV being tuned to a station and one can see the picture.

7. The main difference between any *samāpatti* and *jhāna* is that *jhāna citta* do not run continuously. When one is in a *jhāna*, *jhāna citta vīthi* are interrupted by *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* running in between.

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Pancadvāra citta vīthi are those coming through the five physical senses. Therefore, when one is in *jhāna*, one can see, hear, etc.

- But when one is in any type of *samāpatti*, the corresponding *manodvāra citta vīthi* run continuously. Therefore, there is no opportunity for *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* to run, and thus one in a *samāpatti* is totally unaware of the external environment.

8. One could also be in a *jhāna samāpatti*. In this case also, there are no *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* interrupting the flow of *jhāna citta vīthi*. One in a *jhāna samāpatti* also will not see, hear, smell, etc.

- It is with practice that one who can get into *jhāna* can develop the ability to get into *jhāna samāpatti*. As one cultivates the *jhāna*, there will be less and less *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* coming in between successive *jhāna citta vīthi*. Initially, only 2-3 *jhāna citta vīthi* flow before a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* comes in. With practice, one could be experiencing *jhāna citta vīthi* continuously for hours.

9. However, in the *asaññā* realm, there is no *cittaja kaya* or even a *bhavaṅga* state**. One does not even know that one is alive**. There is a fine physical body that is kept alive by *kammic* energy. So, the *kammaja kaya* is there.

- This is why the Buddha said it is a waste of time to get a birth in the *asaññā* realm by cultivating *asaññā* meditation techniques. One will live in the *asaññā* realm for 500 *mahā kappa* (that is trillions of years), and just comes back to the human realm and start all over.
- In a previous post I provided evidence that *viññāṇa* cannot exist without a *rūpakkhandha*. However, *rūpakkhandha* can exist without *viññāṇa*.
- If we become unconscious for some reason, that is like living in the *asaññā* realm during that time. There is no *bhavaṅga* state there either. Life is maintained by the *kammaja kaya* via an active *rūpa jivitindriya* (not the *jivitindriya cetasika*).

10. When one is in a *phala samāpatti*, that *phala citta* runs continuously.

- For example, if one is in the *Sotāpanna phala samāpatti*, one has the *Sotāpanna phala citta* running continuously. If one is in the *Arahant phala samāpatti*, the *Arahant phala citta* runs continuously.

11. When one is in *nirodha samāpatti*, there are no *citta vīthi* or a *bhavaṅga* state. It is just like in the *asaññā* realm.

- But of course, there is huge difference between *nirodha samāpatti* and being in the *asaññā* realm. One who can get to *nirodha samāpatti* has removed ALL DEFILEMENTS (and thus *avijjā*), but one in the *asaññā* realm has not. So, at the end of the life in the *asaññā* realm, that person would come back to the human realm and can be reborn even in the *apāyā* in later rebirths.
- This point actually explains why it is so peaceful not to have any *citta* running through the mind. That is the closest explanation that can be given to a normal human as to how having no *citta* can be so peaceful. But this is hard even to imagine for a normal human, as I mentioned at the beginning. Those who cultivate *jhāna*, and get to higher *jhānic* states, can start seeing that this is true. That is why they cultivate *jhāna* all the way up to the 8th *jhāna* (*neva saññā nā saññā*).

12. *Nirodha samāpatti* is succinctly described in a verse in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāvedalla Sutta (MN 43), where the difference between a dead body and the body of one in *nirodha samāpatti* is described: *"Yvāyaṃ, āvuso, mato kālaṅkato tassa kāyasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, vacīsaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, cittasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, āyu parikkhīṇo, usmā vūpasantā, indriyāni paribhinnāni. Yo cāyaṃ bhikkhu saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpanno tassapi kāyasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, vacīsaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, cittasaṅkhārā niruddhā paṭippassaddhā, āyu na parikkhīṇo, usmā avūpasantā, indriyāni vippasannāni. Yvāyaṃ, āvuso, mato kālaṅkato, yo cāyaṃ bhikkhu saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samāpanno—idaṃ nesaṃ nānākaraṇan"ti.."*

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Translated: "*āvuso*, a dead body does not generate any *kāyasaṅkhārā, vacīsaṅkhārā,* or *cittasaṅkhārā;* its lifetime expired and it does not breathe, and the body gets cold with all sense organs dead. But that *bhikkhu* in *saññāvedayita-nirodha samāpatti*, even though his *kāyasaṅkhārā, vacīsaṅkhārā,* and *cittasaṅkhārā* all have ceased, and does not breathe, his body does not get cold and all sense organs are kept alive. This, *āvuso*, is the difference between a dead body and that *bhikkhu* in *nirodha samāpatti*."

- Since all *saṅkhāra* are stopped, there are no *citta* with even the universal *cetasika* when in *saññāvedayita nirodha samāpatti.*
- This also clarifies that *saññāvedayita* means without any *saññā* or *vedanā.*

13. Not all *Arahants* can get into *nirodha samāpatti.* Access to *nirodha samāpatti* is NOT by taking *Nibbāna* as the thought object, but via the 8th *jhāna*. As one gets to higher *jhāna*, number of *cetasika* in a *citta* get smaller, i.e., *citta* become less and less "burdened."

- An *Arahant* has to cultivate all the *jhānā*, and get to the 8th *jhāna* (*neva saññā nā saññā*). The *neva saññā nā saññā* state is just a step away from stopping the arising of *citta vīthi.*
- From that state, the *Arahant* can make a determination of how long to stay in *nirodha samāpatti*, and make the transition from the *neva saññā nā saññā* state to *nirodha samāpatti.*
- While *anāriya yogis* can get to the *neva saññā nā saññā* state, I am not certain whether they can make the transition to *nirodha samāpatti.* Furthermore, I vaguely remember hearing in a *desanās* from Waharaka *Thero* that an *Anāgāmī* who has cultivated the eight *jhānā* can get into *nirodha samāpatti.*

14. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Pañcakaṅga Sutta (SN 36.19)" also clarifies another important point. If there are no *citta* flowing with *saññā* or *vedanā*, when one is in *saññāvedayita nirodha samāpatti*, how can one say that it is the ultimate happiness (*Nibbanic* bliss)?

- *Nibbanic* bliss is not a *cetasika vedanā,* which would belong to this world. I have compared it to the relief one feels when a long-experienced migraine headache finally goes away; see, the *Nibbāna* subsection.

The above *sutta*, in the last verse, put it this way: "*Ṭhānaṃ kho panetaṃ, ānanda, vijjati yaṃ aññatitthiyā paribbājakā evaṃ vadeyyuṃ: 'saññāvedayitanirodhaṃ samaṇo gotamo āha, tañca sukhasmiṃ paññapeti. Tayidaṃ kiṃsu, tayidaṃ kathaṃsū'ti?*

Evaṃvādino, ānanda, aññatitthiyā paribbājakā evamassu vacanīyā: 'na kho, āvuso, bhagavā sukhaññeva vedanaṃ sandhāya sukhasmiṃ paññapeti. Yattha yattha, āvuso, sukhaṃ upalabbhati, yahiṃ yahiṃ taṃ taṃ tathāgato sukhasmiṃ paññapetī'"ti."

Translated: "It may happen, Ānanda, that Wanderers of other sects will be saying this: 'The recluse Gotama speaks of the *saññāvedayita nirodha* and describes it as pleasure. What is this pleasure and how is this a pleasure?

"Those who say so, should be told: 'The Blessed One describes as pleasure **not only the feeling of pleasure**. But a *Tathāgata* describes as pleasure whenever and wherein so ever it is obtained.'"

15. No *citta vīthi* run in *nirodha samāpatti,* and *bhavaṅga* state is not present either. Life in the body is maintained with *kammic* energy. No *vedanā, saññā*, etc. Maximum time in *nirodha samāpatti* is 7 days. The *Arahant* can make a determination before getting into *nirodha samāpatti*, as to how long (up to 7 days) to stay in that state.

- *Parinibbāna* state is just like *nirodha samāpatti.* The only difference is that there is no "coming back" to this world upon entering *Parinibbāna.*
- Therefore, *Arahants* tend to get to *nirodha samāpatti* whenever possible, in order to experience the "*Nibbānic* bliss", and to get away from the "burdensome worldly thoughts." As I said, it is hard for normal humans to imagine this.

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16. In other types of *samāpatti* (other than the *nirodha samāpatti*), *manodvāra citta vīthi* will flow continuously. There is no falling to *bhavaṅga* or to take an external object with a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi*. Thus one cannot see, hear, etc. Normally, *samāpatti* will eventually break on its own or (when one gets good at it) one can pre-set the time to be in *samāpatti*.

- *Arahant phala samāpatti* is where an *Arahant* experiences the *pabhassara citta*, a pure *citta* with just the universal *cetasika*, where the *saññā cetasika* is not contaminated. *Nibbāna* is the thought object made contact with *phassa cetasika* and *vedanā* and *saññā* are based on that (we have no idea about that). There, one does not hear, see, anything either, just like in *jhāna samāpatti*.
- When an *Arahant* is not in *nirodha samāpatti* or *Arahant phala samāpatti*, his/her *citta* get only to the "*mano*" state, in the sequence that normally ends up in the *viññāṇakkhandha* state for a normal human; see #4 of "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."

17. Hopefully, that should cover the questions raised in the discussion forum under the topics: "WebLink: Nirodha Samāpatti," "WebLink: Difference between "Arahant phala samāpatti" and "Nirodha samāpatti" ?," and "WebLink: Nirodha Samāpatti and Amoha."

- If there are more questions on this and related issues, please ask them under the topic "WebLink: Difference between "Arahant phala samāpatti" and "Nirodha samāpatti"?." I am going to close the other two topics, in order to not have too many parallel and related discussions.
- Please also include any references **from the *Tipiṭaka***, for above descriptions. This post was put together from what I have heard from Waharaka *Thero*'s *desanās,* and I will also add references as I come across them in the *Tipiṭaka*.

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4.8 Mental Body – Gandhabba

February 11, 2017

- Our Mental Body – Gandhabba
- Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka
- Antarabhava and Gandhabba
- Ānantariya Kamma – Connection to Gandhabba
- Mental Body (Gandhabba) – Personal Accounts
- Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations
- Satara Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba
- Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage
- Working of Kammā – Critical Role of Conditions

Deeper discussions on *gandhabba* can be found in the *Abhidhamma* subsection:

- Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)

4.8.1 Our Mental Body – Gandhabba

December 26, 2016; revised February 1, 2020

Introduction

1. Grasping the message of the Buddha requires two essential ingredients. (i) It is easier done with a mind that has less defilements (*kilesa* or *keles* or *klesha*), (ii) One needs to go beyond learning mundane interpretations of crucila concepts.

- If those two conditions are satisfied, grasping deeper Dhamma concepts will not be a difficult task. If one can comprehend — not merely to memorize — the key concepts, it becomes easy to avoid getting the "*viparīta saññā*" or the "incorrect impression" of a given concept. [***viparīta*** : [adj.] reversed; changed; wrong.]
- This process gradually leads to the comprehension of "*anicca saññā*" that is the key to the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.
- In this post, we will start a discussion that will lead to a better explanation of "*saññā*" (which is one of the five aggregates) generally translated as "perception."

Mental Body Is Primary and Physical Body Is Secondary

2. Here we will discuss how we grasp a given concept using any one of many human languages that are in use today.

- It is essential to understand that the mental body (*manomaya kāya* or *gandhabba*) is primary — initiating all our thoughts, speech, and actions. The physical body that we value so much is secondary.
- While our brains help us grasp what is expressed in a given language (and we have to learn a given language), a *gandhabba* can understand that message directly — without using a brain or eyes, ears, etc. that are associated with the physical body. The *gandhabba* — when outside the physical body — can see and hear without using eyes and ears, and grasp what is expressed by thoughts of other beings **directly** (where allowed by their *kammic* potential).

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- *Gandhabbas* — and most living beings — communicate among themselves via "*saññā*." There is no "spoken language" involved since they cannot "talk" like we do. See, "Ghost 1990 – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- That is somewhat similar to how we experience dreams. We do not use our ears to hear in the dreams. We "perceive" what others say in our dreams. That is the closest analogy with how a *gandhabba* hears when outside a physical body. Seeing is the same way. In dreams, we don't use our eyes to see; our eyes are closed when we dream. **Both hearing and seeing are done just with the *sota* and *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* and the mind.**

Why Do We Highly-Value Our Physical Bodies?

Of course, until a Buddha comes to this world and explains the existence of a mental body, we would not be even aware of that distinction. Even today, scientists believe that the physical body is all we have and that our thoughts arise in the inert brain!

3. We crave ourselves physical bodies because we enjoy sense pleasures associated with smells, tastes, and body touches.

- However, to experience those three types of sensory contacts, our mental bodies need to be trapped inside physical bodies. We pay the price for those sense enjoyments because those physical bodies are subject to rapid and unexpected decay and also have relatively short lifetimes around 100 years.
- Furthermore, when the mental body is enclosed or trapped inside a physical body, it loses the ability to see external objects directly, hear external sounds, and also recall *dhamma* (memories/concepts). All six sensory inputs now need to be processed by the brain and be converted to a form ("*saññā*") that can be grasped by the trapped mental body (*gandhabba*). For a more in-depth analysis, see "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- The sense of smell, taste, or body touches are not available to beings in the higher 20 (*Brahma)* realms. Those *Brahma* have mental bodies (with just a trace of matter) just like our *gandhabbas*. **Just like those *Brahmā*, the *gandhabbā* cannot sense smell, taste, or body touches, but can "directly see, hear, and grasp concepts" without the aid of a brain when outside a physical body.**
- Please contemplate and grasp what is meant by those statements before proceeding further.

The "Mental Body" Lives Much Longer!

4. Another critical factor is the difference between the lifetime of a physical body and that of a mental body (*gandhabba*).

- A human *gandhabba* that is born at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment can live for many hundreds to many thousands of years. Within a given "human *bhava*," there can be many repeated births as a human with a human body; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."
- When a physical body dies (and if more *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* remains), that *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body and waits for a suitable womb to re-enter and make a new human body. This process can happen many times during a given human *bhava*. Each time a different physical body is acquired by the *gandhabba*, as discussed below.
- **Therefore, it makes more sense to focus on the well-being of the mental body (*gandhabba)* than on the short-lived physical body.**

Some Exceptions To The Above Rules

5. There are a few exceptions to the above process.

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- If one commits a *ānantariya pāpa kamma* (killing a parent, for example), the *gandhabba* that comes out of a dead physical body "cannot survive." Because of that strong *kamma vipāka*, it undergoes a *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment and will be instantaneously born in an *apāya* suitable for that strong *kamma*.
- If one develops *Ariya* or *anāriya jhāna*, then this also becomes a "good" *ānantariya kamma* and one will be born in a *brahma* realm (corresponding to the highest *jhānic* state attained) by skipping the remaining human births. However, those who get to *brahma* realms via *anāriya jhānā* will come back to human or lower realms. Any *Ariya* (starting with a *Sotāpanna*) who attains *Ariya jhānā* will never come back to *kāma loka*. Of course, a *Sotāpanna* (*Sakadāgāmī*) without *Ariya jhānā* will be reborn human (*deva*) realms.
- That is also why an *Arahant* is not reborn, even if there is *kammic* energy left over for the human *bhava*. The *gandhabba* that comes out "cannot bear" the mindset of an *Arahant*, and will instantaneously undergo a *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. Still, since an *Arahant* will not grasp a new *bhava*, he/she will not be reborn.
- Those above cases — where the human *bhava* prematurely terminated — is similar to the burning of a heater coil used in an immersion heater, when the heated coil comes out of the water. As long as the heater coil is in the water, it can "bear" the heat. But once out of the water, the heater coil will quickly burn out. The physical human body has the unique capability of being able to "bear" any of those states discussed above.

Why Are Most People Bot Aware of The *Gandhabba* Concept?

6. Even though there is no discussion about the *gandhabba* in Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga, it is a critical concept in Buddha Dhamma. The Buddha compared a *gandhabba* coming out of a physical body, to a sword being pulled out of the sheath. That *gandhabba* is sometimes called a *Tirokuddha* in *Suttā*.

- People with *abhiññā* powers can move the *gandhabba* out of the physical body at will.
- Some people had cultivated *abhiññā* powers in recent previous births and can do it at will even though they have less control over the mental body. One can float to the ceiling and watch one's physical body lying on the bed, for example. Furthermore, during heart operations, the *gandhabba* can come out and view the process from the above, and provide details about it later. See. "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."

7. The *gandhabba* has only a trace of matter; it cannot be seen or touched, even though it has a trace of matter. It is our mental body or *manomaya kāya.*

- This mental body is like a fine mesh spread throughout the physical body with the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) overlapping the physical heart.
- If that mental body comes out of the physical body, the physical body becomes as inert as a piece of wood (as a dead body is).

How Can a "Mental Body" Control a Heavy Physical Body?

8. Let us start by addressing some fundamental objections that you may have on the concept of a mental body controlling the physical body. First, how can a mental body move a heavy physical body?

- A good analogy is to compare it to how a human operator controls a heavy military tank from the inside of that enclosed tank. There the human operator plays the role of the *gandhabba*.
- The human operator, of course, does not have enough energy to move the tank. He merely controls the direction of the movement by instructing the on-board computer. The power to move the tank comes from the fuel stored in the military tank.
- In the same way, the mental body (*gandhabba*) instructs the brain to generate required bodily movements or speech. Here, the brain plays the role of the computer in the military tank analogy. The

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small amount of energy needed for the *gandhabba* comes from the *kammic* power that led to human *bhava*. The energy for actual bodily movements (including speech) comes from the food we eat.

- Back in the 17th century, French philosopher Rene Descartes proposed that there is an immaterial mind that controls the material body. But this proposal had a major problem of explaining how an immaterial-mind causes a heavy material body to move.
- The Buddha –2600 years ago — had described how this actually happens, as discussed above. More details are in the "Origin of Life" section.

Details of The "Operator Analogy"

9. In the above analogy, the operator is totally shielded from the external world. He can monitor the outside environment only via the audio and video equipment mounted on the tank. The video cameras, for example, feed in videos to an on-board computer, which analyzes and displays it on a monitor for the operator to see.

- In the same way, our physical eyes send a picture to our brain, which analyzes them, converts to a form ("*saññā*") that can be "seen" — or comprehended — by the *gandhabba* inside. So, our brain is the computer that conveys the information to the *gandhabba* that is really trapped inside the solid physical body; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- The *gandhabba* accesses the other four physical sensory inputs the same way, with the help of ears, tongue, nose, and the body.
- Our memories, future plans, etc (all mental) are also "out there" (in the *mano loka*) but, of course, cannot be seen. They are collectively called "*dhamma*"; see, "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis." *Gandhabba* accesses those with the help of the *mana indriya* in the brain, which is the sixth sense input (like eyes for seeing, ears for hearing, etc.), and has not been identified by science yet.
- The *mano loka* co-exists with the *rūpa loka* (material world); see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental."

How Does A *Gandhabba* Hear When Outside a Physical Body?

10. Another possible question is: "How does the *gandhabba* see and hear when outside the human body?"

- It is only in the human (and animal) realms that beings communicate via speech (and bodily gestures). In other realms, living beings communicate directly via *saññā*, one of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*). While not all living beings can communicate with all other (it depends on each realm), where it is possible, communications take place via *saññā* generated in one's thoughts.
- This experience is similar to one's experience with dreams. **In a dream, we do not "hear" what others say in the same way when we hear speech normally. In a dream, we perceive what they are saying.**
- That is how those with *abhiññā* powers (even a few of us with *gati* from previous lives where they had such *abhiññā* skills in recent lives) can communicate with beings in other realms.

Why DO PEOPLE HAVE Different Bodies in Successive Human Lives?

11. It is the "same" *gandhabba* that is born with human bodies in successive human lives. Then another question may arise, "Why do people look different in successive rebirths?." That is because the physical body in each human life (within the same human *bhava*) arise with contributions from the parents for that life.

- Even though the *gandhabba* brings in his/her *gati* (habits), *āsava* (cravings), *kilesa* (mental impurities), etc from the previous life, the physical body for each birth has significant contributions from the new parents.

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- Therefore, the DNA of the physical bodies of two successive lives could be different due to this reason. The building of a new physical body is described in the post, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."
- Even then, a *gandhabba* needs to match the *gati* of the parents.

One Can Travel to *Deva* or *Brahma* Realms With the *Manomaya Kāya*

12. Another interesting piece of information comes from how the Buddha (and others with *Iddhi Bala*) traveled to *deva* or *Brahma loka* with the *manomaya kāya*. Here the physical body is left behind (the physical body does not die in this case, and is kept alive by the *rūpa jīvitindriya*). Upon returning, the *manomaya kāya* can re-enter the physical body.

- Those who attain the fourth *jhāna* can develop *iddhi* powers to be able to separate the *manomaya kāya* from the physical body. Then they can travel far with that *manomaya kāya*. Just as a sword comes out of its sheath, those with *iddhi* powers can pull the *manomaya kāya* out of the physical body.
- *Suttā* state that the Buddha visited *deva* or *brahma lokas* "within the time that takes a bent arm to be straightened."
- It is also possible for some of those with *iddhi* powers to travel with their physical bodies. That involves a different mechanism that is not relevant to this discussion.

Connection to "Astral Travel"

13. Even today, some ordinary people can dissociate their mental body from the physical body and can "astral travel." That *manomaya kāya* can then go to distant places within short times (this is what is called astral travel in the present day; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: WIKI: Astral projection."

- A *gandhabba* is the same as an "astral body" that is described in such accounts; see, for example, "Journeys Out of the Body: The Classic Work on Out-of-Body Experience," by Robert Monroe (1992). There are two sequels to that book, as well as books by others. Accounts in at least some of those books are consistent with the above mechanism.
- Also, the *gandhabba* can come out of the physical body under stressful conditions, in particular during heart operations. Many such accounts by a cardiologist have been documented in the book, "Consciousness Beyond Life," by Pim van Lommel (2010).

Explanation of the "Time Gap" Between Two Successive Human Births

14. Many rebirth account features can be explained by the correct interpretation where the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) inherits many successive (but time separated) physical bodies.

- In rebirth stories, there is always a "time gap" between successive human births (*jāti*). That time gap can be several years or at least few years. In between those successive lives, that life-stream lives as a *gandhabba*, without a physical body.
- In most rebirth stories, the previous human life was terminated unexpectedly, like in an accident or a killing. Therefore, the *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* had not been exhausted. And the *gandhabba* just came out of the dead body and waited for another womb to enter.
- The Buddha told Vacchagotta that the *gandhabba* survives that intervening time by using *taṇhā* as *āhāra*. Some *gandhabbas* can "inhale" aroma from plants, fruits, etc., too.

Further Information

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15. If one has been following — and trying to "live" the moral life recommended in the previous posts in the "Living Dhamma" section — it would be easier to follow the upcoming posts as we will be diving a bit deeper.

- One aspect of realizing the *anicca* nature is to see the futility of expecting to have a "future happy life" by trying to make one's physical body to be the "main focus."
- It is essential to keep one's body in good condition by eating well and by engaging in a good exercise program, it is ALSO important to realize that this body will only last about 100 years. On the other hand, the mental body or the *gandhabba* can last many hundreds of years.
- Thus one should try to improve the condition of the mental body (*gandhabba*) by cultivating good *gati* and getting rid of bad *gati*.
- A detailed analysis of life, in general, is in the "Origin of Life" section.

Next, "Saññā – What It Really Means."

4.8.2 Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka

September 16, 2017; revised September 30, 2107; November 14, 2018; August 31, 2019

Introduction

I will present extensive evidence from the *Tipiṭaka* that the *gandhabba* state is a necessary feature of human (and animal) *bhava*. It is not an *antarābhava* (a state "in between two *bhava*"). It is within the same human *bhava*.

- **One's mental body (*gandhabba* or *manomaya kāya*) controls the physical body.**
- *Gandhabba* state remains through many successive human births within a given human *bhava* (which can last many hundreds of years). When a given physical body dies, the *gandhabba* is directed into another womb, when a matching one becomes available. Rebirth stories confirm this account.
- However, the *gandhabba* concept is different from the concept of a "soul." A *gandhabba* will keep changing during its lifetime. Furthermore, it will make a drastic change when the lifetime of the human *bhava* comes to an end.

Background

1. At the Third Buddhist Council, Moggaliputta Tissa *Thero* proved that there is no *antarābhava* in a debate with the *Mahāyānists*. That correct interpretation is in the *Kathavatthu* of the *Tipiṭaka.*

- Most current *Thervādins* erroneously believe that *gandhabba* state is an "*antarābhava*" state. That is not correct; see, "Antarābhava and Gandhabba" and "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."
- **A human *gandhabba* exists within the human *bhava*.**

2. A critical factor that contributes to this erroneous belief that the *gandhabba* state is an "*antarābhava*" is the inability to distinguish between *bhava* and *jāti*. **They erroneously believe that *paṭisandhi* takes place in the womb.** But it is evident in the *sutta* passages above, that it is *okkanti* (of the *gandhabba*) that happens, not *paṭisandhi*.

- A human existence (*bhava*) could last many hundreds or even thousands of years. Many human births (*jāti*) can take place during that time; see, "Bhava and jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."
- In rebirth stories, there is always a "time gap" (of typically several years) between successive human births (*jāti*). In between those successive lives, that lifestream lives as a *gandhabba*, without a physical body.

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- Even during a given human life (*jāti*), the *gandhabba* may come out of the physical body under certain conditions, see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."
- It is the human *bhava* that is hard to attain ("How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm"). However, within a given human *bhava*, there can be many births until the *kammic* energy for that human *bhava* runs out. Otherwise, how can one explain all these rebirth stories, where a human is reborn only a few years after dying in the previous human life?

3. I understand the reluctance of many to discard the deeply embedded idea that *gandhabba* is a *Mahāyāna* concept. I used to have that wrong view too. But as I have discussed above, many things will be left unexplained, and there will be many inconsistencies without it.

- Most importantly, rejecting the idea of a *gandhabba* (i.e., the existence of a *para loka*) is a *micchā diṭṭhi*. Thus one cannot even become a *Sotāpanna Anugami* with that *micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage" and "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)." **So, I would urge everyone to sift through the evidence carefully and make an informed decision.**
- More evidence is in many other posts at the site. There are two subsections on *gandhabba:* "Mental Body – Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- One can also use the "Search" box on top right to locate all relevant posts by typing "gandhabba."
- A simple description of the human conception, according to Buddha Dhamma is at: "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception." It could be useful to read that first.

Three Conditions for Conception per *Suttā*

4. The Buddha has described how three conditions must be satisfied for a conception to occur. That includes how a *gandhabba* (nominative case singular is *gandhabbo*; plural is *gandhabbā*) descending to the womb. For example, in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Tanhāsankhaya Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 38): "..***Tiṇṇaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, sannipātā gabbhassāvakkanti hoti***. *Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca na utunī hoti,* ***gandhabbo ca na paccupaṭṭhito hoti****, neva tāva gabbhassāvakkanti hoti. Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti,* ***gandhabbo ca na paccupaṭṭhito hoti****,* ***neva tāva gabbhassāvakkanti hoti****. Yato ca kho, bhikkhave, mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti,* ***gandhabbo ca paccupaṭṭhito hoti****—evaṃ tiṇṇaṃ sannipātā* ***gabbhassāvakkanti hoti****. Tamenaṃ, bhikkhave, mātā nava vā dasa vā māse gabbhaṃ kucchinā pariharati mahatā saṃsayena garubhāraṃ...*"

Here is the WebLink: suttacentral: English translation from the Sutta Central website (I have slightly modified it): "..***Bhikkhus*, the descent to the womb takes place through the union of three things.** Here, there is the union of the mother and father, but the mother is not in season, and the ***gandhabba* is not present**—in this case no descent of an embryo takes place. Here, there is the union of the mother and father, and the mother is in season, but the ***gandhabba* is not present**—in this case too **no embryo can result**. All three following conditions must be met. Union of the mother and father, the mother is in season, and a ***gandhabba* is present**. **That leads to** the formation of an **embryo**. The mother then carries the embryo in her womb for nine or ten months with much anxiety, as a heavy burden..."

- Even though the venerable *Bhikkhus* who manage the Sutta Central website do not believe in the concept of a *gandhabba*, they have at least correctly translated most of the Pāli verse.
- By the way, the Sutta Central site is a useful resource. It provides access to not only the Pāli version but also translations into several languages. I encourage everyone to contribute to that website to maintain that valuable database.
- **One needs to keep in mind that some critical Pāli terms are translated are mistranslated there. Those include *anicca* as impermanence and *anatta* as "no-self." Furthermore, translating**

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complex Pāli words like *viññāṇa* and *saṅkhāra* as just single words in English can lead to serious problems.

5. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Assalāyana Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 93), there is more evidence that for conception to occur, a *gandhabba* needs to descend to the mother's womb at the right time. That needs to happen within a few days of the union of parents, and it needs to be during the mother's season.

Here, the Buddha explains to Assalayana how the seer Asita Devala questioned seven *brahmanā* who had the wrong view that they were heirs to *Mahā Brahmā*. Here are the questions that seer Asita Devala asked:

"*Jānanti pana bhonto—yathā gabbhassa avakkanti hotī'ti?* "

- "But do you, sirs, **know-how there is conception in the womb**?"

"Jānāma mayaṃ, bho—yathā gabbhassa avakkanti hoti 'ti. Jānāma mayaṃ, bho – yathā gabbhassa avakkanti hoti. ***Idha mātāpitaro ca sannipatitā honti, mātā ca utunī hoti, gandhabbo ca paccupaṭṭhito hoti****; evaṃ tiṇṇaṃ sannipātā gabbhassa avakkanti hotī'ti.*"

- 'We do know, sir, how there is conception. **There is coitus of the parents, it is the mother's season, and a *gandhabba* is present**; it is on the conjunction of these three things that there is conception.'

"*Jānanti pana bhonto—taggha so* ***gandhabbo*** *khattiyo vā brāhmaṇo vā vesso vā suddo vā'ti?*."

- "But do you, sirs, know whether that ***gandhabba*** is a noble or *brahman* or merchant or worker?"

"*Na mayaṃ, bho, jānāma—taggha so* ***gandhabbo*** *khattiyo vā brāhmaṇo vā vesso vā suddo vā'ti.*"

- "We do not know, sir, whether that ***gandhabba*** is a noble or a *brahman* or a merchant or a worker."

Therefore, the concept of a *gandhabba* was accepted even by other *yogis* at Buddha's time.

6. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Nidana Sutta (Digha Nikāya 15): "*..Viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpan'ti iti kho panetaṃ vuttaṃ, tadānanda, imināpetaṃ pariyāyena veditabbaṃ, yathā viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ.* ***Viññāṇañca*** *hi, ānanda, mātukucchismiṃ na* ***okkamissatha****, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ mātukucchismiṃ samuccissathā"ti*? "*No hetaṃ, bhante.*" "*Viññāṇañca hi, ānanda, mātukucchismiṃ* ***okkamitvā vokkamissatha****, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ itthattāya abhinibbattissathā"ti*? "*No hetaṃ, bhante.*"

Translated: "..With consciousness as condition there is mentality-materiality (*nāmarūpa*). How that is so, Ānanda, should be understood in this way: If ***viññāṇa*** were not to **descend** into the mother's womb, would mentality-materiality (*nāmarūpa*) take shape in the womb?" "Certainly not, venerable sir." "If, the **descended *viññāṇa* were to depart**, would mentality-materiality be generated into this present state of being?" "Certainly not, venerable sir."

- Here, is it clear that by "a *viññāṇa* descending to the womb," the Buddha meant the descend of the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*), not the *paṭisandhi citta*. **A *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* cannot come out (depart) of the womb!** In #7 below, we will present evidence that the other four *khandhas* always accompany *viññāṇa.* That includes the *rūpakkhandha* (and a *gandhabba* has all five *khandhas*).
- The Pāli word "***Okkanti***" is often mistranslated as "rebirth." But it means the "descend" of an already formed *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*). Rebirth happens (and a *gandhabba* is born) within a thought moment, at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment; see, "Cuti-Paṭisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

More Details from *Suttā*

7. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Kutuhala Sutta (Saṃyutta Nikāya 44.9), Vacca asked the Buddha, "*..Yasmiñca pana, bho gotama, samaye imañca kāyaṃ nikkhipati, satto ca aññataraṃ kāyaṃ anupapanno hoti, imassa pana bhavaṃ gotamo kiṃ upādānasmiṃ paññāpetī"ti?* OR "..and, Master

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Gotama, when a being has given up this body but has not yet been reborn in another body, what food does it consume?"

- The Buddha answered, "..*Yasmiṃ kho, vaccha, samaye imañca kāyaṃ nikkhipati, satto ca aññataraṃ kāyaṃ anupapanno hoti, tamahaṃ taṇhūpādānaṃ vadāmi.*" OR "..When, Vaccha, a being has given up this body but has not yet been reborn in another body, I declare that it uses craving as food."
- Thus when a *gandhabba* leaves one physical and is not yet reborn in another body, its life is sustained by *taṇhā* (craving). That is similar to *rūpi brahma* making use of *pīti* (mental happiness) as food. Both *gandhabbā* and *rūpi brahmā* have subtle bodies (smaller than an atom in modern science; only a few *suddhaṭṭhaka*). However, some *gandhabbā* can inhale *odors* for food and become relatively more dense.

8. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Sangiti Sutta (Digha Nikāya 33), it is described how a *gandhabba* can enter a womb in four ways: "..*Catasso* ***gabbhāvakkantiyo***. *Idhāvuso, ekacco asampajāno mātukucchiṃ okkamati, asampajāno mātukucchismiṃ ṭhāti, asampajāno mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, ayaṃ paṭhamā gabbhāvakkanti. Puna caparaṃ, āvuso, idhekacco sampajāno* ***mātukucchiṃ okkamati****, asampajāno mātukucchismiṃ ṭhāti, asampajāno mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, ayaṃ dutiyā gabbhāvakkanti. Puna caparaṃ, āvuso, idhekacco sampajāno mātukucchiṃ okkamati, sampajāno mātukucchismiṃ ṭhāti, asampajāno mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, ayaṃ tatiyā gabbhāvakkanti. Puna caparaṃ, āvuso, idhekacco sampajāno mātukucchiṃ okkamati, sampajāno mātukucchismiṃ ṭhāti, sampajāno mātukucchimhā nikkhamati, ayaṃ catutthā gabbhāvakkanti.*"

Translated: "..Four ways of **entering the womb**. Herein, *bhikkhus*, one descends into the **mother's womb** unknowing, abides there unknowing, departs thence unknowing. This is the first class of conception. Another descends deliberately, but abides and departs unknowing. Another descends and abides deliberately, but departs unknowing. Lastly, another descends, abides and departs **knowingly**."

- This is the ***okkanti*** (descending of the *gandhabba*) into the womb (*gabbha*), as described in the *Mahā Tanhasankhaya Sutta* discussed above.
- Almost the same description is also given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sampasādanīya Sutta (Digha Nikāya 28)."

9. It is a *Bodhisattva* in the last birth that, ".. descends, abides and departs the womb knowingly", the fourth way of entering a womb, mentioned above.

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāpadāna Sutta (Digha Nikāya 14): "..*Atha kho, bhikkhave, vipassī bodhisatto tusitā kāyā cavitvā sato sampajāno mātukucchiṃ* ***okkami****. Ayamettha* ***dhammatā***."
- Translated: "..Now Vipassī *bodhisattva*, *bhikkhus*, left the *Tusita* realm and **descended** into his mother's womb mindful and knowingly. That is the **rule**."
- At the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment in the *Tusita* realm, the *deva* died and a human *gandhabba* was born, who entered the mother's womb on Earth.
- By the way, this *sutta* describes in detail the last seven Buddhas including Buddha Gotama, who have appeared in our *cakkāvāta* within the past 31 *mahā kappa* (great eons). English translation of the sutta at Sutta Central provides a useful summary in a table WebLink: suttacentral: English translation of the Sutta at Sutta Central.
- However, in this *sutta*, *gabbhāvakkantiyo* and *okkami* are translated incorrectly at Sutta Central.

Patisandhi Viññāṇa Same as *Gandhabba*

10. In the Bija Sutta (WebLink: suttacentral: Saṃyutta Nikāya 22.54), it is clear that *viññāṇa* cannot "travel" without the other four aggregates, including the rūpakkhandha: "..*Yo, bhikkhave, evaṃ vadeyya:* ***'ahamañña tra rūpā aññatra vedanāya aññatra saññāya aññatra saṅkhārehi viññāṇassa āgatiṃ vā***

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gatiṃ vā cutiṃ vā *upapattiṃ vā vuddhiṃ vā virūḷhiṃ vā vepullaṃ vā paññāpessāmī'ti,* ***netaṃ ṭhānaṃ vijjati***."

"*Bhikkhus*, I say that **it is impossible for *viññāṇa* to exist, to grow, and to move at rebirth in the absence of form, feeling, perception, and *saṅkhāra***.."

- Therefore, the descending of a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* to a womb MUST be accompanied by all five *khandhas*, which is the *kammaja kaya* of the *gandhabba*. *Viññāṇa* can never exist without a *rūpa*; even the *Brahmā* in *arūpa* realms have *hadaya vatthu*, a *suddhaṭṭhaka* made of *cattāro mahā bhūta*.

Antarāparinibbayi State and *Gandhabba*

11. The first seven *saṃyojana* include kāma *rāga, rūpa rāga*, and *arūpa rāga*. In the absence of those three *saṃyojana*, one cannot be reborn in any of the 31 realms in the *kāma, rūpa*, and *arūpa loka*. For a discussion on *saṃyojana*, see, "Dasa Samyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process."

- When a person dies, the *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body. If that person had removed the first seven *samyōjana* by the time he dies, that gandhabba could not grasp a *bhava* in any of the 31 realms.
- However, since the last three *saṃyojana* of *māna, uddhacca, avijjā* are still there, that person will not be able to attain *Parinibbāna* either. In other words, *gandhabba* cannot die either.
- Then "that person" will remain in the *gandhabba* state until his *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* runs out. This is called the "*Anatarāpainibbiyāni*" state.
- Th described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Samyojana Sutta (Aṅguttara Nikāya 4:131): "..*Katamassa, bhikkhave, puggalassa orambhāgiyāni saṃyojanāni pahīnāni, upapattipaṭilābhiyāni saṃyojanāni pahīnāni,* ***bhavapaṭilābhiyāni saṃyojanāni appahīnāni****? Antarāparinibbāyissa.*"
- The first 5 *samyojanā are called orambhāgiyā saṃyojanā. Rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga* are collectively called *upapattipaṭilābhiyā saṃyojanā,* and *māna, uddhacca, avijjā are* collectively called *bhavapaṭilābhiyā saṃyojana.*

There are many posts on *gandhabba*: "Mental Body – Gandhabba," "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."

4.8.3 Antarābhava and Gandhabba

July 29, 2016; revised January 23, 2020; December 5, 2020

Title pronunciation:

WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation: Antarabhava and Gandhabba

What Is *Antarābhava*?

1. There are many misinterpretations about the term "*antarābhava*." Just two to three hundred years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, Mahayanists started saying that there is an *antarābhava*, because they thought *gandhabba* belonged to an *antarābhava*.

- At the Third Buddhist Council, Moggaliputta Tissa *Thero* proved that there is no *antarābhava* in a debate with the Mahāyānists. That correct interpretation is in the *Kathavatthu* of the *Tipiṭaka.*

2. *Antarābhava* ("*antara*" + "*bhava*," where *antara* is "in-between") means in between *bhava* or existences. For example, when a living being in the human *bhava* exhausts its *kammic* energy for that human existence, it grasps a new existence (*bhava*) at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. Suppose the next existence or *bhava* is existence as a deer, for this example.

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- The transition from a human existence to an existence as a deer happens in a billionth of a second from the *cuti citta* (dying moment in the human *bhava*) to the *paṭisandhi citta* (first thought-moment in the existence as a deer).
- Therefore, indeed there is no *antarābhava*. The time-lapse from the *cuti citta* to the *paṭisandhi citta* is negligibly small; see, "Cuti-Paṭisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description." **That was the point made by Moggaliputta Tissa *Thero* at the Third Buddhist Council:** there is no "*antarābhava*" between the "human *bhava*" and the "deer *bhava*" in the above example.
- *Gandhabba* is in the same "human *bhava*" until the human *bhava*'s *kammic* energy runs out (which could be many hundreds of years, compared to about 100 years of a lifetime for a human). In between successive human births within that human *bhava,* it is the *gandhabba* that lives in "*para loka*"; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."

Bhava and *Jāti* Are Two Different Concepts

3. The critical point is that *bhava* and *jāti* are two different things. That is why in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, there is a step, "*bhava paccayā jāti*." There can be many "*jāti*" or births as a human within a single human *bhava*; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Living beings in human and animal realms are not born with fully-formed physical bodies. In all other 29 realms, beings are born with fully-formed bodies, which are called *opapātika* or instantaneous births. Thus a *deva* or *Brahma* is born with fully-formed bodies.
- That means a *deva* or *Brahma* will have the same body during that *bhava*, even though that body will change. **For them, there are only ONE *jāti* within that *bhava*.**

Humans (and Animals) Have Many *Jāti* Within That *Bhava*

4. In our example above, a human could have *kammic* energy supporting that human existence (*bhava*) for many thousands of years. However, a physical human body can last only for about 100 years.

- The *kammic* energy of a human *bhava* is not in the physical body (*karaja kāya*), but is in the "mental body" or the *manomaya kāya* of the *gandhabba.* There is a whole section on the *gandhabba* at this site; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- As explained in the post, "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body," a *gandhabba* will inherit "many physical bodies" during a given human existence.
- As discussed in the post, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," the physical body is inert, and it is the *gandhabba* that "gives life" to that inert body.

Āyukkhaya Maraṇa and *Kammakkhaya Maraṇa*

5. That is why the physical body's death does not necessarily mean that there is a *cuti citta* at that dying moment of a human, i.e., one is NOT released from the human *bhava*. One will lose the human *bhava* only if it is a "*kammakkhaya maraṇa*" or death where the *kammic* energy is exhausted ("*maraṇa*" in Pail or Sinhala is for death).

- But most human deaths are "*āyukkhaya maraṇa*," i.e., the end of life for the physical body (here "*āyu*" means the lifetime of a physical body.) More *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* left. There is no *cuti citta* at that time. In that case, there is no change in the *gandhabba* at the moment of death of the physical body.
- That *gandhabba* would come out of the dead body and wait for another womb.
- A housefly lives for about a week or so. But the "fly *bhava*" may last for thousands and millions of years. When a fly dies, a "fly *gandhabba*" comes out of that dead body. It will get into an egg laid by another

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fly and soon be born a fly. That process will repeat an uncountable number of times during that "fly *bhava*" (or the existence as a fly.)

6. Thus, if it is an "*āyukkhaya maraṇa*," the *gandhabba* comes out of that dead body and waits for another womb. It is improbable that there will be a matching womb appearing precisely at the death of a human physical body. In most cases, the *gandhabba* has to wait months and more likely years before a matching womb becomes available (*gati* of the *gandhabba* have to match those of the parents).

- Most deaths due to accidents are not due to "*kammakkhaya maraṇa*," i.e., just the physical body dies. The human in question will be reborn with a new human body at a later time. That is why many rebirths accounts describe death in a previous life due to an accident, murder, etc.
- Of course, one could die with *āyukkhaya maraṇa* even at old age.

Mahāyāna Concept of *Anatarābhava*

7. Now, the reason that the Mahāyānists say that there is an *antarābhava* is that they believe that the *gandhabba* is not human and is an "in-between state."

- The irony is that many current Therāvadins even refuse to believe the EXISTENCE of a *gandhabba*, simply because they do not want to be seen as taking the side of the Mahāyānists. Those Tharāvadins believe that when a human dies — and is going to be reborn human — the second human fetus start INSTANTANEOUSLY in a womb. In other words, the previous human dies at the *cuti* moment, and a billionth of a second later appears as a new baby in a human womb (*paṭisandhi*).
- However, that approach leads to many inconsistencies: (i) That kind of timing is an impossibility. (ii) The step "*bhava paccayā jāti*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* does not make sense: Is that new human birth a new *bhava*?. (iii) *Paṭisandhi* or grasping a new *bhava* happens within a thought-moment. However, the birth of a human body occurs via a series of steps described in #8 below. (iv) As discussed in #9 – #11 below, rebirth accounts are also not compatible with rebirth occurring in the womb. (v) There is more evidence from the *Tipiṭaka*, as discussed in #12, #13 below.

A Physical Human Body Versus *Manomaya Kāya* (*Gandhabba*)

8. According to the *Tipiṭaka*, a full-pledged human appears via a series of steps: *jāti, sañjāti, okkanti, abhinibbantti, khandhānanṃ pātubhāvo, āyatānaṃ pāṭilābho*. See, "Vibhaṅga Sutta (SN 12.2)" and "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body."

- Here, *jāti* is the *paṭisandhi* moment, when the *kammaja kāya* for the new *bhava* appears in a thought-moment. Moments later, that *kammja kāya* is augmented by the *cittaja kāya* and a *utuja kāya*, and a *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) results. That is the *sañjāti* moment. This *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body in the previous life (*bhava*).
- When that *gandhabba* goes into a suitable womb, that is the *okkanti* moment. In many *suttā*, that is described as "*viññāṇa* of a boy or girl descending into a womb." Note that by the time descending into a womb, the sex is already determined. It is a human *gandhabba* that comes into a womb.
- There is no place in the *Tipiṭaka* that says *paṭisandhi* happens in a womb. Rather it says, "… *gandhabba okkanthi hoti*."

9. Many rebirth account features are consistent with that correct interpretation where the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) inherits many successive (but time separated) physical bodies.

- In rebirth stories, there is always a "time gap" between successive human births (*jāti*). They are always separated by several years or at least a few years. In between those successive lives, that life-stream survives as a *gandhabba*. The Buddha told Vacchagotta that the *gandhabba* survives that intervening time by using *taṇhā* as *āhāra*. Some *gandhabbā* can "inhale" aroma from plants, too.

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- We all know that human existence is extremely difficult to get; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm." If each human birth is categorized as a "brand new human existence or *bhava*," that would be inconsistent since human existence is a rare event.

Human Births Within the Human *Bhava*

10. Then another question may arise, "Why do people look different in successive rebirths?" That is because the physical body in each human life (within the same human *bhava*) arises from the parents' contributions to that life.

- Even though the *gandhabba* brings in his/her *gati* (habits), *āsava* (cravings), *kilesa* (mental impurities), etc., from the previous life, the physical body for the new life has significant contributions from the parents. The DNA of the physical bodies of two successive lives will be very different due to this reason. For details, see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

Gandhabba's Gati Will Change With Time

11. Furthermore, even the mental body of the *gandhabba* WILL change in the next life. Thus *gati* (habits), *āsava* (cravings), *kilesa* (mental impurities), etc., will also change as one grows up in a new environment under a different set of influences.

- For example, one could have lived a moral life in the previous birth, but may be born into a family of drug addicts due to a bad *kamma vipāka*. In that case, the new life could drastically change to an immoral life.
- However, in most cases, the successive lives are not that drastically different, unless one makes drastic changes during the life. If one could attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, then one will not be born into an immoral family. If one reaches the *Anāgāmī* stage of *Nibbāna*, one will never be born a human, and will be born in the *Brahma* realm.
- On the other hand, even if one is born in a moral family but under the influence of bad friends becomes a drug addict and commits crimes, one is likely to be born into an immoral family in the next birth. If one commits a *ānantariya pāpa kammā* (say by killing a parent), then one will be born in the *apāyā* at death, even if there is more *kammic* energy left in the human *bhava*.

More Evidence From *Tipiṭaka*

12. Now, let us discuss more evidence from the *Tipiṭaka*. During the night of his Enlightenment, the Buddha (or more accurately the ascetic Siddhartha) first attained the "*pubbe nivāsānussati ñāṇa*," before attaining the "*cutupapāda ñāṇa*" and finally the "*āsavakkhaya ñāṇa*." It is the *āsavakkhaya ñāṇa* that led to the Buddhahood; see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā."

- The first two pieces of knowledge (*ñāṇa;* pronounced "*gnana*";) can be attained even with *anāriya jhānā* (with limited capabilities). Both those deal with the ability to look back at previous lives. But with the first one, *pubbe nivāsānussati ñāṇa,* one could only look at the previous human births.
- Here, "*pubbe*" means "previous," "*nivasa*" means "house," and "*anussati*" means "recall," i.e., the knowledge to recall successive residences of a given *gandhabba*. In a given human *bhava*, a *gandhabba* could have many different "houses," i.e., physical bodies. Thus with this *ñāṇa*, one could look at human births in the past, in multiple human *bhava* going back to very long times, depending on the *yogi's* capability.
- The second one, *cutupapāda ñāṇa,* extends the capability to see all previous rebirths in any realm. Here *cutupapāda* (*cuti* means the end of a *bhava* and *upapāda* means birth) refers to all types of rebirths in various realms (*niraya*, animal, *deva*, etc.) in the past.

Connection to *Pubbe Nivāsānussati Ñāṇa*

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13. Furthermore, the Buddha described how he saw human *gandhabbā* moving from one physical body to the next (in a single human *bhava*) with the *pubbe nivāsānussati ñāṇa.* He explained that with the following simile: If one is situated in an upper level of a multi-story building (yes, there were multi-storied buildings at the time of the Buddha) located at a busy junction, one could see people meandering in the streets below.

- Some people just stay on the street, sometimes sitting in a bench or standing by the road, etc.; this is analogous to *gandhabbā* just waiting for a physical body (i.e., a womb).
- Sometimes, a person enters a house and stays there for a long time; this is comparable to a *gandhabba* in a physical body for a long time, i.e., until old age.
- Other times, a person may enter a house and come out after a few hours. That is comparable to death at a young age.
- Also, a person could enter a house and immediately come out. That corresponds to abortion or an unsuccessful pregnancy.

14. Thus, the *pubbe nivāsānussati ñāṇa* is limited to looking at past human lives. That is an excellent example that the Buddha clearly stated the concept of the *gandhabba*. The *cutupapāda ñāṇa*, extends the capability to see all previous rebirths in any realm.

- In the *Tirokudda Sutta*, the *gandhabba* is called a "*tirokudda*"; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."

Change of *Bhava*

15. If a human dies at the end of the *kammic* energy for the human *bhava*, then the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition happens at the death moment. In the specific example of a human to deer transition, now a "deer *gandhabba*" comes out of that dead body and has to wait for a matching "deer womb" to become available.

- However, if the human was to become a *deva*, then a fully formed *deva* will appear instantaneously in a *deva* realm, the moment the human dies in a *kammakkhaya maraṇa.* A *gandhabba* is involved only in human and animal realms; see, "Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms."

Connection to Astral Travel

16. Another interesting piece of information comes from how the Buddha (and others with *iddhi* powers (*bala*)) traveled to *deva* or *Brahma loka* with the *manomaya kāya* (which is the same as *gandhabba*.) Here, the physical body is left behind. Yet, the physical body does not die, and is kept alive by the *rūpa jivitindriya* (*kammic* energy.) Upon returning, the *gandhabba* can re-enter the physical body.

- Those who attain the fourth *jhāna* can develop *iddhi* powers to be able to separate the *manomaya kāya* from the physical body and travel far with that *manomaya kāya*. The Buddha stated that just as a sword comes out of its sheath, those with *iddhi* powers can pull the *manomaya kāya* out of the physical body. There are many *suttā* in Dīgha Nikāya with that exact statement.
- That *manomaya kāya* can then go to distant places within very short times (this is what is called "astral travel" in the present day; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: Wiki: Astral projection." **A *gandhabba* is the same as an "astral body."**
- In many *suttā*, it is stated that the Buddha visited *deva* or Brahma *lokas* "within the time that takes a bent arm to be straightened."
- Some yogis with *iddhi* powers can travel with the physical body. Of course, the Buddha did that too. That involves a different mechanism, that is not relevant to this discussion.

17. If you have any other questions or unresolved issues about this discussion, please send me a comment (lal@puredhamma.net) or post at the discussion forum. I can add to the post to address such questions.

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4.8.4 Ānantarika Kamma – Connection to Gandhabba

June 2, 2018

1. *Ānantarika* or *ānantariya* comes from "*na*" + "*an*" + "*antara*." That rhymes as "*ānantara*." There are many words like this, meanings of which remain unclear to many. Pāli is a phonetic language, where some meanings can never be found grammatically.

- *Anatta* is the negation of "*atta*" or having refuge/having substance: "*na*" + "*atta*" (which rhymes as "anatta"): there is no substance/does not hold any ultimate truth; see, "Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?."
- The word *Anāgāmī* comes from "*na*" + "*āgāmī*" or "not coming back": "*na*" + "*āgāmī*" rhymes as "anāgāmī." It means "not coming back to the *kama loka*." He/she will attain *Nibbāna* from those *brahma* realms.
- Words like this cannot be analyzed grammatically. This is why current Pāli experts are wrong in interpreting such words (and are unable to interpret many key words).
- By the way, *anantara* means the opposite of *ānantara*; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."

2. Going back to the word "*ānantarika*": "*An*" or "*anu*" means "food" or "*kamma* seed" depending on where it is used. "*na*" means "not." "*antara*" means stored somewhere away. Therefore, *ānantarika* means "not stored away to come back when conditions are right", i.e., it will bring *vipāka* "right away."

- When one does a *kamma* that is NOT *ānantarika*, its *kammic* energy is "stored away" at "*antara*" and can bring suitable *kamma vipāka*, when suitable CONDITIONS appear. Some *kamma vipāka* may not be realized for many lives simply because suitable conditions had not appeared.
- However, an *ānantarika kamma vipāka* SHOULD override any existing other kamma vipāka. Our life experiences (*citta vīthi*) ALWAYS start with a *kamma vipāka* (see, "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?"). **Therefore, an *ānantarika kamma vipāka* SHOULD BE enforced** right after the *kamma* is done, even before any other *pavutti kamma vipāka* (like a seeing, hearing event) is initiated, i.e., **instantaneously.** There should be no need for a delay until the death of the human. [***pavutti*** : happening, proceeding, fate, event]

3. However, an *ānantarika kamma* will bring *vipāka* "right away" ONLY in realms other than human realm (*ānantarika kamma* are not relevant in the animal realm). In order to see why that is, let us first look at what types of *kamma* belong to *ānantarika kamma.*

- The BAD *ānantarika kamma* are five: killing one's mother, killing one's father, killing an *Arahant*, shedding the blood of a Buddha, creating *Saṅgha bheda*. These are listed towards the end of the following link in the *Tipiṭaka*: WEBLINK: suttacentral: Ñāṇakathā [***bheda*** : [m.] breach; disunion; dissension.]
- Then, there are several GOOD *ānantarika kamma*: *magga phala* (stages of *Nibbāna*) and attainment of (*Ariya* or *anāriya*) *jhānā*.
- Any of these, by definition, should lead to their *vipāka* right away. However, there is another factor that comes into play for humans, which we will discuss now.

4. All of the five bad *ānantarika kamma* are done by humans. Therefore, we need look at the good *ānantarika kamma* in order to see how they work in other realms.

- For example, if a *deva* attains the *Anāgāmī* stage, that *deva* will instantaneously be born in a *rūpāvacara brahma* realm. [***deva*** : （lit: the Radiant Ones; related to Lat. deus）: heavenly beings, deities, celestials, are beings who live in happy worlds, and who, as a rule, are invisible to the human eye. They are subject, however, just like all human and other beings, to ever-repeated rebirth, old age and death, and thus are not freed from the cycle of existence and from misery.]

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- If a *rūpāvacara brahma* attains the *Arahant* stage, that *brahma* will instantaneously attain *Parinibbāna*, i.e., will cease to exist in the 31 realms.
- In both those cases, the true meaning of the term *ānantarika kamma* will be enforced, i.e., the *vipāka* will take place without a delay, instantaneously.

5. In the human realm, the enforcement of an *ānantarika kamma* will be DELAYED due to the following reason.

- The primary "body" that is directly subjected to *ānantarika kamma vipāka* is the *kammaja kaya,* the "primary body" created by *kamma* for that *bhava* at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. All living beings are born with a "mental body" (called "*trija kaya*" or three bodies) consisting of the *kammaja kaya*, *cittaja kaya*, and *utuja kaya*.
- *Brahmā* only have *trija kaya.* Even though *devas* in the six *deva* realms have a fourth "physical body" or a "*karaja kaya*," that is very fine. Thus, the *trija kaya* (specifically the *kammaja kaya*) of a *deva* is not shielded sufficiently and any *ānantarika kamma vipāka* will take place without a delay.
- This *trija kaya* in human and animal realms it is given a special name "*gandhabba*."

6. **The *trija kaya* or the *gandhabba* of a human is shielded by the "dense human physical body."** Therefore, the instantaneous enforcement of the *ānantarika kamma vipāka* on the *kammaja kaya* cannot take place. It will have to wait until the death of the physical body.

- When the physical body of a human dies, the *trija kaya* (which is given the special name *gandhabba*) comes out and is no longer shielded by the physical body. **At that time, the *ānantarika kamma vipāka* will be enforced instantaneously.**
- This is the reason that the term *ānantarika kamma vipāka* does not apply to a human in the true sense of *ānantarika* (no delay).
- **Therefore, the working of *ānantarika kamma vipāka* cannot be explained without the concept of *gandhabba*.**

7. Now we can explain many applications of the *ānantarika kamma vipāka* for humans.

- On the "bad side", for example, one can kill a parent or cause *Saṅgha bheda* and can live a full life. However, at the death of the physical body, one would be instantaneously born in the *apāyā* (even if there is more *kammic* energy for the current human *bhava* left).
- On the "good side", one attaining a *jhāna* will be born in the appropriate *brahma* realm only after death. One attaining the *Anāgāmī* stage will be born in the appropriate *brahma* realm only after death, and one attaining the *Arahant* stage would undergo *Parinibbāna* (i.e., cease to exist in the 31 realms and immediately get to *Nibbāna*) only at death.

8. Now, another question may come up regarding the following situation: an *Arahant*'s or an *Anāgāmī*'s *gandhabba* may have to come out of the physical body when performing a supernormal action (*abhiññā*). Wouldn't that *gandhabba* undergo instantaneous transformation at that time?

- The answer is no. The reason is that the *gandhabba* is still firmly connected to the living physical body (that is they can re-enter that body any time). It is as if the *gandhabba* is still protected by the physical body; the shielding is still active.
- This explanation holds also in the cases of astral projection and out-of-body experiences (OBE); see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." In the case of astral projection or astral travel, it is said that the astral body is kept "attached" to the physical body by "silver cord."

9. Now we can address another related issue. There seems to be two issues that may be difficult to grasp.

- A LIVING *Arahant* is subjected to *kamma vipāka* DURING his/her life.
- No *kamma vipāka* will come to an *Arahant* AFTER his/her death.

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10. As we discussed above, a **human *Arahant*** will not attain *Parinibbāna* at the moment of attaining the *Arahanthood*, because of the presence of human physical body. Thus, a human *Arahant* has to wait until the death of the physical body to attain *Parinibbāna*.

- **Now, attaining a *magga phala* does NOT mean the removal of *kammic* energies for previous *kamma* (see below).** Therefore, those *kamma vipāka* will be still effective for the *Arahant* until death.
- This is why even the Buddha had to suffer from an injury to his toe, had back problems, and also had pains after the last meal.

11. There could many more *kamma vipāka* left for an *Arahant* at the time of death. However, at death, the *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body and will instantaneously disappear from the 31 realms of this world, i.e., attain *Parinibbāna*.

- Therefore, any remaining *kamma vipāka* will NEVER be able to materialize. They are said to have become "*ahosi kamma*," or "ineffective *kamma*."
- So, now we have answers to the two questions raised in #9 above.

12. However, **some *kamma vipāka*** other than an *ānantarika kamma vipāka* **will be overcome** by attaining a *magga phala* (at least the *Sotāpanna* stage), i.e., some *kamma vipāka* will become *ahosi kamma*. Of course, **all *kamma vipāka*** will become *ahosi kamma* at *Parinibbāna.*

- Let us discuss how some *kamma vipāka* can become *ahosi kamma* upon attaining stages of *magga phala*.
- In order to do that we need first to discuss what happens at the *Arahant* stage.

13. One attains the final stage of *Nibbāna* (*Arahanthood*), not by removing or exhausting all *kamma vipāka* from the past.

- One attains the *Arahanthood* by cultivating one's *paññā* (wisdom) to the level where one truly understands the real nature of this world. **At that point one's mind will not be tempted by ANY desire (*taṇhā*) to be born ANYWHERE in the 31 realms**. That is a CRITICAL POINT to understand.
- Now when the *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body of an *Arahant*, it immediately undergoes the ***cuti* (separation from the human *bhava***), due to the *ānantarika kamma vipāka* associated with the *Arahant phala*.
- But now, that life-stream CANNOT grasp **a new *bhava* (*paṭisandhi*)** anywhere in the 31 realms since there is no "*upādāna*" in the step of "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process. This is because there is no *taṇhā* left for any existence in the 31 realms and thus "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step will not happen.

14. Therefore, even though there are many good and bad *kamma vipāka* may be associated with that *Arahant*, all those will have become "*ahosi kamma*" (are not able to bring out *vipāka*), simply because one has lost ALL cravings (*taṇhā*).

- This is why Aṅgulimāla became free of the *apāyā*, even though he killed 999 people. That was not an *ānantarika kamma*. Only those *kamma* listed in #3 above are *ānantarika kamma*.

15. However, in the case of the death of an *Anāgāmī*, the *gandhabba* comes out, undergoes *cuti*, but can grasp a *bhava* in the *rūpāvacara brahma* realms reserved for the *Anāgāmīs*. Therefore, a *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition takes place leading to the rebirth in such a realm.

- But an *Anāgāmī*'s mind would not grasp a *bhava* anywhere in the *kāmāvacara* realms, since he/she has lost all "*upādāna*" (tied to cravings via *taṇhā*) for such realms. Therefore, any previous *kamma vipāka* that could have led to a rebirth in the lower realms will have become *ahosi kamma*.

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16. In the same way, a *Sotāpanna*'s mind would not grasp a *bhava* in the *apāyā*. Any "*apāyagāmī kamma*" he/she had done have now become "*ahosi kamma*." If one has "*apāyagāmī kamma vipāka*" waiting to bear fruit (as almost all normal humans do), attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage will OVERRIDE those *kamma vipāka*.

- To put it in another way: at the dying moment, a *Sotāpanna* WILL NOT grasp (*upādāna*) a birth in the *apāyā*. His/her mindset has PERMANENTLY changed. Therefore, such *kamma vipāka* will NEVER materialize even in future lives for a *Sotāpanna*.
- His/her *diṭṭhi anusaya* and *diṭṭhāsava* have been permanently removed, and the three *samyojanā* that binds one to the *apāyā* have been cut off; these terms describe the *Sotāpanna* attainment in different ways; see below.

17. Even though one who attained an *anāriya jhāna* would grasp a *bhava* in the appropriate *brahma* realm, that is just for that particular *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition.

- Since he/she had not attained a *magga phala* (and thus has not "seen" the futility/danger of "*apāyagāmī* actions"), a birth in the *apāyā* can happen in the future.
- One with an *anāriya jhāna* has only SUPPRESSED cravings for *kāma loka*, **but such cravings remain as *anusaya*:** One has not not removed *avijjā* to the level of truly realizing the dangers of *kāma rāga,* by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa.* Thus, *kāma rāga anusaya* remains together with *kāmāsava,* and one has not broken through the *kāma rāga samyojanā*. These terms are explained in, "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava" and "Dasa Samyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process."

18. Therefore, ultimately it is the true understanding of *Tilakkhaṇa* at various levels that lead to various *magga phala*.

- However, understanding of *Tilakkhaṇa* is possible only for one who has cultivated the mundane eightfold path, via discarding ALL 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. [See the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* at Mahā Chattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty), Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage, Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala), and Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samadhi] [WebLink: suttacentral: 62 views at WebLink: suttacentral: *Brahmajala Sutta*]
- To put it another way, attaining *magga phala* at various stages is associated with getting rid of *dasa akusala* at various levels.
- *Micchā diṭṭhi* is the worst of the *dasa akusala*, and at the root of *micchā diṭṭhi* is are the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. The second level of *micchā diṭṭhi* is removed with the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* (that is when one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path).
- All wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) are removed when one attains the *Arahanthood*. When all wrong views are removed, all other nine *akusala* are prevented. However, abstaining from other *dasa akusala* is necessary to remove wrong views, so they are all inter-connected.
- **I keep repeating this, but I am not sure how many pay attention to these basic facts. Many people seem to waste time trying to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*, before getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.**

Discussion at: "Anantariya Kamma, Euthanasia and Assisted Suicides."

4.8.5 Mental Body (Gandhabba) – Personal Accounts

February 5, 2017; revised April 25, 2020

The evidence comes in three general types of accounts, as we discuss below.

1. Many people have at least briefly experienced an "out-of-body experience" (OBE), where the mental body just comes out of the physical body, and one sees one's own physical body from above.

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- In his book, "Travels", the famous author of the Jurassic Park, Michael Crichton (1988, p. 307) mentions his ability to "shift my awareness out of my body and move it around the bedroom", and he says, "..I didn't think anything about it… I assumed that anybody could do it..".
- A similar account has been given by a woman recently who also thought that "everybody could do it": WebLink: ABCNews: Woman Has 'Out of Body' Experiences Whenever She Wants
- Robert Monroe (see #6 below) says mental bodies of most of us come out and wander around even without us realizing it. Sometimes, we are in a dream state (we believe) and then feel a "sudden fall" and wake up. He says this "dream state" is actually the mental body wandering around and we feel the "sudden fall" when the mental body re-enters the physical body.
- **So it is not correct to assume that a *gandhabba* or the mental body as a "ghost." In a sense, it is a better representation of us than our physical bodies that are discarded after about 100 years, because it may live for many hundreds of years until the *kammic* energy for this human *bhava* is exhausted.**

2. There are other — more dramatic — reported cases of OBE and some of them involve "near-death experiences" (NDE), where the person was presumed to be dead but revived later on. During that time, the mental body usually "went through a tunnel" to another dimension, but then came back to re-enter the body.

- Of course, there are many books written on OBE and NDE. "Consciousness Beyond Life", by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of OBE and NDE experienced by people undergoing heart operations, some of whom were declared dead but came back to life.
- A third category involves the rebirth accounts from children, who were killed in an accident in the previous life. They can recall that incident from the previous life, where the mental body came out of a physical body and they watched the accident scene from above. They have provided accurate accounts of that scene. I will discuss one such account at the end of the post.

3. The experiences described in the accounts below need to be evaluated with the following nuances (subtle aspects) in mind. Once the mental body comes out, first it can be an exhilarating experience to be free of the heavy physical body. So, most people describe it as a "liberating experience."

- However, without the physical body, one cannot enjoy smells (in many cases), the taste of food, and also bodily pleasures. Thus, if one had to live without a physical body for a long-time, one could become frustrated, and one could suffer. This is the status of a *gandhabba* in between two consecutive human births.
- Therefore, even though it could be a "liberating experience" to come out from the shackles of the physical body for a short time as in OBE and NDE, it may not be that pleasant to stay in that state state if one has not given up the desire for sensual pleasures since one cannot "enjoy" sense pleasures without a physical body.

4. The other point to keep in mind is that many experiences (especially those from the Western world) are from people who have other religious backgrounds. In a way, this is good because we can get an unbiased opinion. But, unfortunately, they have a different bias due to their own religious beliefs. For example, many people say they visited heaven, which in reality could be a "good locality" of the *gandhabbā*.

- It must be kept in mind that *gandhabba* world is not just "one place", even though physical locations cannot be assigned. It is much better to say that "good *gandhabbā*" with higher moral values hang out together (such localities may be referred to as "heaven"), and "bad *gandhabbā*" segregate away from those. And there can be many varieties in between.
- It is similar to the case of people with similar *gathi* hanging together.
- So, it can be thought of as there being many "*gandhabbā* worlds" in the nether world or *para loka*.
- Some of the *gandhabbā* have very fine bodies, but others may have more dense bodies (still much less dense than our bodies). Some may "look" like humans, but some may have started already transforming

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to animal forms (due to types *saṅkhāra* they cultivate) and may look half human and half animal. It is a very complex world.

5. Robert Monroe has written several books about the OBE experiences of himself and others. Two of his books are: "Journeys Out of the Body: The Classic Work on Out-of-Body Experience" and "Far Journeys."

- Here is how he describes his first OBE experience (there are many other youtube videos on his accounts):

  WebLink: Youtube: Robert Monroe explains his first OOBE

6. Here is an interesting documentary, "Beyond Our Sight – documentary." Thanks to Mr. Johnny Lim from Singapore for sending me this video.

  WebLink: YouTube: Beyond Our Sight - documentary (52')

7. In their book, "Soul Survivor: The Reincarnation of a World War II Fighter Pilot", by Bruce and Andrea Leininger detail the amazing story of their son's recount of a past life, mentioned in the above video. There the little boy vividly describes how he died in his previous life. This falls into the third category that I mentioned in #1 above. Here is a ABC News report on the story:

  WebLink: YouTube: Reincarnation - Airplane Boy (abc Primetime)

- Another youtube video link was sent to me by a reader from Sri Lanka who did not want to be identified. This video is in Sinhala and is the account of a boy. This boy was an adult in the previous life and was killed in an accident. He describes how his mental body came out of the dead body and how he watched from above the scene of the accident.
- The actual account starts at 3 minutes into the video.

  WebLink: YouTube: wenasa (Video not avaliable 21 August 2018)

Several years later (during which time he was in the *gandhabba* world or *para loka*), he was born to a family in a different village in Sri Lanka.

- As is evident from the above two stories, successive births within a given *bhava* are likely to be– but not always — in similar geographic regions because of the tendency to match one's *gathi*.

8. Some scientists believe that these are mind-made hallucinations. Here is a researcher's account of his investigations into that possibility. He started the project to prove that it is a hallucination but ended up convincing himself otherwise.

WebLink: YouTube: Larry King Interview with Melvin Morse

9. There are some people trying to make money saying they can teach how to do "astral projection." Astral projection is another name for OBE.

- This is not something that can be taught. So, don't waste money.
- The only way to do it systematically is to cultivate *Ariya* or *anāriya jhānā* to the fourth *jhāna*. Then one can practice further and learn how to remove the mental body from the physical. The Buddha compared this to removing a sword from its sheath.
- However, most people who can naturally do it get it as a *sansāric* habit. They are likely to have cultivated *jhānā* and developed *abhiññā* powers in recent past lives.
- The most common situation is when the mental body just pops out of the physical body in highly stressful situations where the stress is affecting the heart. The *hadaya vatthu* of the *gandhabba* overlaps the physical heart, and thus when the heart is stressed out, *gandhabba* may just pop out of the physical body.

10. The idea of a mental body controlling the physical body discussed in the previous post in this section ("Our Mental Body – Gandhabba.")

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By the way, the mental body is not all mental. It has a fine material component at *suddhaṭṭhaka* level; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kaya)- Introduction".

- There are many reported instances of this mental body coming out of the physical body, and I have mentioned some of those in other posts. But I would like to have some of that evidence in one place so that one can get an idea of why it is not an alien concept.
- But there are many made-up stories too. So, my advice is not to get carried away too much about watching these youtube videos. That is a waste of time. I just wanted to provide some idea that the mental body (*gandhabba*) is real.
- More information at, "Mental Body – Gandhabba," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kaya)," and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

4.8.6 Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations

September 30, 2017

1. Modern science and technology, especially the internet, is a very useful resource to understand and confirm some concepts in Buddha Dhamma. All of us can now access rare events in remote places, that we would never have known without the internet.

- I started thinking about this post when I received a youtube video of a "strange looking animal" sent to me by Mr. Tobias Große from Germany. Then I did a Google search and found that there are many such "abnormal" human and animal birth reports from all over the world.
- Such observations can be explained with the concept of *gandhabba*, which is an essential concept for describing the life in the human and animal realms. I have two sub-sections at the website devoted to the important concept of *gandhabba*: "Mental Body – Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."
- Of course, gandhabba is NOT a Mahayana concept, see, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka," and without that there will be many inconsistencies, including the observed fact that there are gaps of several years in between successive human rebirths; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

2. As we have discussed in those posts, a human *bhava* (existence) could last for many hundreds or even thousand of years. Within that time, one could be born with a human body many times. When one is born with a human body and when that "physical body" dies, the "mental body" or the *gandhabba* state could have many hundreds of years of life left.

- Thus, unless the kammic energy for that "human *bhava*" has been exhausted, the mental body (*gandhabba*) comes of the dead physical body unharmed. Since we cannot see that very fine body, it is said that the *gandhabba* lives in "*paralowa*" (other world, sometime called nether world), compared to "this world" that we can see.
- That *gandhabba* has to wait for a suitable womb to become available, and at that time it is pulled into that "matching womb." This is why there is normally a gap of several years exists in between successive rebirths per rebirth stories; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

3. During one's lifetime, the *kammaja kaya* of the *gandhabba* changes, and sometimes those changes can be drastic. If one kills a parent, that *kammaja kaya* does not change instantly only because it is "enclosed" in the dense physical body.

- But when the physical body dies, the *gandhabba* is automatically kicked out of that body, and will instantly transform to a *kamma kaya* suitable for a being in an *apāya*. Therefore, even if the original *gandhabba* had more *kammic* energy left for the human *bhava*, a *cuti-paṭisandhi* to a "hell being" will occur, and he/she will be instantly born in an *apāya*.

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- There are such *anantariya kamma* that can instantly lead to births in *rūpa* and *arūpa loka*: If one had cultivated *jhāna*, then when the *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body, it will instantly undergo a *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition to a *brahma* and will be born instantly in the corresponding *brahma* realm.

4. Sometimes, a human *gandhabba* starts making the transformation to another *bhava* while in the *gandhabba* state after coming out of a dead body. This happens especially for those who are engaged in highly immoral deeds.

- For example, if one is cultivating "animal *gati*" (thinking and behaving like an animal), then the *gandhabba* will continue to generate such "animal *saṅkhāra*" after coming out of the dead body, and may gradually transform to an animal while in the *gandhabba* state. Then, if a matching animal womb comes available, that half-human creature will be pulled into that womb.
- Now, by "matching womb" what is meant is the mental state of the mother at that time. She could be a "good moral person", but if for some reason her mental state at that time became "abnormal", then it could become a matching womb for that creature, who could be half human, half animal.
- Depending on how far that transformation had taken place, that *gandhabba* could be pulled into a human womb or an animal womb, i.e., be born to a human or animal mother. Here is the video sent to me by Mr. Tobias Große from an animal birth that looks partly human:

  WebLink: gmx.net: Halb Mensch, halb Tier: Kuh sieht aus wie Fabelwesen

5. The following are some more examples of (both abnormal human and animal births) available as youtube videos (of course, in some cases "photoshop" may have been used; there are many on the internet and I have picked a couple that appear to be genuine):

WebLink: Youtube: Half Animal Half Human Found In Real Life

WebLink: Youtube: South African Sheep Births Half Human Half Beast (Video not avaliable 21 August 2018)

- Here is more information on the above "beast":

  WebLink: Youtube: HALF HUMAN-HALF BEAST CREATURE SENT BY THE DEVIL

- Thanks to Mr. C. Saket from India for the following video. Some abnormalities shown there could also be due to *gandhabba* transformation together with bad *kamma vipāka*:

  WebLink: Youtube: 10 REAL People With Shocking Genetic Mutations

- Please send me any good videos that you come across, so that I can add them to this collection.

6. Anything and everything in this world happens due to a cause, or more correctly due to multiple causes. The foundation of science is causes and effects. If things happen arbitrarily, then there is no way to predict the outcome of a scientific experiment.

- But modern science deals mainly with the properties of material objects. Also, material objects only have a short "history"; a building or a car is assembled and eventually destroyed. Thus it is easier to see the link between causes and effects.
- But living beings have minds and each living being has a past that extends to the deep past (due to rebirth). So, the causes that bring about results now, may have been done in the deep past. That is why it is hard to see the connection between causes and effects for living beings.

7. My late Noble teacher, Waharaka Thero, has mentioned in several *desanās* how he saw such "*gandhabba* transformations" while in *samādhi*.

- When an immoral human dies, the *gandhabba* that comes out will keep cultivating those "bad *saṅkhāra*," and if they get strong enough the fine body of the *gandhabba* will start changing to match those "*saṅkhāra*" and thus "*gati*"; see, "Gati and Bhava – Many Varieties" and "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control."

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- For example, he had seen how a human *gandhabba* transforms to a bird. It started with the head getting longer and forming a beak. The rest of the body then changed gradually from top to bottom. When I heard that, those Egyptian pictures seen on pyramids of "bird men" with bird heads immediately came to my mind.

8. By the way, even some normal people can see those *gandhabbas* with fine bodies; this is due to "*puñña iddhi*" due to some past good *kamma*.

- There are different types of "*puñña iddhi*." Surviving without food and water is known as "breatharianism" and has been documented or claimed by many. an extreme case of a Hindu *yogi*, Prahlad Jani, is baffling to many modern scientists:

WebLink: Youtube: Snippet from "IN THE BEGINNING THERE WAS LIGHT" - Yogi Prahlad Jani

- Thanks again to Mr. C. Saket for sending this video and the related comments above.
- The ability to have very detailed memories from this life is also such a "*puñña iddhi*," see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)", where a woman describes her memories from this life going back to many years. The level of detail she can remember is amazing.
- In fact, I am beginning to believe that in those early Buddhist Councils (*Sangāyana*), where *Arahants* recited the whole *Tipiṭaka*, they were likely to have VERIFIED then by actually re-visiting each *sutta's* delivery by *iddhi* power. When you listen to the woman describing past events in such detail, it is as if she is re-visiting that event.
- The ability of some people to see *gandhabbas* with fine bodies could be responsible for the misty "ghost figures" like the ones that we see in popular culture (in books, movies and on the internet).

9. A human *gandhabba* is a finer version of a human. When a human, say a middle aged person dies, the *gandhabba* that comes out looks very similar to that person (if one can see it). Then with time it will show normal changes that could be expected of a human: His hair and fingernails will grow, for example. In a few years, that *gandhabba* WILL look like ghost with long hair and long finger nails. **Imagine what will happen to one's human body if one doesn't cut one's hair, finger nails, or shave. One will look like a ghost. That is why some *gandhabbas* look like ghosts, according to Waharaka *Thero*.**

- Some of them get a bit denser by inhaling aroma and may become easier to see for those people with "*puñña iddhi*" that we mentioned earlier. However, when that *gandhabba* is pulled into a womb, it will shed all "added" mass (*utuja kaya*), and only the basic "*kammaja kaya*" with the *hadaya vatthu* and the *pasāda rūpa* (combined to be smaller than an atom in modern science) will merge with the zygote (the single cell formed by the union of mother and father) that is in the womb.
- Now that "new baby" will have a different body than the body in the previous life, because it have many features inherited from the parents (via DNA) in the zygote.
- But it is essentially the evolved *kammaja kaya* formed at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment that is still there for that next "birth" in the human world. Thus while the *gandhabba* keep its *kammaja kaya*, but the physical body will be influenced by the parents.
- This is discussed in detail in, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."

This world is much more complex than we realize, and the "*paralowa*" of the *gandhabbas* is even more complex; see "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."

4.8.7 Satara Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba

February 11, 2017

1. As we have discussed in this subsection and elsewhere at the site, we have two bodies: the physical body (*karaja kāya*) and mental body (*gandhabba*). Both these bodies need food to survive.

- The food we eat to sustain the physical body is called *kabaliṅkāra āhāra*.

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- Our mental body consumes three more types of food: *phassa, mano sañcetanā*, and *viññāṇa.*
- The four types of food are called "*satara āhāra*." We will see that all four can be food for the mental body (*gandhabba*).

2. Food is essential for all living beings. If one stops taking *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* (which includes water) for about seven days or so, one's physical body will die.

- However, unless one is an *Arahant*, one will be reborn somewhere in the 31 realms upon death, because one's mental body (*gandhabba*) will not die.
- We cannot stop suffering by committing suicide, i.e., via the death of the physical body. The mental body needs to die in order to stop the rebirth process.

3. If one can stop giving food to the mental body for seven days, **it will die**, and one will never be reborn anywhere in the 31 realms, i.e., one will attain *Nibbāna*; then that *Arahant* will not be reborn upon death of the physical body. Thus the unimaginable suffering associated with the rebirth process will be over **(as I discussed in the beginning of this section on "Living Dhamma," stopping the rebirth process seems scary and it should not be contemplated when one is starting on the Path)**.

- This is why in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, the Buddha said that if one can practice the *sutta* without making any mistakes, one will attain *Nibbāna* in seven days.
- Let us discuss how this is possible.

4. There are two conditions that must be satisfied to generate a new mental body at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment: (i) There must be a *kamma bīja* available to grasp, and (ii) one's mind must willingly grasp that *kamma bīja.*

- We all have accumulated numerous *kamma bīja*, so the first condition is always satisfied for anyone. Therefore, it is the second condition — grasping a new existence (*bhava*) at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment that can stop the rebirth process.
- At the beginning, we need to just focus on not grasping a *bhava* in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*).
- As we have discussed before, this grasping of a new *bhava* is not done consciously, but automatically.
- For example, a *Sotāpanna*'s mind will not grasp a *bhava* in the *apāyā*; A *Sakadāgāmī*'s mind will not grasp a human *bhava* in addition, an *Anāgāmī* will not grasp a *bhava* in the *kāma loka*, and an *Arahant* will not grasp any.

5. There is another way to look at this mechanism of grasping a new *bhava* at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. In the *uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) cycle, a certain *bhava* is grasped at "*upādāna paccayā bhava*."

- When we trace the cycle backwards, we see that it starts at "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."
- The grasping (*upādāna*) happens only if that PS starts with *avijjā* and generates an appropriate *viññāṇa* for grasping that *bhava.*

6. Therefore, it is important to realize the two roles that *viññāṇa* play. We can understand this by examining how a *Sotāpanna* avoids birth in the *apāyā*.

(i) If one cultivates "*apāyagāmī viññāṇa*" by doing extremely hateful/greedy actions, *viññāṇa* will keep GENRERATING *kamma bīja* (energy) that fuel a new *bhava* in the *apāyā*. When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one will automatically stop generating any more such *kamma bīja*, but those ones that had been created will be there.

(ii) However, after someone attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, his/her mind will not start a *uppatti* PS cycle with an *apāyagāmī viññāṇa*, because that level of *avijjā* has been removed. That type of *viññāṇa* has been

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"killed" or removed from her mind and is no longer able to grasp a new *bhava* in the *apāyā,* even though *apāyagāmī kamma bīja* will still be there.

7. A good example from the *Tipiṭaka* is Ven. Aṅgulimāla. He killed almost 1000 people and definitely had accumulated enough strong *kamma bīja* to be born in the *apāyā*.

- But at death his mind was devoid of that kind of bad *viññāṇa* to grasp any type of *bhava* in the 31 realms. Therefore, he was not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms.

8. Therefore, the word *viññāṇa* represents much more than just consciousness: It can be "food" for accumulating new *kamma bīja* AND also "food" or "fuel" that leads to grasping a new *bhava*.

- *Viññāṇa* is opposite of *ñāṇa* (pronounced "gnana") or wisdom. When one cultivates *ñāṇa*, one's *avijjā* is reduced and certain types of *viññāṇa* are concomitantly reduced.
- Pronunciation of *viññāṇa*:

  WebLink: Pronunciation of Viññāṇa
- Pronunciation of *ñāṇa*:

  WebLink: Pronunciation of ñāṇa
- There are many types of *viññāṇa*; see, "2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms."
- As one attains the four stages of *Nibbāna*, *avijjā* is removed in four stages and the strength of all types of *viññāṇa* are accordingly reduced (removed) and all are eventually removed at the *Arahant* stage.
- This pure level of consciousness — without any defilements and thus any cravings — is called *pabhasvara citta;* see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."
- In other words, an *Arahant* can experience the world with a purified mind that is not blemished by even a trace of greed, hate, or ignorance. Therefore, at death, his purified mind will not grasp any existence (*bhava*).

9. As long as one has *viññāṇa*, one will be born somewhere in the 31 realms. This is why *viññāṇa* is called a type of food for the mental body.

- As one proceeds at successive stages of *Nibbāna*, one will crave for less and less things in this world. For example, at the *Anāgāmī* stage, one would have lost all cravings (and hopes) — or *viññāṇa* — for any type of sensual pleasures.
- It must be noted that the birth in the *apāyā* is not due to cravings to be willingly born there (no one has such cravings), but due to immoral deeds one one had done to enjoy sensual pleasures AND has not yet removed that mentality (desire to enjoy sense pleasures at any cost) or bad *viññāṇa*.

10. Any type of *viññāṇa* is cultivated by thinking, speaking, and acting in such a manner. Thinking, speaking, and acting is done based on *mano*, *vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra* which arise due to *sañcetanā* ("*san*" + "*cetanā*" or defiled intentions; *cetanā* is pronounced "chethanā").

- For example, an alcoholic regularly thinks about drinking, likes to speak about it and likes to drink. The more he does those, the more that *viññāṇa* will grow.
- It is easy to see how a gambler, smoker, etc grow their corresponding *viññāṇa* the same way.
- Having such *viññāṇa* can lead to other immoral activities and corresponding *viññāṇa*, say tendency to lie, steal, and even murder.
- Therefore, all activities done in cultivating such *viññāṇa* are based on *mano sañcetanā*. That is why *mano sañcetanā* are also food for the mental body.

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11. The triggers for such *sañcetanā* are sense contacts or *phassa*. These are not mere sense contacts, but those that give rise to "*samphassa ja vedanā*."

- *Phassa* is a sense contact. When one just looks at something that is *phassa*. But if one looks at it with greed or hate (and ignorance) in mind, that is *samphassa* ("*san*" + "*phassa*"); see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."
- This is why sense contacts or *phassa* (more precisely *samphassa*) are food for the mental body. Such sense contacts can lead to thoughts about bad actions and can give rise to future *kammaja kāya*.
- Therefore, one needs to avoid sense contacts with sense objects that one has *taṇhā* for. We need to remember that *taṇhā* is attachment to something via greed or hate; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- So, it is a bad idea for a gambler to visit casinos, an alcoholic to make visits to bars, etc. **Furthermore, one needs to avoid friends who encourage such activities too.**
- It is best to avoid any type of contacts that can lead to sense exposures that provide "food" for the mental body, i.e, get us started thinking about those bad activities.

12. Now we can see how those three types of food act in sequence to feed the mental body: Sense contacts (*phassa*) can lead to *mano sañcetanā*, which in turn cultivate *viññāṇa*.

- Such sense contacts (*samphassa*) automatically start *mano saṅkhāra*; then we start thinking and speaking about those favorite activities, i.e., we start *vacī saṅkhāra* (consciously think about them and even speaking about them). Then when the feelings get strong, we will start doing them (using *kāya saṅkhāra*).
- It is important to realize that *mano saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra,* and *kāya saṅkhāra* are all generated in the mind: *Vacī saṅkhāra* are conscious thoughts that can lead to speech; *kāya saṅkhāra* are conscious thoughts that move the physical body.
- All three types of *saṅkhāra* arise due to *mano sañcetanā*. We cannot think, speak or do things without generating appropriate *mano sañcetanā*.

13. As we discussed before, the physical body is just a shell; it is controlled by the mental body (*gandhabba*).

- Sense contacts come through the physical body. When we get attached to them, we generate *mano sañcetanā* and think, speak, and act accordingly, generating various types of *viññāṇa*.
- *Kabalinka āhāra* or the food that we eat are experienced through one of the six sense contacts (tongue or *jivha pasāda*). If we eat food with greed, that also lead to *mano sañcetanā* and corresponding "greedy *viññāṇa*." Therefore, *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* can also be a food for the mental body. More details can be found at "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa."
- That is why all four types can be food for the mental body.

A deeper discussion on the four types of food (*āhāra*) is in the post, "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa."

Next, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage",..

4.8.8 Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage

May 6, 2017; September 24, 2019

Two Eightfold Paths

1. There are two Eightfold Paths: mundane and Noble. See, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty).."

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- First, one starts on the mundane Eightfold Path by removing the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* or wrong views.
- It is only then one's mind is capable to see the "bigger picture" and one could comprehend the Three Characteristics or *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) of this world of 31 realms. When one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Once one comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent, one becomes a *Sotāpanna*. Subsequently one can attain higher stages of *Nibbāna*.

2. But there are many people today who have at least some of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* and believe that they are on the Noble Path. But it is clear from above that some may not even be on the mundane Path.

- **Those 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* cannot be given up just by saying to oneself that one believes in them. One's mind must be convinced of it, and that conviction comes by learning Dhamma, true nature of this world.**
- In this post, we focus on the *para loka* and *gandhabba* because many *Theravadins* incorrectly assume that *gandhabba* is a *Mahayana* concept.

The Ten Types of *Micchā Diṭṭhi* (Wrong Views)

3. The 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are listed in many *suttā*, including the *WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Cattarisaka Sutta* and *Pathama Niraya Sagga Sutta* (WebLink: suttacentral: Aṅguttara Nikāya: AN 10.211): "*Natthi dinnaṃ, natthi yiṭṭhaṃ, natthi hutaṃ, natthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, natthi ayaṃ loko,* ***natthi paro loko****, natthi mātā, natthi pitā, natthi sattā opapātikā, natthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaṃ parañca lokaṃ sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī'ti*." Translated, the wrong views are:

- Giving (*dāna*) has no merits
- being grateful and responding in kind (for what others have done for oneself) has no merits
- respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues has no merits
- what we enjoy/suffer in this life is not due to *kamma vipāka* but they "just happen"
- this world does not exist
- ***para loka* or the world of *gandhabba* does not exist**
- there is no special person as a mother
- no special person as a father
- there are no *opapātika* (instantaneous) births
- there are no *Samana brahmana* (basically *Ariyā* or *yogis*) with *abhiññā* powers who can see both this world (*imanca lokam*) and *para loka* (*paranca lokam*)

Micchā Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views) About the *Gandhabba*

4. I have highlighted three types of *micchā diṭṭhi* that are common. They are somewhat inter-related. But the one about the *gandhabba* is a common *micchā diṭṭhi*. Even those who believe themselves to be "devout Buddhists" seem to have that wrong view. They believe that the Buddha did not teach about *gandhabba* or the *para loka*.

- There is WebLink: suttcentral: Tirokuṭṭa petavatthu in the *Petavatthu* in the *Khuddaka Nikāya* (KN). This has been translated to English (not very good), but one can get the idea: WebLink: accesstoinsight: Tirokudda Kanda: Hungry Shades Outside the Walls.
- Also see, "Antarabhava and Gandhabba."

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5. In many *suttā*, including WebLink: suttcentral: Mahāsaccaka Sutta and WebLink: suttcentral: Bodhirājakumāra Sutta the Buddha described how he saw human *gandhabbas* moving from one physical body to the next (in a single human *bhava*) with the *Pubbenivasanussati Ñāṇa* on the night he attained the *Buddhahood.*

- While *Ariyā* with *jhānā* can attain both the *Pubbenivasanussati Ñāṇa* (about previous human rebirths) and the *Cutupapada Ñāṇa* (about past births in all realms), other *yogis* can mostly acquire only the first one, i.e., they can see only their previous human births. Note that this is related to the last type of *micchā diṭṭhi*, i.e., to believe that no such *Ariyā* or *yogis* exist.
- In the *sutta* links above, the Pāli version is correct but English and Sinhala translations are not correct, because there is no distinction made between the *Pubbenivasanussati Ñāṇa* and the *Cutupapada Ñāṇa*. With the first *Ñāṇa*, one can see previous human births and the with the second, one can see previous births in all 31 realms.
- By the way, hereafter I will try to provide *sutta* references at the WebLink: suttcentral: SuttaCentral site. They have not only the Pāli version, but also translations in different languages. **However, it must be kept in mind that some translations are incorrect, as mentioned above and also with the translations of *anicca* and *anatta*.**

Gandhabba is a Human Without a Human Body

6. We also need to realize that *para loka* or the world of *gandhabba* (of both humans and animals) is NOT a separate realm.

- In all other 29 realms, beings are born fully-formed instantaneously (*opapātika*) contrary to the 9th *micchā diṭṭhi* on the list above. Those instantaneous births, of course, do not involve a mother's womb, and one *bhava* means just one *jāti* (birth). For example, a *deva* or a *Brahma* is born once instantaneously. That *Brahma* dies only once.
- The difference in the human and animal realms is that those dense physical bodies have lifetimes much smaller than the *kammic* energies for the two *bhava*; see, "Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- When a human or an animal dies — and if there is leftover *kammic* energy for the human or animal *bhava* — then a *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body and waits for a suitable womb to be born (*jāti*) again in the same *bhava* (same realm).
- Thus, contrary to the widespread belief, *gandhabba* is not an "*antarābhava*" (in between *bhava*; "*antara*" means "in between"), but rather is in the same *bhava*. The confusion arises with not knowing the difference between *bhava* and *jāti*.

Gandhabba Lives in This World

7. Until they find a suitable womb, those *gandhabba* are in "*para loka*" or the netherworld, which co-exists with our world (but normally we cannot see those fine bodies of *gandhabbas*).

- Thus a human may be reborn many times before switching to another existence (*deva, brahma*, animal, *preta,* etc).
- This is why rebirth stories are common. It is the "human *bhava*" that is extremely hard to get as the Buddha explained. But once in the human *bhava*, one could be born many times as human; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- The difference between *bhava* and *jāti* is explained in, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

8. **So, I hope one can understand the fact that one still has *micchā diṭṭhi* if one adamantly rejects the concept of *gandhabba*, or the concept of *opapatika* births.**

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- **If one has any one of the ten *micchā diṭṭhi*, one is not yet on even the mundane Eightfold Path**; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and the post referred to in that chart, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."
- The Buddha discussed this clearly in the "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

It is a Step-by-Step Process

9. In order to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage, the first step is to make sure that one learns *Dhamma* and clear up any remaining doubts about those ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.

- When one gets rid of all ten *micchā diṭṭhi*, then one is truly on the mundane Eightfold Path.
- At that point, one's mind been cleansed to a stage where one can comprehend deeper Dhamma concepts. In particular, the Three Characteristics of Nature (*Tilakkhaṇa*): *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. This is a deeper *micchā diṭṭhi,* the second type described in the *Mahā Cattarisaka Sutta*.
- When one comprehends the *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent, one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. That is when one gets to the *Lokuttara* (Noble) Eightfold Path.
- Then, by following the Noble Eightfold Path one reaches the higher stages of *Nibbāna*, culminating at the *Arahant* stage.

10. **The Path to *Nibbāna* has been covered for hundreds of years due to fact that the above steps have not been clear. Furthermore, the meanings of those keywords, *anicca, dukkha, anatta* have been distorted.**

- That slow process of degradation of Buddha Dhamma took place over about 1500 years. In the late 1800's when the Europeans discovered the ancient Sanskrit and Pāli documents, they did more damage.
- They first discovered Sanskrit Hindu *Vedic* literature in India (Buddhism had disappeared from India long before that), and later came across the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* in Sri Lanka, Burma, and other Asian countries.
- The key problem arose when they ASSUMED that Sanskrit words "*anitya*" and "*anātma*" are the same as the Pāli words "*anicca*" and "*anatta*." **The Sanskrit words "*anitya*" and "*anātma*" do mean "impermanent' and "no-self", but the Pāli words "*anicca*" and "*anatta*" have totally different meanings.** See, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

More Information

11. That historical background is fully explained in many posts at the "Historical Background" section. But at least read the posts starting with "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline."

- The correct meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* have been discussed in the section, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

12. As for the instantaneous births, instances of such *opapātika* births occur in many *suttā*. For example, in the WebLink: suttcentral: Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta, the Buddha told Ven. Ānanda about *opapātika* births of many people who died in a certain village: "..*Nandā, ānanda, bhikkhunī pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātikā tattha parinibbāyinī anāvattidhammā tasmā lokā*.."

- As I mentioned, the translations are available in several languages in the above SuttaCentral link for the *sutta*. For example, the above verse is translated into English as "..The nun Nandā, Ānanda, through the complete destruction of the five lower fetters has arisen spontaneously in the Brahmā worlds, and will attain Final Emancipation there, without returning from that world..."
- In Sinhala as: "..ආනන්දය, නන්දානම් භික්ෂුණිය පස් ආකාර ඔරම්භාගිය (සත්වයන් කාමලකෙයහේ රඳවන) සංයෝජනයන් නැතිකිරීම නිසා ඔපපාතිකව (බ්‍රහ්මලකෙයහේ) උපන්නිය. ඒ (බ්‍රහ්ම) ලකෙයනේ වනෙස් නවෙන ස්වභාව ඇත්තෙළුහිදීම පිරිනිවන් පාන්නිය..."

- However, please keep in mind that those SuttaCentral translations also can have errors (as is the case at most online sites as well as books), as I pointed out in #5 above.

Grasping the Real Nature

13. Finally, there may be people who attain *magga phala*, but had never even heard about *gandhabba* in this life. If one comprehends the *Tilakkhaṇa*, that is all needed.

- In such cases, they had not rejected the concept of a *gandhabba*. If someone explained the concept to them, they would accept it since they can see that it must be true.
- However, if one has hears those explanations and reject them as "nonsense", that is *micchā diṭṭhi*. Those are the concept of a *gandhabba* (and *para loka*), instantaneous births, the existence of other realms, and the existence of *Ariyā* or *yogis* who have the ability to see such realms as well as *para loka*, and one rejects them as "nonsense", that is *micchā diṭṭhi*.
- The only way to get rid of such *micchā diṭṭhi* is to examine those concepts and convince oneself that those must be true.

14. In that process, it is also necessary that one lives a moral life staying away from *dasa akusala* as much as possible, as explained in the "Living Dhamma" section. It is important for anyone to experience the mental clarity (and the "peace of mind" or "*niveema*") that comes with staying away from *dasa akusala*.

- By the way, the strongest of the *dasa akusala* is *micchā diṭṭhi*, which includes not only the 10 types but also ignorance about *Tilakkhaṇa*. This is why a *Sotāpanna* removes 99% or more of the defilement by getting rid of the BOTH types of *micchā diṭṭhi;* see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."
- The first type of *micchā diṭṭhi* is about the 10 types discussed in #3 above, which includes believing that nothing happens without a cause, bad causes (dasa akusala) lead to bad consequences, etc. The second type is about not knowing the true nature of this world of 31 realms, i.e., that it is not possible to maintain anything to one's satisfaction (*anicca*), one is subjected to suffering because of that (*dukkha*), and thus, one is truly helpless in this rebirth process (*anatta*).
- However, it is difficult to "see" those *Tilakkhaṇa* until one believes in that bigger picture. That includes the 31 realms and the rebirth process and the concept of *para loka* with *gandhabbas*.

4.8.9 Working of kammā – Critical Role of Conditions

May 21, 2017

1. We can see various levels of human happiness/suffering around us. We see some people live with relatively higher levels of health, wealth, and happiness, while others live in poverty, ill-health, and misery.

- We become distraught upon hearing that a child died prematurely, or someone was brutally murdered. Of course, we should generate empathy and sympathy, and also do our utmost to prevent such horrible occurrences.
- However, we also need to look at the CAUSES for such things to happen. Once we understand the underlying causes, we will be able to prevent such things happening to us in the future, if not in this life, in future lives.
- Nothing happens in this world without a reason or without a cause (normally multiple causes). In order to prevent tragic outcomes, we need to locate the causes and eliminate them.
- This is the key message of the Buddha: It is not possible to eliminate the suffering that has arisen (we can minimize it), **but we can eliminate FUTURE suffering from arising.**

2. The principle of cause and effect (*hetu/phala*) is a key principle in Buddha Dhamma, as in modern science.

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- Science is all about finding out HOW things HAPPEN around us due to CAUSES. A pebble on the ground will not go up by itself unless some energy is given to it, i.e., we have to pick it up and throw it up.
- We receive sunlight because of the Sun is putting out a vast amount of energy every second. And science has figured out how that happens: That energy comes from nuclear reactions in it; Sun is a giant fusion reactor.
- With the development of modern science we have figured out that nothing happens without a cause; normally there are more than one cause that lead to an effect.

3. However, science has not yet figured out that what happen to humans or any living being are also due to causes.

- Does it just happens that X is born healthy and wealthy, Y is born healthy but poor, and Z is born handicapped and poor?
- There must be REASONS why X, Y, and Z are born that way.
- Not only that, many times a person born rich can become poor, and vice versa. Or a person in good health can die suddenly in an accident or by a heart attack. There must be reasons for such "turnarounds" too!
- The laws of *kammā* can explain all the above. But the laws of *kammā* are not just based causes and effects, they DEPEND on CONDITIONS. That is what prevents laws of *kammā* being deterministic, i.e., one's future is NOT determined by one's past actions or *kammā*.

4. Science has been unable to come up with explanations for the effects discussed above. There are two key reasons for this lack of progress in science.

- **First**, unlike with inert objects like a pebble, **a living being has a mind**. When a person moves, the cause for that movement originates in that person's mind, i.e., the person decides to move. Your hand will not move until you decide to move it. And you have the power to STOP its movement too!
- **The second difference** is that for living beings **there is a rebirth process**. The laws of *kammā* cannot be explained without accepting the rebirth process. This is why not believing in rebirth is a strong *micchā diṭṭhi.* With that wrong vision, one will never be able to figure out the true nature of the world and explain why there are so many variations of happiness/misery in living beings; see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"" and "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- The present life of about 100 years is only an extremely short time in our *sansāric* journey (rebirth process). As we go from life to life, our mental states as well as our physical appearances change; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."

5. So, anything and everything in this world happen due to reasons or causes. However, just because there is a cause, it is not guaranteed that it will give rise to the corresponding effect.

- In the terminology of Buddha Dhamma, past *kammā* do not necessarily lead to *kammā vipāka.*
- We can grasp this key idea with an example.

6. A seed CAN give rise to a tree. It has the POTENTIAL to bring a tree to existence. However, for that to happen, suitable CONDITIONS must be present.

- If we keep a seed in a cool, dry place it will not give rise to a tree, and will remain a seed with that POTENTIAL for hundreds of years.
- Eventually, that potential to bring about a tree will go away and the seed will be "dead."

7. When a strong *kammā* is done, that creates a *kammā bīja,* or a *kammā* seed, that works pretty much like a normal seed that we discussed above.

- For that *kammā bīja* to bring about its result, i.e., *kammā vipāka*, suitable CONDITIONS must exist.

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- If suitable conditions do not materialize for long times, then that *kammā bīja* will lose its energy and it is said that it will become an *ahosi kammā* , i.e., that *kammā* will not bring about any *kammā vipāka*.

8. As we mentioned above, the other important factor in this complex process is that a given living being has gone through a rebirth process that has no discoverable beginning.

- In this unimaginably long rebirth process, we all have accumulated uncountable *kammā* seeds, both good and bad.
- Those good *kammā* seeds can bring about good results (health, wealth, beauty, etc), and bad *kammā* seeds bad results (ailments, handicaps, poverty, etc).
- But either kind can run out of energy without giving results (*vipāka*), if suitable CONDITIONS do not appear within a period of time.

9. A seed cannot germinate unless required CONDITIONS are provided (i.e., it should be placed in the ground and water, sunlight, and nutrients need to be provided).

- In the same way, we can avoid many possible bad *kammā vipāka* by being mindful and not providing conditions for them to appear. We can also MAKE conditions for good *kammā vipāka* to bring about good results.
- For example, if one goes into a bad neighborhood at night, that is providing conditions for any suitable bad *kammā* seeds waiting to bring about their bad *vipāka.* On the other hand, we cannot be successful in any project unless we are willing to provide right conditions: to pass an examination, we must prepare for it by studying.
- Even if one is born poor, one could work hard and come out of poverty. If one is prone to catching diseases, one could eat healthy, exercise, and overcome at least some of the recurring ailments. *Kammā* is not deterministic, see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

10. But of course it will be difficult to overcome the results of very strong *kammā* seeds. One may be born handicapped due to a strong *kammā* seed that was generated in a previous birth.

- In the same way, strong good *kammā* seeds can bring about good results without much effort. Some are born rich, healthy, and wealthy due to a past strong good *kammā* seed coming to fruition.

11. So, I hope it is clear that one's happiness in this life could be determined by several different factors.

- In relatively few cases, one could automatically (without much effort) receive health, wealth, and RELATIVE happiness due to strong *kammā* seeds. In the same way, some others could be facing miserable lives.
- However, on the average, one's happiness in this life is to a large extent is determined by one's willingness to make right CONDITIONS for good *vipāka* to take place and prevent bad *vipāka* from appearing.
- Even more importantly, one could make conditions for health, wealth, etc in future lives by living moral lives and doing good deeds.

12. Now let us look at what happens when a result materializes due to a *kammā vipāka*. Once a bad *vipāka* materializes, we can certainly manage it to minimize its effects, and in some cases even get rid of it by working to making conditions for a good*kammā* seed to overcome it.

- For example, if one comes down with cancer, in some cases it can be overcome by good medical treatment, i.e., making conditions to counter the initial effect.
- If one is born tall or short, there is nothing much one can do about it. If one is born handicapped, one will have to live the whole life that way.
- As we can see, we can improve some of those *kammā vipāka*, while we cannot do much about some others.

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- Even the Buddha could not avoid certain *vipāka*. He had back aches and Devadatta was able to injure his foot. Ven. Moggallana was beaten to death.

13. Another observation we can make from the above discussion is that when one becomes an *Arahant* (or even a Buddha), his suffering is not completely ended at the *Arahanthood*. He still had to suffer due to the physical body that had already "started."

- So, what was meant by "removal of suffering" when one attains *Nibbāna*? It is the future suffering (i.e., suffering in future lives) that is ended. When an *Arahant* attains *Parinibbāna* (i.e., physical death), he/she will not be reborn in this suffering-filled world of 31 realms, and that is when the suffering completely ends.
- However, as we have discussed, part of suffering ends with the attainment of *Arahanthood*: suffering associated with "*saṅkhāra dukkhā*" or what is called "*samphassa jā vedanā*"; see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

14. Of course, IN THE LONG RUN (in the rebirth process), no matter how hard one strives, it will be IMPOSSIBLE to attain PERMANENT happiness **anywhere in this world**. This is called *anicca* nature. That is why we need to strive to attain *Nibbāna* to avoid future suffering.

- However, it is not an easy task to even to beginning to comprehend the *anicca* nature, until one enters the **mundane Eightfold Path** by getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi,* which include not believing in rebirth or the concept of a *gandhabba*; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- Only when one enters the **mundane Eightfold Path** that one will be able to grasp the Three Characteristics of Nature (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), and start on the **Noble Eightfold Path** to attain *Nibbāna.*
- The two types of Eightfold Paths were discussed by the Buddha in the "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)." Also see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

15. Finally, the role of conditions in the laws of *kammā* are inherent in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*; see, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?" and "Paṭṭhāna Dhamma – Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)."

- *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is discussed in the section: "Paṭicca Samuppāda."

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4.9 Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa

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In this important subsection, we will discuss the link between mind (*nāma*) and matter (*rūpa*). These are deeper analyses. For simpler analyses, see, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- Rūpa Aggregate
  - Bhūta and Yathābhūta – What Do They Really Mean
  - What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!
- Mental Aggregates
  - What Is Vedanā (Feelings)?
    - Vedanā – What It Really Means
    - Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?
  - What is Saññā (Perception)?
    - Saññā – What It Really Means
    - Future Suffering – Why It Arises
    - Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra
  - What is Saṅkhāra (Mental Formations)?
    - Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means
- Viññāṇa Aggregate
  - Viññāṇa – What It Really Means
  - Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter
  - Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means
- Sakkāya Diṭṭhi
  - Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?
- Nāmarūpa Formation
  - Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāṇa

4.9.1 Rūpa Aggregate

Bhūta and Yathābhūta – What Do They Really Mean

What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!

4.9.1.1 Bhūta and Yathābhūta – What Do They Really Mean

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1. *Yathābhūta* is normally translated as "true nature" (which is a bit close to the true meaning). From that, it seems, *bhūta* is translated as "nature"; sometimes *bhūta* is translated as "becoming." Both are wrong.

- These words are also associated with *yathābhūta ñāṇa*. By the end of this discussion one will know what that *ñāṇa* or wisdom is about.

2. *Bhūta* is a Sinhala word as well as a Pāli word. It literally means a "ghost." The deeper meaning is associated with the "*satara mahā bhūta*": *pathavi*, *āpo*, *tejo*, *vāyo*.

- One cannot ever see those *satara mahā bhūta* individually. The smallest unit containing any of them is a *suddhaṭṭhaka*, which consists of those four (*pathavi*, *āpo*, *tejo*, *vāyo*) AND *varna*, *gandha*, *rasa*, *oja*. Thus a *suddhaṭṭhaka* ("*suddha*" + "*aṭṭha*" where "*suddha*" is pure or fundamental and "*aṭṭha*" is eight) means "pure octad" or "pure unit of eight." How a *suddhaṭṭhaka* is formed is discussed in "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."
- It should also be noted that *satara mahā bhūta* are the primary *rūpa*. All others, including *varna*, *gandha*, *rasa*, *oja*, are derived from them and are called *upādaya rūpa*.

3. As mentioned in that post, *bhūta* have their origins in "*gathi*." When one cultivates a certain *gathi* and when they become strong, they can lead to the creation of *bhūta* (*suddhaṭṭhaka*) produced via their *javana citta*.

- So, in order to get a good understanding of these key words, one needs to know about *gathi* (I have sometimes spelled as *gati*), which is discussed in many posts at the site. For example, see, "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti."

4. Scientists have now verified the illusive nature of matter at very small scale. Atoms were thought to be the smallest possible division of matter until 1897 when J.J. Thomson discovered the electron. Then it was realized that an atom is made of smaller units (protons, neutrons, and electrons), and then those were found to have structure too, but they sub-units (quarks, etc) cannot be detected individually).

- With the advent of quantum mechanics, the distinction between matter and energy has become blurred. The mass of a particle depends on its speed, and its mass when it is at rest is the smallest. Photons or "particles of light" have zero mass at rest, i.e., zero rest mass. It is now typical to state the mass of an elementary particle in terms of energy units.
- It has become clear that matter has an illusive nature when tried to figure out the "smallest units" from which all matter is composed of.

5. Furthermore, it is not possible to determine the exact position of an elementary particle at a given time. For example, it is only possible to say that an electron can be within a certain region of space. Thus, an electron is like a ghost. It cannot be pinned down to be at a certain location.

- The situation is even worse for a photon, a particle of light. When a photon is released, one can only find it at a later time by stopping it at a detector. It is IMPOSSIBLE to state the exact path of the photon from the source to the detector. It could have been anywhere in between. The same applies to an electron too, even though it has a non-zero rest mass.
- This has been referred to as "quantum weirdness." Those small particles are as elusive as ghosts.

6. That is exactly what the Buddha said. A *suddhaṭṭhaka* is much smaller than even a photon, and the Buddha said that *satara mahā bhūta* are the true "smallest units of matter." This is why he called them *bhūta*. One can NEVER see them or detect them individually. As we mentioned above, the smallest unit of *rūpa*, or a *suddhaṭṭhaka* consists of eight sub units.

- Furthermore, these *bhūta* arise from *gathi* of living beings (mostly human and above); see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka." A person with rough character qualities is likely to create *suddhaṭṭhaka* with higher proportion of *pathavi*, etc.

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7. No one will be able to "see" or figure out how *gathi* are transformed to *bhūta* or *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. Only a Buddha can discern that.

- Billions of billions of *suddhaṭṭhaka* are combined to lead to the *mahā bhūta* stage of *rūpa*. *Brahmā* have bodies made of *mahā bhūta*. Only *brahmā* can see such fine *rūpa*.
- When large number of *mahā bhūta* combine, that leads to the *dhātu* stage of *rūpa*. Bodies of *devas* are at fine *dhātu* stage. Our human bodies are made of much denser *dhātu* stage of *rūpa*.

8. All mater that we see are made of such dense *dhātu*. Rocks have *dhātu* that have mostly *pathavi*. Water mostly has *āpo*. Fire mostly has *tejo*, Wind mostly had *vāyo*. That is why earth, water, fire, wind are loosely referred to as *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo*.

9. When someone comprehends what we discussed above about the true nature of matter that exists in this world, one is said to have the *yathābhūta ñāṇa*. However, just reading about them is just the start. That *ñāṇa* grows as one comprehends the finer details.

- *Yathā* means the true nature. *Yathābhūta* means the true nature of matter or true nature of *bhūta*, which arise via the MIND. Of course, more finer details need a good understanding of *Abhidhamma*.
- However, for most purposes, it is sufficient to have the above discussed rough idea. As one learns more, the details will be automatically filled in.

10. This is also why the Buddha said, "*mano pubbangamā dhammā, mano settā manomayā*" in the famous *Dhammapada gāthā*.

- It means "everything in this world has its origins in the mind, all are set by the mind and prepared by the mind."

11. *Suddhaṭṭhaka* by themselves are inert. They acquire "life" when energized by the mind in the formation of "*kammaja rūpa*." This energy in embedded as rotation (*paribramana*) and spin (*bramana*). When that embedded energy runs out, rotation and spin stop and they again become inert.

- For example, a *hadaya vatthu* for a new existence comes into being as a *kammaja rūpa* at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. During its lifetime, the *hadaya vatthu* maintains its spin and rotation. When the *kammic* energy embedded is exhausted, its motion stops and the *bhava* ends. At that time, a new *hadaya vatthu* for a new *bhava* is formed by *kammic* energy.

12. The *hadaya vatthu* is also called "*vatthu dasaka*" where *dasaka* means ten. This is because the *hadaya vatthu* or *vatthu dasaka* has two modes of energy (spin and rotation) in addition to the 8 parts in the inert *suddhaṭṭhaka*. That why it is called a *dasaka* (made of ten units).

- This added spin and rotation is what gives life to an inert *suddhaṭṭhaka*. That power of energy is given by *javana citta* (mind). The more energy given to a *kamma bīja*, it will sustain a *bhava* (*hadaya vatthu*) that arises from it for a longer time.
- Same is true for the five *pasāda rūpa* (*cakkhu*, *sota*, *ghāṇa*, *jivhā*, *kāya*) formed at the moment of *cuti-paṭisandhi*. There are two *bhava rūpa* which are also *dasaka*, and *jivitindriya rūpa* which is a *navaka* (just spin or *bramana*). How different modes of rotation and spin give rise to these nine "life forming" basic units is discussed in the post: "Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body."
- By the way, the word *kammaja* comes from "*kamma*" + "*ja*" where "*ja*" means birth. Therefore, those nine *kammaja rūpa* are created by *kammic* energy.

13. Now we can clearly see that our heavy physical body, by itself, is totally inert. The real life is in the *gandhabba* with the *hadaya vatthu* and the five *pasāda rūpa*. Our body movements are controlled by the *kāya dasaka* of the *gandhabba* and it is spread like a very fine mesh over the whole body.

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- At the death of the physical body, this life-carrying *gandhabba* leaves the body and the body becomes inert and starts decaying.
- In the case of an out-of-body experience (OBE), even though the *gandhabba* leaves the physical body, it is still connected to the physical body (by a "silver cord" in the terminology of astral projection) and that is why the body does not start to decay: "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

14. Therefore, in all life forms in the 31 realms the real life is in the ultra-fine life form of a *hadaya vatthu* accompanied by up to five *pasāda rūpa*. In *arupavaccara brahma* realms, there is only the *hadaya vatthu*. In *rupavacara brahma* realms, *hadaya vatthu* is accompanied by *cakkhu* and *sota pasāda rūpa*. In all other realms, five *pasāda rūpa* exist with the *hadaya vatthu*.

- The only exception is *asañña* realm, where only the *kāya dasaka* is maintained by the *jivitindriya* (no *hadaya vatthu*, since thoughts are not generated).
- **This is another critical factor in the *yathābhūta ñāṇa***: All life forms are like *bhūta* (ghosts); in essence, life is maintained by a ultra-fine body that is impossible to see and have temporary existence. Any life in any realm is short-lived in the *samsāric* scale. In the *samsāric* scale trillion years is like a drop of water in the ocean.

15. This *yathābhūta ñāṇa* about the real nature of our body also helps to get rid of the "*ghāṇa saññā*" about our bodies. One values one's dense body so much because one believes that there is a "self" in the physical body.

- Those with *ucceda diṭṭhi* (like most current scientists and philosophers) believe that our physical body (and its brain) is all that is there.
- Those with *sāssata diṭṭhi* believe that there is a mental body that lives forever.

16. Buddha discovered that both those are wrong views. There is a mental body, but it drastically changes from *bhava* to *bhava*. One could be a *deva* or a human for a time being, but the next *bhava* could be in the *apāyā*.

- There is nothing in our physical body worth to be taken as "mine."
- When one comprehends this fact, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (which is one of four conditions to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage) is removed. However, it is just one way to remove *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.
- This aspect is discussed in "WebLink: suttacentral: Mūlapariyāya Sutta (MN 1)," "WebLink: suttacentral: Kaccānagotta Sutta (SN 12.15)," AND "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Hatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28)," among others.

17. Now we see that the precursors for all matter in this world, *satara mahā bhūta*, are mind-made and have a transient existence. They are "*bhūta*" or "ghosts." And since everything else is made of them, what we consider to be "solid, tangible things" in this world are really "ghost-like."

- The knowledge of this real "ghost-like" nature is called "*yathābhūta ñāṇa*." When one has that knowledge, one looks at the world according that correct view, which is called "*anu bhūtam*."
- When one is not aware of this true nature, it is called "*na anu bhūtam*" which rhymes as "ananubhūtam." It is to noted that many key Pāli words are composed that way: anatta is "*na*" + "*atta*"; see, "Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?."
- Anantariya is "*na*" + "*an*" + "*antara*." Words like this cannot be analyzed grammatically. This is why current Pāli experts are wrong in interpreting such words (and are unable to interpret many key words).
- This word "*ananubhūtam*" comes in several key *suttā,* including the ones mentioned above in #16.

18. One good example is the famous WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 49): "*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ, taṃ pathaviyā pathavattena **ananubhūtaṃ**, āpassa āpattena **ananubhūtaṃ**, tejassa tejattena **ananubhūtaṃ**, vāyassavāyattena **ananubhūtaṃ**,*

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bhūtānaṃ bhūtattena ***ananubhūtaṃ****, devānaṃ devattena* ***ananubhūtaṃ****, pajāpatissa pajāpatittena* ***ananubhūtaṃ****, brahmānaṃ brahmattena* ***ananubhūtaṃ****, ābhassarānaṃ ābhassarattena* ***ananubhūtaṃ****, subhakiṇhānaṃ subhakiṇhānaṃ subhakiṇhattena* ***ananubhūtaṃ****, vehapphalānaṃ vehapphalattena* ***ananubhūtaṃ****, abhibhussa abhibhuttena* ***ananubhūtaṃ****, sabbassa sabbattena* ***ananubhūtaṃ****..*"

Translated: "*Viññāṇa* is unseen, infinite, and leads to the rebirth process for all. With *viññāṇa* one cannot comprehend the real nature of *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, bhūta, deva, pajapti brahma, abhassara brahma, subhakinha brahma, vehapphala brahma*, etc. and everything in this world (*sabba*)."

- One has a defiled consciousness or *viññāṇa* until one attains the *Arahantship*. Until then one cannot fully comprehend the real "ghost-like" nature of everything in this world, i.e., one's *yathābhūta ñāṇa* is not complete.
- We will discuss the first part of the verse "*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ..*" in the next post. This short phrase is commonly mistranslated.

19. Another major sutta where it appears is "WebLink: suttacentral: Saḷāyatana Vibhaṅga Sutta (MN 137)": "*Rūpānaṃ tveva aniccataṃ viditvā vipariṇāmavirāganirodham, 'pubbe ceva rūpā etarahi ca sabbe te rūpā aniccā dukkhā vipariṇāmadhammā'ti evametaṃ* ***yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya passato uppajjati somanassaṃ****."*

Loosely Translated: Any *rūpa* that has existed or in existence now, has the "ghost-like transient nature." That is the reason why they change unexpectedly (*viparinama*) and have the *anicca* nature. When one comprehends this true nature, it leads to joy in one's mind (*somanassa*)."

4.9.1.2 What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!

May 13, 2017; revised November 4, 2017

All our conscious thoughts start with one of the **six** senses getting an input from the external world. With those six sense faculties, we detect six types of *rūpa* "out there" in the world.

1. Many people think *rūpa* means just "material things" that we can see out in the world. But EVERYTHING that we sense through our six senses are *rūpa*. I will systematically explain this.

- Those things that we detect with our five physical senses are what we can call "dense *rūpa*" made of *suddhaṭṭhaka*, i.e, they are made of *mahā bhūta* (*pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo*).; see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."
- Such *rūpa* that we detect with the *mana indriya* are called "*dhammā*." These are **just energies** and have not condensed to the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level, i.e., **they are below** the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.
- It is good to remember that ***dhamma*** refers to a doctrine (like in Buddha Dhamma,) and ***dhammā*** refers to such very fine *rupā*.
- Let us discuss those two types of *rūpa* in detail first.

2. **All things that we experience through our SIX senses are *rūpa*, but the first FIVE types of sensory inputs come through five "sensors" obvious to everyone (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body).** The SIXTH one, called *mana indriya* (located in the brain) is not known to science. That is clearly stated in the *Cha Chakka Sutta*, as discussed below.

- **All six types are eventually EXPERIENCED by the mind, i.e., with *citta* (thoughts) with *cetasika* (mental factors) in them.**
- For details of how the mind experiences the sensory inputs that come through the six "sense doors," see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."

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3. Those that we experience through our FIVE physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body) are "dense *rūpa*." They have *suddhaṭṭhaka* made of the four great elements or the "*cattāri mahā bhūta*."

- Those five kinds of *rūpa* are all in our "*rūpa loka*," the world that we experience.
- What we touch with our **body** or see with our **eyes** are the *rūpa* that are familiar to everyone. They are sometimes called "***rūpa rūpa***" or "***vaṇṇa rūpa***" (***varna rūpa*** in Sinhala or Sanskrit) to distinguish from other four types.
- However, we need light to "see" those "*rūpa rūpa*." Light consists of tiny particles called photons. Those photons have very small masses due to their energies.

4. Now, let us look at the other four types of *rūpa* that we detect with our ears, noses, tongues.

- It is easy to see that what we taste are also "*rūpa rūpa*," i.e., solid food or liquids.
- What we detect with the nose are scents, which are really very small particulates. So, they are also "*rūpa rūpa*."
- When we hear sounds, our ears detect disturbances in the air due to that sound. Sound, therefore, involves energy, just like light. Sometimes sound energy is attributed to energy packets called "phonons."

5. Therefore, detection of *rūpa* in the "*rūpa loka*" involve matter or energy, and all those are above the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.

- Yes. The light particles or photons are also made of *suddhaṭṭhaka*.
- They are above the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage, so one can see how minute a *suddhaṭṭhaka* is; it is much, much smaller than an atom in modern science.
- For example, a photon in the visible range (which is a *suddhaṭṭhaka*) is a billion times less massive than a hydrogen atom, the smallest atom. That is like the mass difference between a grain of sand an average airplane.
- A *suddhaṭṭhaka* could be a billion times smaller than that photon.

6. That is actually another example of how Buddha was ahead of modern science 2500 years ago. He had categorized all five "objects" sensed by the five physical senses as "*rūpa*" made up of *suddhaṭṭhaka*. It was only about 100 years ago that science identified photons as particles, with the advent of quantum mechanics.

- Even many physicists did not accept the particle nature of light until the single-photon detection experiments of Grainger, Roger, and Aspect in 1986: WebLink: PDF file: Grainger et al-Experimental Evidence for a Photon Anticorrelation Effect-1986
- Now it is accepted that light is made up of particles called photons.

7. Now let us think about what else we experience, other than those detected with the five physical senses. Imagine someone trapped in a cell with soundproof walls with no light inside and nothing in that room except its walls.

- That person can only touch the walls. He cannot see, hear, smell, or taste anything.
- But touch is not the only sense experience he has. He can think about anything he wants to. He can think about past events, and he can think about what can take place in the future.
- Those thoughts do not come at random, but due to *kamma vipāka*. Of course, one can willingly recall them too. They are one's memories and future hopes, among others. That is the part that most people don't even consider.

8. As we discussed above, those are the finer *rūpa* detected by the mind lie below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. They are detected by the *mana indriya* in the brain (another fact unknown to science) and subsequently sensed by the mind.

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- *Kamma bīja* — that are generated by our minds (via our thoughts) — are also part of *dhammā*. They bring *kamma vipāka* back to from time to time. These are what we think of as "random thoughts" that come to us about things and people.
- Those *dhammā* are not coarse enough to be "seeing" even with *abhiññā* powers and do not make contact with other five coarse senses. Thus they are called, "*anidassanaṃ appaṭighaṃ dhammayatana pariyapanna rūpaṃ*."
- Here, "*anidassana*" means "cannot be seen" and "*appaṭigha*" means "cannot be touched or sensed with even the finest instrument." And, "*dhammayatana pariyapanna rūpaṃ*" means "can make contact only with the *dhammāyatana* or *mana indriya*"; see, "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

9. We see a person when light reflected off of that person comes to our eyes. A sound is heard when the air disturbances due to that sound reach our ears. We smell a scent when tiny particulates of scent reach our noses. When food particles make contact with our tongues we taste the food.

- So, we have five physical "sensors" on our bodies to detect those five five sense inputs. They are **eyes, ears, nose, tongue**, and **our bodies**. They are called ***cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā***, and ***kāya indriya***.
- The sixth sense that we have is called the ***mana indriya***. It is located in the brain. But I have not yet been able to identify it with the known components in the brain. Of course, scientists do not think about it that way. This is how the Buddha described it.

10. We detect "*dhammā*" with the *mana indriya,* just like we detect pictures with *cakkhu indriya* or sounds with *sota indriya* (ears). But all these sense inputs are "felt" by the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) located close to the physical heart; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."

- These *dhammā* are also *rūpa* in Buddha Dhamma, but they are even finer (subtle) than those light particles or photons.
- "***Dhammā***" are just energies that lie BELOW the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. They cannot be detected with even the finest scientific instrument.
- That person locked up in an isolated room can generates thoughts about his past or future. That involves *dhammā* and the *mana indriya*.

11. Just like the dense *rūpa* that we detect with our five physical senses are in our "*rūpa loka*," these *dhammā* (which are the same as *kamma bīja*) are in our "*mano loka*"; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental."

- This *mano loka* is also called "*bhava*" because that is where one's *kamma bīja* are, as we mentioned above, in #8. We all have numerous *kamma bīja* that can give rise to a variety of *bhava* at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment when a new *bhava* is grasped (the strongest *kamma bīja* corresponding to an appropriate *bhava* is selected).
- Of course, *kamma vipāka* during a given life also arise due to smaller *kamma bīja,* as mentioned above.
- Whe *kamma bīja* lose their energies over long times, they become just "records," of what happened. Now they cannot bring any more *vipāka*, but become only "memories."

12. So, these *dhammā* (or *kamma bīja*) are *rūpa* that are below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage, and are in our "*mano loka*" or "mental world," as opposed to those dense *rūpa* that are in our "material world" or "*rūpa loka*."

- The "mental world" is all around us, just like the "material word," but of course we cannot "see it", just like we cannot "see" all those radio, television, and cell phone signals that are all around us.
- But we do know that those radio, television, and cell phone signals are there because we can receive them with our radios, TVs, and cell phones. Just the same way, we receive those "*dhammā*" with our *mana indriya*.

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- One may be engaged in some task, say washing dishes in the kitchen, but all of a sudden, a thought may come to mind about a friend far away or some incident at work. That is due to "*dhammā*" impinging on *mana indriya* due to *kamma vipāka*.
- Also, we can recall such memories at our will too.

13. Those who are familiar with *Abhidhamma* know that a "seeing event" is a sense input through the eyes: "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*," i.e., "eye-consciousness arises when a ***rūpa rūpa*** (with the aid of light) impinges on the eyes."

- Similarly, hearing is due to: "*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ*," etc. for other physical senses of *ghāṇa* (smell), *jivhā* (taste), and *kāya* (body).
- Finally, detection of *dhammā* with the *mana indriya* is stated as "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*."

14. We also need to realize that "*dhammā*" can have somewhat different meaning too, depending on the where used.

- Buddha Dhamma means the teachings of the Buddha. Here it is usually written as "Dhamma," but some do write it as Buddha Dhammā.
- So, we need to take the appropriate meaning of a given word depending on the context.

15. For those who are familiar with *Abhdhamma*, we can state the above with *Abhdhamma* language as follows. According to Buddha Dhamma EVERYTHING in existence can be put into four ultimate realities (*paramatthatha*):

- Thoughts (***citta***)
- Thought qualities or mental factors (***cetasika***)
- Matter (***rūpa***) which (includes energy and *dhammā.*)
- ***Nibbāna***

16. As we will see later, it is these *dhammā* that eventually lead to the formation of dense *rūpa* that we enjoy with our five physical senses.

Such **dense *rūpa*** have finite lifetimes (they are impermanent). **Besides, they change unpredictably during their existence, and that is called *viparinama lakkhana***.

- But no matter how hard one tries, one is unable to maintain such **dense *rūpa*** to one's satisfaction (*anicca*). Thus, such **dense *rūpa*** leads to more **suffering** than any pleasure.
- Five types of **dense *rūpa*** are in our "*rūpa loka*", the less dense *dhammā* are in our "*mano loka*"; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Mental."
- A living being exists to experience such **dense *rūpa*** and hopes to enjoy them with the mind (with ***citta*** and ***cetasika***). That is the basis of existence in a sentence.

17. The Buddha said, "*sabbe dhammā |anattā|*," i.e., "all *dhammā* are without essence at the end" and must be given up to attain *Nibbāna*. But that cannot be done by sheer will power: One has to comprehend the true nature — *Tilakkhanna* — to see the real nature of all *rūpa*, including *dhammā*.

- We make our own world by creating *dhammā* our own. That is a critical point that I will try to explain in future posts in this "Living Dhamma" section.
- The basis for making *dhammā* are our thoughts with *javana citta*. A *javana citta* generates "*kamma bīja*," and they give rise to future *kamma vipāka*. So, *kamma bīja* are *dhammā*. They are very tiny packets of energy below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.

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- But some *javana* (especially in *jhāna samāpatti*) can create energies above the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage, i.e., they can produce tangible *rūpa*. That is how one with *abhiññā* powers can "create" physical objects.

18. Any *rūpa* (including *kamma bīja*) that one makes for oneself, cannot be maintained to one's satisfaction.

- Any *rūpa* with energy will eventually be destroyed, or that energy will wear out. Furthermore, such *rūpa* can and will change unexpectedly while in existence too; that is the *viparinama* characteristic and is a root cause of suffering.
- The only *dhammā* that are "permanent" are *nāma gotta*, **records** of our *saṅkhāra,* which do not have energy in them; "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Thalaya (Mind Plane)."

19. When one sees the perils of this rebirth process (after one grasps the *Tilakkhaṇa*), one stops making those causes via *abhisaṅkhāra*, and also gives up the craving (*taṇhā*) for them, which leads to *Nibbāna*.

- ***Nibbāna*** results when all those causes are removed, no *rūpa* can arise. Hence *Nibbāna* is permanent. No more suffering!

20. Finally, our six sense inputs (*āyatana*) and the six types of *rūpa* that we experience with them are discussed in several *suttā*. For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cha Chakka Sutta (MN 148)":

"*Cha* ***ajjhattikāni*** ***āyatanāni*** *veditabbānī'ti—iti kho panetaṃ vuttaṃ. Kiñcetaṃ paṭicca vuttaṃ?* ***Cakkhāyatanaṃ, sotāyatanaṃ, ghānāyatanaṃ, jivhāyatanaṃ, kāyāyatanaṃ, manāyatanaṃ****. 'Cha ajjhattikāni āyatanāni veditabbānī'ti—iti yaṃ taṃ vuttaṃ, idametaṃ paṭicca vuttaṃ. Idaṃ paṭhamaṃ chakkaṃ*. (1)"

"*Cha* ***bāhirāni*** ***āyatanāni*** *veditabbānī'ti—iti kho panetaṃ vuttaṃ. Kiñcetaṃ paṭicca vuttaṃ?* ***Rūpāyatanaṃ, saddāyatanaṃ, gandhāyatanaṃ, rasāyatanaṃ, phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ, dhammāyatanaṃ****. 'Cha bāhirāni āyatanāni veditabbānī'ti—iti yaṃ taṃ vuttaṃ, idametaṃ paṭicca vuttaṃ. Idaṃ dutiyaṃ chakkaṃ*. (2)"

- Thus, there are six (*Cha*) internal *āyatana* (*ajjhattikāni āyatanāni*) and six external *āyatana* (*bāhirāni āyatanāni*).
- The sixth internal *āyatana* is *manāyatana*, and it detects *dhamma* (called *manāyatana*, just like *sadda* or sound is called *saddāyatana*).

A more in-depth analysis of *dhammā* is at, "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

4.9.2 Mental Aggregates

What is Saññā (Perception)?

- Saññā – What It Really Means
- Future Suffering – Why It Arises
- Vipallāsa (Ditthi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra

What Is Vedanā (Feelings)?

- Vedanā – What It Really Means

What Are Saṅkhāra (Mental Formations)?

- Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means

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4.9.2.1 What is Saññā (Perception)?

Saññā – What It Really Means

Future Suffering – Why It Arises

Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra

4.9.2.1.1 Saññā – What It Really Means

December 31, 2017; revised August 22, 2019

1. *Saññā* is usually translated to English as "perception" and sometimes as "recognition"; it is both and more! *Saññā* has a much deeper meaning and at the same time, a more straightforward definition.

- *Saññā* is pronounced "sangnā" and gives an encoded meaning in Pāli and Sinhala with that pronunciation (click to play the audio):

WebLink: Listen to the Pāli word "saññā"

- It means "sign" or even closer, "the embedded message." That latter expresses it well since it is how one "instantaneously gets the idea of what is meant by an external signal."

2. When we understand what is meant by *saññā*, we can clarify many things, including how humans can communicate with beings in other realms via *saññā*.

- *Saññā* is the "universal language." To give an analogy: if there is a sign that reads, "winding road ahead," only those who know English can understand what that sign says.
- But those universal signs — showing a picture of a winding road — provide the "*saññā*" that a road ahead is going to be curvy.

- A second example (on the right above) shows a sign. That conveys the "*saññā*" to stop.

3. At the fundamental level, *saññā* means "recognition" of an object or a person or a concept; getting "full comprehension" of what it is AND what it means.

- Whether one says fire in English or "*ginna*" in Sinhala, or "*fue*" in French, if a person knows how to associate any of those words with "fire", that is the *saññā* that comes to one's mind when one hears either the word "fire", "*ginna*", or "*fue*."
- If a person does not speak those three languages, those words do not mean anything to that person. However, with the following picture, anyone will have the idea that it is about a fire or a flame:

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4. Therefore, *saññā* is the "full picture that comes to the mind instantaneously. "

- When we think about a fire, that "sense of what a fire is," arise automatically. The mind can visualize a fire.
- Therefore, regardless of the language, one speaks in, everyone who has seen a fire generates the same feeling about a fire in one's mind. **That is a crucial point to contemplate on, and will be valuable in comprehending the "*anicca saññā*."**

5. Our mental body (*gandhabba*) can register only pure *saññā*. When two *gandhabbas* are communicating, they cannot use words OR pictures. So, the process is much simpler. What one *gandhabba* X thinks about what to say to *gandhabba* Y, that message or *saññā* is automatically transmitted to Y, **if Y is pointing attention to X.**

- When *gandhabba* X wants to see what is happening at a given location, it just needs to point to that direction and can see that location. We will not discuss the details here, but essential point is that a *gandhabba* does not "see" things using light as we do.
- In the same way, a *gandhabba* does not hear using an ear. Sound waves propagating through the air are not needed.
- That is how most beings — who don't have physical bodies like us — communicate and interact with the external world, as emphasized briefly in the previous post, "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba."
- When someone gets to the fourth *jhāna* and attains *abhiññā* powers, he/she will be able to see and hear without eyes and ears. These capabilities are *dibba cakkhu* or "divine eye" and *dibba sota* or "divine ear." One using one's own mental body (*gandhabba*). Then seeing and hearing is not limited to short distances.

6. However, when a *gandhabba* is trapped inside a physical body, one does not have those capabilities (in a normal human). Then one needs to rely on the sense faculties located in the physical body (eyes, ear, etc.) to capture information that comes via pictures, sounds, etc. The brain to convert those signals to "*saññā*" and to transmit them to the *gandhabba* inside.

- If you are not clear on this point, please re-read the previous post, "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba."
- In that post, we compared how a gandhabba trapped in a physical body to a human operator enclosed in a military tank. That is a good analogy.

7. At conception, the *gandhabba* takes hold of a single cell formed by the union of a mother and a father. That single cell grows to a baby inside the womb, and a grown adult after birth. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

- In an average human, the physical body shields the, the *gandhabba*. Thus, it cannot receive direct *saññā*. Pictures and sounds come through the eyes and ears not as *saññā* but as video and audio signals. Those need to be converted to *saññā* that can be grasped by the *gandhabba.*
- When a baby grows, the eyes and ears (as well as nose, tongue, and body) need to develop to capture those sense inputs. The brain also needs to build circuitry for converting that information to a "*saññā*" that can be transferred to the *gandhabba* so that it can grasp what object, person, or concept it is.

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- Once those capabilities develop, the signal transmission goes from the brain to the *hadaya vatthu* located close to the heart via "*kirana*" or in the language of modern science electromagnetic waves. That was discussed briefly in the post, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) – Introduction."

8. When a baby is growing up, it learns to associate words and pictures with each object, person, concept that it experiences. That requires many parts of the brain. That is why it takes a newborn baby several years to become fully functional in the world.

- So, when a person hears someone yelling "fire", the brain matches that with a visual of a fire, converts it to the correct "*saññā*" of a fire, and transmits that signal to the *gandhabba*.
- The association of a word with its meaning happens in the brain (which is acting like a computer). Then only the meaning is conveyed to the *gandhabba*, where our thoughts are generated.
- As I have discussed in the posts on the *gandhabba*, a human *gandhabba* is born at a *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. It could live to thousands of years in age, and during that time could be born many times as a human (of course with different bodies). See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

9. If the relevant parts of the brain are damaged later in one's life, one may not be able to recognize one's surroundings. That is what happens to people with Alzheimer's disease.

- When a person gets old, the brain starts degrading, and then again, one's ability to interact with the external world could become limited.
- When that person dies, the *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body if there is leftover *kammic* energy for the human *bhava.* When a suitable womb becomes available, it can start another human body. This is how there can be several births during a given human *bhava*.

10. Now we move to the next level of *saññā* where it is more than just recognition. For example, when two people hear the name of a person X, they will have the picture of that person (or "*saññā*") coming to their mind automatically. But not only that, they would register some qualities that they had attached to that person through their interactions with X. One may say. "It is my Dad. I love him so much." Another would say, "Oh, he is a crook.."

- Then based on that *saññā*, each will generate different feelings (*vedanā*) about X. That could lead to creating good or bad thoughts (*mano saṅkhāra*) automatically. If one keeps thinking about X some more, then one will be consciously generating more thoughts about X, and may even speak out (*vacī saṅkhāra*). If the feelings get strong, one may generate *kaya saṅkhāra* (thoughts leading to actions), and, for example run to Dad and give him a hug (or avoid the person perceived to be a crook).
- Therefore, based on the same thought object, different people can get different *saññā* and thus can respond differently.

11. In general, how we make decisions about interacting with others or respond to external stimuli depends on our "world views." This is what is called "*diṭṭhi*" in Buddha Dhamma.

- When one has wrong world views or *diṭṭhis*, one could make wrong decisions based on "distorted *saññā*."
- When one's mind is free of greed, hate, and ignorance, it is easier to sort out wrong *diṭṭhis*. The meanings of greed and hatred are apparent. Ignorance here is the ignorance about the message of the Buddha. That message, of course, can be grasped only in stages.
- First, it is crucial to realize that one MUST live a moral life and follow that mundane Eightfold Path by abstaining from *dasa akusala* as much as possible.
- Then it will become easier to cultivate the "*anicca saññā*," start grasping the *Tilakkhaṇa* and become a *Sotāpanna*. We will discuss the *anicca saññā* in upcoming posts.

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4.9.2.1.2 Future Suffering – Why It Arises

January 22, 2017

In the subsection "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals," we mentioned that there are two types of suffering that can be eliminated according to Buddha Dhamma. In that subsection, we discussed and explained how **some suffering in this life** can be stopped from arising. With this post, we will start a discussion on the **second type suffering associated with future rebirths — which is even more important** — can be stopped from arising.

1. Let us first review the existing ideas from other religions and philosophies. First, let us discuss the dominant religious view.

- Most major religions have a world view that is based on three "realms" of existence: the human realm, the heavenly realm, and hell. If one lives according to the religious teachings, one will live in happiness in the heaven forever; if not, one will suffer in the hell forever.
- It is not explained how one is born in the human realm to start off. It could be that the Creator created Adam and Eve and their descendants are just born. In this view, the sentient beings in this world started off at just two and will grow with time; see below.
- In Hinduism, the "eternal realm of happiness" is not the heaven, but the *Brahma* realm (there is only one, where one merges with *Mahā Brahma*). Also, there is no permanent hell, as I understand.

2. Based on whether one lives according to the "particular religious teachings" or not, one will be born either in heaven or hell FOREVER.

- Of course, these religious teachings will vary from one religion to another.
- Furthermore, even within one religion, they can be changed by a decree from the "head of the Church."
- Since all those who are making those decisions are human, It seems illogical that they can decide on basically their own fate.

3. Turning to philosophy, many people today — especially those who believe that the above religious reasoning is illogical — take the materialistic view, that one is born out of inert matter only to die and to be recycled back to the Earth. They are the so-called atheists.

- In this case, the logic would say that one could live immorally since any immoral actions to benefit oneself would not have any consequences.
- Still, most who belong to this category live moral lives. They have an innate feeling that morality must be adhered to, but cannot quite explain why.

4. I have discussed the above points in several posts:

- On religion, see, "'The Language of God" by Francis Collins" and "What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?."
- On the belief in a materialistic view, see, "'Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt" and "'Waking Up" by Sam Harris."
- In the commonly-used sense of the word "religion", Buddha Dhamma is not a religion; see, "Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."
- I would welcome any comments/criticisms on my points above. I can go to more details if needed, and I believe that the above points cannot be logically refuted.

5. Buddha Dhamma (true and pure Buddhism) does not belong to either of the above two categories.

- The complex world view of Buddha Dhamma is explained in the subsection "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," but a brief introduction is in the post, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."

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- Briefly, one is born in one of 31 realms of existence. From a beginning-less time, we all have been undergoing this rebirth process. But most times we are born in the lower four realms filled with suffering, and thus the long-term solution is to stop the rebirth process. This is done in four steps, and at the *Arahant* stage, one stops the rebirth process.
- This is not a nihilistic or pessimistic view, see, "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."

6. So, that is the background for our discussion. Now, let us discuss how one can get to *Nibbāna*, or to stop future suffering.

- Some Buddhists believe that *Nibbāna* can be attained by living a moral life and doing meritorious deeds (*puñña kamma*).
- We will now discuss why just living a moral life and doing *puñña kamma* will not lead to *Nibbāna*, even though they are necessary parts of the process.

7. We are born in one of the 31 realms due to six root causes (*hethu*): *lobha, dosa, moha* and *alobha, adosa, amoha*. This categorization can be used to look at births in different realms in another way.

- Deeds (*kamma*) done with *lobha, dosa, moha* lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* (lowest 4 realms). For these deeds, *moha* is always present with either *lobha* (*pretha* and *asura* realms births) and or with *dosa* (*niraya* or the lowest realm). Births in the animal realms can be due to either.
- Those deeds done with one or more of *alobha, adosa, amoha* lead to rebirth in the higher realms, starting with the human realm.

8. As discussed, for example in the *Dutiyasikkhāpada Sutta* (AN 4.236), a verse that summarizes the results of meritorious deeds and immoral deeds is: "*Atthi, bhikkhave, kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇha vipākaṃ; kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukka vipākaṃ..*"

Here the word *kaṇha* means bad or dark. *Sukka* means pure or white.

- So, the word "*kaṇhaṃ*" in the above verse refers to immoral deeds done with *lobha, dosa, moha* and other *asobhana cetasika*. *"Sukkaṃ"* implies meritorious deeds done with *alobha, adosa*, *amoha*, and other *sobhana cetasika*.
- How different types of *cetasika* contribute to either defile or purify our minds is discussed in the subsection, "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals".

9. In this beginning-less rebirth process, this is how we have been born in almost all of the 31 realms due to the fact that we keep accumulating both *kaṇha vipāka* and *sukka vipāka.*

- Furthermore, we have accumulated enough of both kinds to bring about many, many future births in all those realms.
- Even if we do not commit a single *kaṇha vipāka* in this life, we have done enough of them in the past to bring about births in the *apāyā* in the future. This is a point that not many people understand. I have heard many people say, "I don't harm anyone, so I hope to get a good rebirth". Unfortunately, they are wrong.

10. *Puñña kamma* with "*sukka vipāka*" leads to two important results in this and future lives that make suitable conditions for attaining *Nibbāna*:

- Rebirth in the "good realms" (human realm and above). Attaining *Nibbāna* — or even working towards it — is possible only in the good realms and especially in the human realm.
- If done correctly, merits acquired through *puñña kamma* can lead to a long life (*āyusa*), flawless sense faculties (*vaṇṇa*), healthy life without much physical suffering (*sukha*), and necessary resources to live without hardships (*bala*). These benefits make suitable conditions for one to focus on attaining *Nibbāna*. For example, if one is sick or is very poor, it is not easy to follow the Path.

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11. On the other hand, "*kaṇha vipāka*" or results of immoral deeds lead to births in the *apāyā* where the suffering is intense.

- We have been born in the human realm due to a good *uppatthi sukka vipāka.*
- But in this unique human realm one is subject to both *kaṇha vipāka* and *sukka vipāka* as *pavutti kamma vipāka* that bring results during the lifetime.

12. Births in the human realm could be a *tihethuka* ("*ti*" + *hethu*," meaning all three of *alobha, adosa, amoha*), *dvihethuka* ("*dvi*" + *hethu*," meaning *alobha* and *adosa*), or *ahethuka.*

- Those humans with *tihethuka* births can attain *magga phala* in this life if they strive enough.
- Those humans with *dvihethuka* births cannot attain *magga phala* in this life. Since they do not have the *amoha* root cause, their wisdom level (*paññā*) cannot grow beyond a certain point. However, they can do *puñña kamma* and be eligible to be reborn a human with a *tihethuka* birth in future lives.
- Even though the word *ahethuka* literally means "without causes", here it means a weak version of *dvihethuka*. Here *ahethuka* means "without sufficiently good *hethu*" to be able to follow the Path. They are born with mental deficiencies that are obvious.

13. It is very important to realize that no one (at the present) can distinguish between *tihethuka* and *dvihethuka* births. On the surface, both types appear the same. For example, there could be people with higher education, who are *dvihethuka*, and some with no education who are *tihethuka.*

- So, the thing to do is to strive to the best of one's ability. No matter whether one is *tihethuka* or *dvihethuka,* the efforts will pay off in the long run. Furthermore, being *tihethuka* does not take one automatically to *Nibbāna*; one has to strive.
- Furthermore, no one should be discouraged and believe they are *dvihethuka,* if the efforts are not paying off quickly. One prominent example in the *Tipiṭaka* is the story about the Culapanthaka Thero. He almost disrobed because he could not even memorize a single *gātha* after trying hard for months. But with Buddha's help, he was able to attain the *Arahanthood* in a day, and even developed *abhiññā* powers: "WebLink: suttacentral: Cūḷapanthaka."

14. Therefore, by thinking good thoughts, doing good deeds and by living a moral life, we can improve our chances (but not guarantee) of a good future rebirth. In fact, this is the goal of all major religions (to be born in heaven and live there forever).

- However, nothing in this world of 31 realms is everlasting — and moreover — we do not have control over where we will be born in the next life, regardless of how well we live this life.
- It is important to realize that one or more of past bad deeds (*kamma vipāka*) may still lead to a bad rebirth, and then it will be very difficult to again get a good rebirth.
- This is one aspect of the ***anicca* nature**, the futility of believing that there is happiness to be achieved somewhere in this world.
- The opposite belief that somehow happiness to be achieved somewhere in this world gives rise to deeply-embedded ***nicca saññā*** (a sense of hope) in our minds.
- One cannot avoid future suffering until one comprehends first that immoral deeds done with the *nicca saññā* lead to *kaṇha vipāka* and will bring much suffering. Even though moral deeds done with the *nicca saññā* lead to *sukka vipāka* with happiness, one cannot avoid immoral deeds in the long run, BECAUSE OF this *nicca saññā*.

15. Therefore, until we change our wrong view (and the corresponding wrong perception or *saññā*) that there is happiness to be had in this world, we will never be released from future suffering.

- This is the unique message of the Buddha. We will discuss how we can get rid of this *nicca saññā* and cultivate the *anicca saññā* in the next post.

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4.9.2.1.3 Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra

January 28, 2017; re-written October 15, 2019

The word *vipallāsa* (used in plural) means "confusions." One gets confused because one has wrong views (*diṭṭhi*). That leads to distorted perceptions (*saññā*), which in turn affect the way one thinks (*citta*). That is how we generate (*abhi*)*sankhāra* that lead to future suffering. This is just another way to analyze the origin of suffering.

- You may want to read the previous posts on *saññā* and *saṅkhāra.* See, "Saññā – What It Really Means" and "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."
- This post is a re-write of an old post, "Diṭṭhi, Saññā, and Saṅkhāra – How They Relate."

Wrong Views Come First

1. One's perceptions (*saññā*) are closely associated with one's views (*diṭṭhi*), and both of those affect how we think (*citta*), and generate *saṅkhāra*.

Most of our world views are based on ideas from our families, friends, and religions that we are born into. Those inputs play a major role in our views. Those, in turn, mold our perceptions and how we think — and thus generate *saṅkhāra*.

- It is not possible to get rid of the wrong or distorted perceptions (*viparīta saññā*) without getting rid of the erroneous views (*micchā diṭṭhi* or simply *diṭṭhi*).
- There are some dominant world views which must be removed before one can even hope to get an idea about *anicca saññā*. We will discuss some of these critical factors first.

Wrong Views on Heaven, Hell, and Human Realms

2. Most people believe in an eternal heaven after death. That perception is based on the world view of three "major categories or realms." They are hell, human world, and heaven. This world view and the corresponding perception or *saññā* come from families who have been taught that world view through generations via religious teachings.

- That world view is also that a Creator created the Earth. That Creator resides in the heavens, and those who live by those teachings will join the Creator. Those who disobey those teachings are supposed to be born in the hell for eternity.
- Even though modern science rejects that cosmic world view, most people still go by that wrong view. The heavens comprise of trillions of planetary systems, just like our Solar system.
- It is astonishing to see that even some prominent scientists are willing to disregard scientific facts. They believe (i.e., have the perception) that a Creator created the Earth and the whole universe. I am not sure where they think that Creator resides among those trillions of star systems.

Wrong Views About Animals

3. Another example is killing animals for sport, which includes fishing. This is based on the view that animals are not sentient and were created by the Creator for human consumption. That is such an ingrained *diṭṭhi* that many people who live otherwise moral lives fail to see the suffering endured by these animals.

- While fish cannot cry out, the severe pain felt by a wriggling fish caught on a hook is quite apparent. It is feeling both the pain in mouth due to hook. It is also suffering due to lack of oxygen since it cannot breath as we do.
- Higher animals are capable of showing their pain, among other emotions. Anyone who has a pet dog or cat knows that they do have emotions as we do.

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- But we tend to disregards such easy-to-see things, because of our *diṭṭhis*. The underlying reason is the religious view that animals are here for our consumption.

4. However, we all have had animal births, as well as *deva* and *brahma* births. Comprehension of this fact can help change one's perception about animals.

- However, even in Buddhist countries, there are fishing villages where fishing is the livelihood of many, who have done it for many generations.
- Some may say that those people need to make a living to sustain their families. But that argument is no better than the argument that a drug addict needs to inhale another dose to get through the day: the long-term consequences are infinitely worse.
- It is customary for the older generations in many countries to teach their children or grandchildren how to fish or hunt animals for sport. That custom passes through generations.
- **Still, we cannot equate animal lives to human lives, as some animal right activists believe.** When one comprehends Buddha Dhamma, one can avoid going to either extreme.

Wrong Views Lead to Wrong Perceptions (*Saññā*)

5. The above are several prominent examples of major *micchā diṭṭhi*. One can remove distorted perceptions (*viparita saññā*) by removing such wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*). Learning Buddha Dhamma helps getting rid of wrong views.

- The key reason that those *diṭṭhi* propagate through generations is the inability to "breakthrough" such ingrained beliefs by contemplating on facts.

6. Another wrong view (and hence the wrong perception) that we have is about the high value placed on the "beautification" of our physical bodies. This perception is predominant in Western countries but is growing in other countries as well.

- People spend billions of dollars a year in trying to make their physical bodies "more beautiful." They don't realize — or don't even contemplate — the following fact. No matter how much money one can spend, one's body will not stay at peak condition for too long.
- That wrong perception leads to an enhanced level of suffering at old age when one's body becomes frail and not so appealing. This can lead to severe depression.
- For those who have comprehended the *anicca* nature, the old age is a fact of life. While the brain is working optimally, one needs to spend one's "peak years" not trying to beautify one's body but to make progress on the Path . When the body starts degrading at old age, the brain deteriorates. So, one must exercise and eat healthy to keep both the body and the brain in good condition as long as possible.
- That happens to everyone, regardless of how powerful or wealthy they are. At President Trump's inauguration, this was quite obvious by looking at the ex-Presidents.
- Think about any famous, beautiful or wealthy person that has grown old, to convince of the truth of this *anicca* nature.

Characteristics of Anything (*Saṅkhata*) In This World

7. Anything in this world — living or inert — has that anicca nature. A *saṅkhata* is born, goes through the formation process, reaches the peak condition, starts to decay, and becomes dead or destroyed at some point.

- Some things (*saṅkhata*) last a short times: for example, a fly or a flower. Other things can last for tens of years: for example, humans or a car. Then some things/beings live much longer: for example, a *Brahma* or a star system like our Solar system.

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- But eventually, anything in this world — a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) — decays and is destroyed at some point.
- Even though those things that reach the peak condition can provide/enjoy sense pleasures, they do not last long.
- The overall effect or the net effect is suffering, when one considers the rebirths in the 31 realms in the long term.

Three Types of *Vipallāsa* (Confusions)

8. The Buddha stated that there are three types of *vipallāsa* or distortions about *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and *asubha*. See, WebLink: suttacentral: *Vipallāsa Sutta* (Aṅguttara Nikāya 4.49). We have discussed the first three in detail at this website. *Asubha* (not fruitful) is the opposite of *subha* (fruitful or beneficial).

- No matter how appealing those sense pleasures or sense objects can be, they all make one get trapped in the rebirth process. That is why they are *asubha*.
- The three types of *vipallāsa* are *diṭṭhi vipallāsa*, *saññā vipallāsa*, and *citta vipallāsa*.
- Those are the distortions associated with views, perceptions, and the way we think. We think (and speak and act) with *saṅkhāra*, and especially *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* and *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*; see,"Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

Confusion About a *Nicca* Nature Is the Key – They Lead to *Saṅkhāra*

9. Let us consider the *diṭṭhi, saññā*, and *citta vipallāsa* about the *anicca* nature as an example.

- We have the wrong view that things in this world have *nicca* nature, i.e., that they can provide with happiness. That is the *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* about the actual *anicca* nature.
- Because of this wrong view, we develop the *saññā vipallāsa* about the *anicca* nature of things: We tend to perceive (*saññā*) that worldly things can provide happiness.
- Because of the wrong perception, we tend to think (*citta*) that things in this world can provide us with happiness. Thus we do (*abhi*) *saṅkhāra* that prolong the rebirth process for *puñña abhisaṅkhāra*. Even worse, they make one suffer mightily in the future rebirths through *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra.*
- Therefore, we constantly generate *mano saṅkhāra* (automatic thoughts about worldly sense objects), *vacī saṅkhāra* (conscious thoughts or speech), and act accordingly (*kāya saṅkhāra*).

Saṅkhāra Lead to Future Suffering

10. All three types of such *saṅkhāra* lead to suffering in this world AND also in future rebirths. These are the *saṅkhāra* that arise due to *avijjā* (not realizing the true nature of this world): "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."

Those *saṅkhāra* eventually lead to *bhava* and *jāti* via *paṭicca samuppāda*. Here *jāti* means both future rebirths AND also "births during this life," see, "Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda."

- That is why it is essential first learn Dhamma and first grasp the fact that suffering in this life can arise due to our conscious thoughts and actions. Not only that, but that suffering CAN BE stopped from arising.
- Once one comprehends this fact and lives accordingly, one can actually experience the *nirāmisa sukha* when one removes this type of suffering.
- Furthermore, this helps one build true faith (*saddhā*) in Buddha Dhamma. It will convince one of the truth in the much worse type of suffering in future rebirths.
- More details in the first few subsections in the "Living Dhamma" section.

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11. At that stage, one may be able to comprehend the *anicca* nature of the rebirth process. The truth of the rebirth process that nowhere in the 31 realms can one find happiness.

- Moreover, one will "see" that unimaginable levels of suffering are present in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*). That will help get rid of the *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* about *dukkha*. Instead of the wrong view that there is happiness in human, *deva*, or *Brahma* realms, one will "see" that any pleasure to be had is only temporary. Furthermore, there is much more suffering inevitable if one stays in the rebirth process.
- Then one will also "see" that one is genuinely helpless if stayed in this rebirth process (*saṃsāra*). Thus one will get rid of *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* (that this world is of *atta* nature) and truly "see" the "*anatta* nature."
- One will also "see" that — in the long run — things in this world are not *subha*, i.e., they are not beneficial or fruitful. Attachment to anything in this world will lead to suffering in the long run. Thus a *Sotāpanna* will have removed the *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* "distorted views" about *subha* nature as well.
- That is how one gets rid of *diṭṭhi vipallāsa*. That leads *Nibbāna* by dissociating from the material world, see, "Nibbāna."

Saññā Vipallāsa

12. *Saññā* (pronounced "sangna") comes from "*san*" + "*gnana*," which means "wisdom" about "*san*." But regular humans have only *viparīta sangna* or *saññā vipallāsa*: they do not see "*san*" as bad.

- Removal of *saññā vipallāsa* requires getting rid of *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* which in turn requires attaining *sammā diṭṭhi*. Then one will be able to perceive the benefits or the harm in each speech or action that one is about to make.
- When one has right vision and perceives things as they really are, then one will start thinking along those lines. Then one will begin removing *citta vipallāsa*.

Removal of *Vipallāsa*

13. For completion, we will end with the following technical details. *Diṭṭhi vipallāsa* about *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and *asubha* disappear at the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- *Saññā vipallāsa* about *anicca* and *anatta* removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage. But *saññā vipallāsa* about *dukkha* and *asubha* are removed in stages and is completely removed only at the *Arahant* stage.
- The same is true for the *citta vipallāsa*: *citta vipallāsa* about *anicca* and *anatta* go away at the *Sotāpanna* stage, but *citta vipallāsa* about *dukkha* and *asubha* reduce in stages. It is only at the *Arahant* stage that they cease to exist.
- That is why even though a *Sotāpanna* can "see" that things in this world can eventually lead to only suffering, he/she will still tend to enjoy sense pleasures. However, those do not involve *apāyagāmi* deeds.
- Even though an *Anāgāmī* has removed the desire for sense pleasures in the *kāma loka*, he/she will still tend to enjoy *jhānic* pleasures.
- All *vipallāsa* go away entirely only at the *Arahant* stage. An *Arahant* does not make *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* that leads to heat (or *thāpa*) in mind and makes one eligible to be born in the *apāyā*. He does not make *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* that make one eligible to be born in the "good realms" either. He makes only *kammically* neutral *saṅkhāra* or *kriya* that allows maintaining life until *parinibbāna* or death.

4.9.2.2 What Is Vedanā (Feelings)?

February 18, 2017

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Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā – More Than Just Feelings replaces (11Nov2018) Vedanā – What It Really Means

Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?

4.9.2.2.1 Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā – More Than Just Feelings

February 18, 2017; November 10, 2018 Rewritten and replaces Vedanā – What It Really Means

1. *Vedanā* is conventionally translated as "feelings", but it is much more than just feelings. The Buddha said that *vedanā* can be analyzed in many ways, with simple or deeper meanings. Here we will analyze *vedanā* in a way that will be most helpful at this stage (for those who have been following the "Living Dhamma" section from the beginning.

- In this analysis, we will discuss 9 types of *vedanā*.
- By understanding these 9 types of *vedanā*, we can understand how to correctly do *vedanānupassanā* in the *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.

2. At the very fundamental level *vedanā* means "*veema danaveema*" (වේම දැනවේම) in Sinhala, which means "one becomes aware (of a sense input)" and experience the corresponding good, bad, or neutral *kamma vipāka*.

- That is the *vedanā* experienced by an *Arahant*. He/she simply is aware of a sense input, and does not ADD anymore *vedanā* in his/her mind to that sensory input.
- A *vedanā* can be a ***dukha vedanā*** (due to a past bad *kamma*), a ***sukha vedanā*** (due to a past good *kamma*), or a neutral sensation — like feeling the wind on the body — called an ***upekkha vedanā*.**
- Even an *Arahant* will experience those *dukha* or *sukha vedanā*, as long as he/she has the physical body. It is only those "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" that will not arise in an *Arahant*; see below. No more *vedanā* of any type arising in an *Arahant* after the death, because he/she will not be reborn in the 31 realms of "this world."
- However, normal humans go far beyond that and generate **three additional types** of their own mind-made "*samphassa ja vedanā*," as we will discuss below.

3. It is important to realize that *sukha* and *dukha vedanā* due to *kamma vipāka* are felt by the physical body. They result due to past good or bad *kamma vipāka*. This can be verified by referring to *Abhidhamma:*

- *Akusala kamma vipāka* coming though the body are listed as, "*dukkha sahagataṃ kāya viññānaṃ*," and *kusala kamma vipāka* coming though the body are listed as, "*sukha sahagataṃ kāya viññānaṃ*."
- **Neutral (*upekkhā*) *vedanā* can arise via all five physical senses; see #7 below.**

4. A normal human being will mentally generate three more type of *vedanā* due to those *sukha, dukha,* and neutral *vedanā* that initially arise due to *kamma vipāka* via all five physical senses.

- If it is *dukha vedanā* (due to a headache, getting injured, etc.), one is likely to start worrying about it and **add more suffering. Those are *domanassa vedanā* or *āmisa dukha vedanā*.**
- If it is *sukha vedanā* (getting a massage, lying in a luxurious bed, etc.), one is likely to start generating thoughts about how good it is and how one can enjoy similar *sukha vedanā* in the future. Those are ***somanassa vedanā*** or ***āmisa sukha vedanā*** ; one could also be generating them by remembering past such *sukha vedanā.* These are also added in by the mind.
- *Somanassa* means "mind-made joyful." *Domanassa* means "mind-made misery", which is basically a depressed mindset.

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- If a *vedanā* due to a *kamma vipāka* is not that strong one may just generate neutral feelings about it; that is ***āmisa upekkha vedanā***.

5. Let us take some examples to illustrate how those additional types of *vedanā* can arise due to initial *dukha vedanā* and *sukha vedanā*.

- Suppose someone comes down with an illness. Any pain (*dukha vedanā*) due to that illness CANNOT be avoided by anyone once the illness takes hold: It is the RESULT (*vipāka*) of a previous CAUSE (*kamma*).
- Of course, it is possible that one could have avoided the *kamma vipāka* to materialize by trying to minimize CONDITIONS (*paccayā*); see, "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?." That is why *kamma vipāka* can be avoided by being mindful and taking precautions.
- Once an illness starts, all one can do is to take medicines and also take any possible actions to reduce the pain.
- However, people tend to make the situation worse by starting to generate negative feelings about the situation. This gives rise to *domanassa vedanā*.

6. In the same way, one can start generating *somanassa vedanā* based on a *sukha vedanā* that was brought by a good *kamma vipāka*.

- For example, when one is eating a delicious meal, one could be generating joyful thoughts about how delicious it is and how one can eat it again in the future. Such joyful thoughts (*somanassa vedanā*) may be generated even long after the meal.
- Both *domanassa* and *somanassa vedanā* are "mind-made." They are called "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*"; see #8 below.

7. ***Kamma vipāka* also leads to sense inputs at the other four physical senses. They are all neutral.** Thus neutral *vedanā* can arise via all five physical senses.

- *Kusala* and *akusala vipāka* coming through those four sensory doors are listed as, "*upekkhā sahagataṃ cakkhu viññāṇaṃ*," "*upekkhā sahagataṃ sota viññāṇaṃ*," "*upekkhā sahagataṃ ghāṇa viññāṇaṃ*," and "*upekkhā sahagataṃ jivhā viññāṇaṃ*."
- For example, when we see an "eye-pleasing picture", the initial *vedanā* felt by the mind is neutral.
- However, that "neutral feeling" may not even register in one's mind because "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" that we discuss next arise automatically and instantaneously based on one's *gati*.

8. But if one has cravings or repulsion to such pictures, one will start generating "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*," or feelings that arise due to "*samphassa*" ("*san*" + "*phassa*" or contacts with "san" that is in one's mind); see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)."

- It is easy to understand this when one contemplates on some examples. Upon seeing person X, an enemy of X will generate what are called "*domanassa vedanā*" or bad feelings, whereas a friend of X will generate "*somanassa vedanā*" or good feelings.
- The same is true for sounds, tastes, and smells. Even though there appear to be "universally good" tastes, that is not true for an *Arahant*. We just cannot comprehend it at this stage. But we know that some foods enjoyed by some could be repulsive to others, for example.
- In *akusala-mula paṭicca samuppāda,* the "*phassa paccayā vedanā*" step, the *vedanā* that arises is really "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*"; see, "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."

9. Three more types of mentally generated *vedanā* can arise in those who are on the Noble Eightfold Path. These arise by suppressing or eliminating those *āmisa vedanā* or "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" discussed above.

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- In the beginning of this section we discussed how heat or *tāpa* in the mind arise due to "san" which are greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*); see, "Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities" and "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

10. When one constantly is attached or repulsed by all those sensory inputs that one experiences in a given day, one's mind can get really stressed out. A normal human being may even not be aware of this heat (*tāpa*) in the mind; see those two posts mentioned above, and other posts in the beginning of the "Living Dhamma" section.

- Even if one is generating *somanassa vedanā*, those inevitably lead to the stress in the mind. However, the effect is easily seen with *domanassa vedanā.*
- This is very important to grasp. You may want to go back and read those posts.

11. When one stays away from generating too many "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" of both kinds, one will start feeling three more types of *vedanā*. These are called *nirāmisa vedanā*, because they arise due to staying away from cravings (and repulsion) to worldly objects.

- When one prevents the mind from heating up by comprehending the adverse effects of "san" and staying away from them, one's mind starts "cooling down." This is the ***nirāmisa sukha vedanā*** that we have discussed in many posts.
- This is what is emphasized by "*ātāpi sampajāno"* in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*; it means "remove the fire or heat from one's mind by being aware of the '*san*' or "immoral tendencies"; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure."
- The pleasant feelings one feels during *jhānā* are also *nirāmisa sukha vedanā.* They are devoid of *tāpa* or heat.
- Such feelings can also be experienced when one is doing a meritorious deed, such as giving or helping out someone in need. Those are also devoid of *tāpa* or heat and are *nirāmisa sukha vedanā.*
- *Nirāmisa sukha* can, of course, be experienced while engaging in meditation, especially *Metta Bhāvanā*. This is optimized when one does those *bhāvanā* with comprehension of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*, i.e., when one does it with full comprehension of "*ātāpi sampajāno*."

12. There are two more types of *vedanā* that one experiences when proceeding on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Sometimes, one gets a bit discouraged by not advancing "fast enough" on the Path. One thinks about "why am I not getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage?" or "Is there anything that I am missing in order to make progress?", etc.
- Those are not *domanassa vedanā* (because they are devoid of *paṭigha anusaya*)*;* they are ***nirāmisa dukha vedanā***. It is common for one to experience such *vedanā*.
- If a *vedanā* is not that strong one may just generate neutral feelings about it; that is ***nirāmisa upekkha vedanā***.

13. The key to *vedanānupassanā* in the *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* is to be able to recognize which type of *vedanā* one feels.

- If it is a *dukha* (*vipāka*) *vedanā*, one understands that one needs to bear it (after reducing it as much as possible with medicines, etc). One needs to understand why such a *vipāka vedanā* arise, and remedy it as much as possible. After all, our goal is to stop any type of suffering.
- A good example is a pain one feels when sitting cross-legged at meditation retreats. Just by saying "I feel this *vedanā*" will not of any use. That *vedanā* can be removed by shifting one's posture. I have seen some instructors, advice people, to just bear the pain saying that it will go away. It may go away because the nerves may become numb. That is not good in the long term.

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- Also, one needs to understand why one should stop generating *domanassa* and *somanassa vedanā*, per above discussion.
- And one should, of course, cultivate *nirāmisa sukha vedanā* that arise when one starts on the Path (especially upon comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent) and reduces the tendency to generate *domanassa* and *somanassa vedanā.*

14. *Vedanānupassanā* is all about first identifying the types of *vedanā* one is experiencing, and then deciding what to do about them. Getting rid of all *vedanā* — as some people believe — is the wrong thing to try to do.

Vipāka vedanā do not have *lobha, dosa, moha*, but *vipāka vedanā* **can lead to** *samphassa-jā-vedanā* which will have *lobha, dosa, moha*.

- *vipāka vedanā* needs to be experienced with *upekkhā*.
- *samphassa-jā-vedanā* are the ones to be stopped.
- *Nirāmisa vedanā* are the ones to be cultivated.

15. In summary, try to avoid *vipāka dukha vedanā* by trying not to make conditions for them to appear; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā." Do not indulge in *vipāka sukha vedanā* when those arise. Suppress and gradually eliminate *samphassa-jā-vedanā* and cultivate *nirāmisa vedanā*, which is what the "Living Dhamma" section is all about.

- That is — in brief — what *vedanānupassanā* is all about.

More details on *vedanā* can be found at: Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways" and "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa."

4.9.2.2.1.1 Vedanā – What It Really Means

February 18, 2017; this is being replaced by Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā – More Than Just Feelings

1. *Vedanā* is conventionally translated as "feelings", but it is much more than just feelings. The Buddha said that *vedanā* can be analyzed in many ways, with simple or deeper meanings. Here we will analyze *vedanā* in a way that will be most helpful at this stage (for those who have been following the "Living Dhamma" section from the beginning.

- In this analysis we will discuss 9 types of *vedanā* (highlighted in ***bold italic red***).
- By understanding these 9 types of *vedanā*, we can understand how to correctly do *vedananupassana* in the *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.

2. At the very fundamental level *vedanā* means "*veema danaveema*" in Sinhala, which means "one becomes aware (of a sense input)" and experience the corresponding good, bad, or neutral *kamma vipāka*.

- That is the *vedanā* experienced by an *Arahant*. He/she simply is aware of a sense input, and does not ADD anymore *vedanā* in his/her mind to that sense input.
- A *vedanā* can be a ***dukha vedanā*** (due to a past bad *kamma*), a ***sukha vedanā*** (due to a past good *kamma*), or a neutral sensation — like feeling the wind on the body — called an ***upekkha vedanā*.**
- An *Arahant* will bear them all with a neutral mind even though the *dukha* or *sukha* sensation cannot be avoided.
- However, normal humans go far beyond that and generate **three additional types** of their own mind-made "*samphassa ja vedanā*," as we will discuss below.

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3. It is important to realize that *sukha* and *dukha vedanā* due to *kamma vipāka* are felt by the physical body. They result due to past good or bad *kamma vipāka.* This can be verified by referring to *Abhidhamma:*

- *Akusala kamma vipāka* coming though the body are listed as, "*dukkha sahagatham kaya vinnanam*," and *kusala kamma vipāka* coming though the body are listed as, "*sukha sahagatham kaya vinnanam*."
- **Neutral (*upekkha*) *vedanā* can arise via all five physical senses; see #7 below.**

4. A normal human being will mentally generate three more type of *vedanā* due to those *sukha, dukha,* and neutral *vedanā* that initially arise due to *kamma vipāka* via all five physical senses.

- If it is *dukha vedanā* (due to a headache, getting injured, etc.), one is likely to start worrying about it and **add more suffering. Those are *domanassa vedanā* or *amisa dukha vedanā*.**
- If it is *sukha vedanā* (getting a massage, lying in a luxurious bed, etc.), one is likely to start generating thoughts about how good it is and how one can enjoy similar *sukha vedanā* in the future. Those are ***somanassa vedanā*** or ***amisa sukha vedanā*** ; one could also be generating them by remembering past such *sukha vedanā.* These are also added in by the mind.
- *Somanassa* means "mind-made joyful." *Domanassa* means "mind-made misery", which is basically a depressed mindset.
- If a *vedanā* due to a *kamma vipāka* is not that strong one may just generate neutral feelings about it; that is ***amisa upekkha vedanā***.

5. Let us take some examples to illustrate how those additional types of *vedanā* can arise due to initial *dukha vedanā* and *sukha vedanā*.

- Suppose someone comes down with an illness. Any pain (*dukha vedanā*) due to that illness CANNOT be avoided by anyone once the illness takes hold: It is the RESULT (*vipāka*) of a previous CAUSE (*kamma*).
- Of course, it is possible that one could have avoided the *kamma vipāka* to materialize by trying to minimize CONDITIONS (*paccaya*); see, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?." That is why *kamma vipāka* can be avoided by being mindful and taking precautions.
- Once an illness starts, all one can do is to take medicines and also take any possible actions to reduce the pain.
- However, people tend to make the situation worse by starting to generate negative feelings about the situation. This gives rise to *domanassa vedanā*.

6. In the same way, one can start generating *somanassa vedanā* based on a *sukha vedanā* that was brought by a good *kamma vipāka*.

- For example, when one is eating a delicious meal, one could be generating joyful thoughts about how delicious it is and how one can eat it again in the future. Such joyful thoughts (*somanassa vedanā*) may be generated even long after the meal.

7. ***Kamma vipāka* also lead to sense inputs at the other four physical senses. They are all neutral.** Thus neutral *vedanā* can arise via all five physical senses.

- *Kusala* and *akusala vipāka* coming through those four sense doors are listed as, "*upekkha sahagatham cakkhu vinnanam*," "*upekkha sahagatham sota vinnanam*," "*upekkha sahagatham ghana vinnanam*," and "*upekkha sahagatham jivha vinnanam*."
- For example, when we see an "eye-pleasing picture", the initial *vedanā* felt by the mind is neutral.

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8. But if one has cravings or repulsion to such pictures, one will start generating "*samphassa ja vedanā*," or feelings that arise due to "*samphassa*" ("san" + "phassa" or contacts with "san" that is in one's mind); see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."

- It is easy to understand this when one contemplates on some examples. Upon seeing person X, an enemy of X will generate what are called "*domanassa vedanā*" or bad feelings, whereas a friend of X will generate "*somanassa vedanā*" or good feelings.
- The same is true for sounds, tastes, and smells. Even though there appear to be "universally good" tastes, that is not true for an *Arahant*. We just cannot comprehend it at this stage. But we know that some foods enjoyed by some could be repulsive to others, for example.

9. Three more types of mentally generated *vedanā* can arise in those who are on the Noble Eightfold Path. These arise by suppressing or eliminating those *amisa vedanā* or "*samphassa ja vedanā*" discussed above.

- In the beginning of this section we discussed how heat or *tāpa* in the mind arise due to "san" which are greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*); see, "Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities" and "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

10. When one constantly is attached or repulsed by all those sense inputs that one experiences in a given day, one's mind can get really stressed out. A normal human being may even not be aware of this heat (*tāpa*) in the mind; see those two posts mentioned above, and other posts in the beginning of the "Living Dhamma" section.

- Even if one is generating *somanassa vedanā*, those inevitably lead to the stress in the mind. However, the effect is easily seen with *domanassa vedanā.*
- This is very important to grasp. You may want to go back and read those posts.

11. When one stays away from generating too many "*samphassa ja vedanā*" of both kinds, one will start feeling three more types of *vedanā*. These are called *nirāmisa vedanā*, because they arise due to staying away from cravings (and repulsion) to worldly objects.

- When one prevents the mind from heating up by comprehending the adverse effects of "san" and staying away from them, one's mind starts "cooling down." This is the ***nirāmisa sukha vedanā*** that we have discussed in many posts.
- This is what is emphasized by "*ātāpi sampajāno"* in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*; it means "remove the fire or heat from one's mind by being aware of the '*san*' or "immoral tendencies"; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure."
- The pleasant feelings one feels during *jhānā* are also *nirāmisa sukha vedanā.* They are devoid of *tāpa* or heat.
- Such feelings can also be experienced when one is doing a meritorious deed, such as giving or helping out someone in need. Those are also devoid of *thāpa* or heat, and are *nirāmisa sukha vedanā.*
- *Nirāmisa sukha* can of course be experienced while engaging in meditation, especially *mettā bhāvanā*. This is optimized when one does those *bhāvanā* with comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* i.e., when one does it with full comprehension of "*ātāpi sampajāno*."

12. There are two more types of *vedanā* that one experiences when proceeding on the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Sometimes, one gets a bit discouraged by not advancing "fast enough" on the Path. One thinks about "why am I not getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage?" or "Is there anything that I am missing in order to make progress?", etc.
- Those are not *domanassa vedanā* (because they are devoid of *paṭigha anusaya);* they are ***nirāmisa dukha vedanā***. It is common for one to experience such *vedanā*.

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- If a *vedanā* is not that strong one may just generate neutral feelings about it; that is ***nirāmisa upekkha vedanā***.

13. The key to *vedananupassana* in the *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* is to be able to recognize which type of *vedanā* one feels.

- If it is a *dukha* (*vipāka*) *vedanā*, one understands that one needs to bear it (after reducing it as much as possible with medicines, etc). One needs to understand why such a *vipāka vedanā* arise, and remedy it as much as possible. After all, our goal is to stop any type of suffering.
- A good example is the pain one feels when sitting cross-legged at meditation retreats. Just by saying "I feel this *vedanā*" will not of any use. That *vedanā* can be removed by shifting one's posture. I have seen some instructors advice people to just bear the pain saying that it will go away. It may go away because the nerves may become numb. That is not good in the long term.
- Also, one needs to understand why one should stop generating *domanassa* and *somanassa vedanā*, per above discussion.
- And one should of course cultivate *nirāmisa sukha vedanā* that arise when one starts on the Path (especially upon comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent) and reduces the tendency to generate *domanassa* and *somanassa vedanā.*

14. *Vedananupassana* is all about first identifying the types of *vedanā* one is experiencing, and then deciding what to do about them. Getting rid of all *vedanā* — as some believe — is the wrong thing to try to do.

Vipāka vedanā do not have *lobha, dosa, moha*, but *vipāka vedanā* **can lead to** *samphassa ja vedanā* which will have *lobha, dosa, moha*.

- ***Vipāka vedanā*** needs to be **experienced with *upekkha***.
- ***Samphassa ja vedanā*** are the ones to be **stopped**. [***ja***, （-°） [adj. -suffix from *jan,* see janati; cp. ° ga; gacchati] born, produced, sprung or arisen from]
- ***Nirāmisa vedanā*** are the ones to be **cultivated**.

15. In summary, try to avoid *vipāka dukha vedanā* by trying not to make conditions for them to appear; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." Do not indulge in *vipāka sukha vedanā* when those arise. Suppress and gradually eliminate *samphassa ja vedanā* and cultivate *nirāmisa vedanā*, which is what the "Living Dhamma" section is all about.

- That is — in brief — what *vedananupassana* is all about.

More details on *vedanā* can be found at: "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways" and "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa."

4.9.2.2.2 Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?

January 12, 2018

1. *Vedanā* can be categorized into five types (WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Vibhaṅga Sutta; SN 48.4):

- **Two are generated by the mind** (called *cetasikam sukham* and *cetasikam dukkham* in the above *Sutta*) due **to one's *gathi***: *somanassa* (joy) and *domanassa* (depression).
- **Two felt by the body** (called *kāyikaṃ sukham* and *kāyikaṃ dukkham* in the above *Sutta*) **and are "real", not mind-made**: *sukha* (bodily pleasure) and *dukkha* (bodily pain).
- **Neutral**: *adukkhama sukha* (without pain or pleasure) or *upekkha* (without *somanassa* or *domanassa*). In the *Sutta* stated as : "*Katamañca, bhikkhave, upekkhindriyaṃ? Yaṃ kho,*

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bhikkhave, kāyikaṃ vā cetasikaṃ vā nevasātaṃ nāsātaṃ vedayitaṃ—idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, upekkhindriyaṃ."

- *Kāyika sukha* and *dukkha* are also experienced by the mind, but they come through the body as direct results of previous *kammā,* as we discuss below.

2. As clearly stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Nakulapitu Sutta (SN 22.1)":

- The two types of *vedanā* generated by the mind do not arise in *Arahants*. They are called "*samphassa jā vedanā*"; see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways," and at a deeper level "Vedanā – What It Really Means."
- Those two felt by the body due to *kammā vipāka* are experienced also by the *Arahants*.
- This is also explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Salla Sutta (SN 36.6)," saying that while a normal human experiences both types of *vedanā* when pierced by a spear (including "*samphassa jā vedanā*"), an *Arahant* experiences only the "direct *vedanā*" caused by the wound.

3. This is why In *Abhidhamma*, all sense inputs via the other five sense inputs (other than physical body) are initially felt as *upekkha* (neutral) *vedanā*. Only the bodily sense inputs could lead to *dukkha vedanā* (getting injured, headaches, cancer, etc) or *sukha vedanā* (good massage, lying on a comfortable bed, etc).

- When we generate joy upon seeing something that we like, for example, it comes in as a neutral *vedanā*. We generate joy via "*samphassa jā vedanā*" based on our *gathi*.
- A good example is seeing a well-known politician. Some people generate good feelings and others may generate bad feelings; **but it is the same person they were all looking at.** The joy or disgust was not in the politician, it was within the observer. One may need to contemplate this and let the idea sink in. It is an important point. It holds true for any sensory input other than the bodily sense inputs (except *kāma guna*, discussed in #6 below).

4. Regarding *Abhidhamma*, most people use the book "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma", by Bhikkhu Bodhi (First Edition 2000). This is the English translation of the "*Abhidhammattha Sangaha*", a commentary to the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* in the *Tipiṭaka*, by *Acariya* Anuruddha, who lived around the same time as *Acariya* Buddhaghosa, who wrote the commentary Visuddhimagga.

- Both these recent commentaries have material inconsistent with the *Tipiṭaka*; see, "Incorrect Theravada Interpretations – Historical Timeline."
- I have started a discussion focused on the book "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma", by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000) at the discussion forum: "Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma (Bhikkhu Bodhi) – Grave Error on p. 164."

5. Going back to our original discussion, the key point from *Abhidhamma* is that only bodily sense inputs (experienced via the physical body) can bring in *sukha* (pleasant) or *dukha* (unpleasant or painful) **bodily** sensations.

- In other words, when we experience joy (upon seeing a loved one) and dislike (upon seeing an enemy) are both mind-made; same is true for taste, sounds, smell. The same is also true for *dhammā* that comes to the mind (recalling past events or future plans).
- However, *kāyika sukha* or *kāyika dukkha* arises due to injuries and sicknesses (headaches, cancer, etc), and are thus "real."
- We have discussed these in various posts, but I wanted to find a couple of *Suttā*, where this is clearly stated concisely. Those are given in #1 and #2 above.

6. It must also be stated that the Buddha has described *vedanā* as two types to 108 types depending on the analysis; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahuvedanīya Sutta (MN 59)." For this discussion, the fives types are appropriate.

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- Another complexity involved is due to sensory experiences that arise as part of a being's *bhava* (yet at the root still determined by *kammā*), which are called "*kāma guna*"; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha." This is also mentioned in the above *Sutta*.
- For example, dogs and pigs eat feces because they taste such things as tasty. Humans, in general, taste sugar as sweet and salty as salty, etc. Those are *kāma guna* associated with each *bhava*; An *Arahant* would taste them the same way.

7. Everything in this world arises with the mind as the root cause. That is what is meant by the *Dhammapada gāthā* : "*mano pubbangamā dhammā, mano setta manomayā...*"

- At the very fundamental level, those '*kammā bīja*" or "*kammic* energy" has its root in *javana citta* with one or more of the six root causes: *lobha, dosa, moha*, and *alobha, adosa, amoha*.
- It is also important to realize is that the three types of *kammā* are done by *mano, vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*: "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

8. This vicious cycle of "*vipāka*" leading to new "*kammā*" (via acting with *avijjā*), which in turn lead to more "*vipāka*", is the process that binds us to the *saṃsāra* of endless rebirths, or perpetuate our "world" of suffering; see, "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?."

- The Buddha described this as, "*kammā vipākā vaddanti, vipāko kammā sambhavo, tasmā punabbhavo hoti, evan loko pavattati.*"
- That means, "*kammā* lead to *vipāka*, *vipāka*, in turn, lead to *kammā* and thus to rebirth (*punabbhavo*), and that is how the world (existence) is maintained." Here "*sambhava*" is "*san*" + "*bhava*," or "adding more existences." Also, "*loka*" is world and "*pavatta*" means "maintain."

9. However, the working of *kammā/kammā vipāka* is NOT deterministic, i.e., just because one has done a bad (good) deed in the past, that DOES NOT mean one would get the corresponding result (bad or good); see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

- This is because "conditions" are a key aspect of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (cause and effect) in Buddha Dhamma. Just because there are causes (*kammā bīja*), corresponding *vipāka* do not take place unless suitable conditions come into play; see, "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?" and "Paṭṭhāna Dhammā."

10. On the other hand, things DO NOT just happen. One or more causes MUST act as the root cause for a good (or bad) effect. Therefore, a past *kammā*, is ALWAYS needed to act as the cause.

- The above is an important point, so let me give an example. When someone gets a headache or cancer that is a bodily *vedanā* arising solely due to a *kammā vipāka* **and one's action at that time does not come into play. Of course, one can take subsequent actions to either alleviate that problem or even to get rid of it.**
- On the other hand, one may encounter sufferings that seem to be not directly due to *kammā vipāka*. For example, one may have breathing problems because one's body has excess phlegm (*semha*). **So, it appears that the cause of breathing problems is excess phlegm.** But there is a root cause for phlegm to be present at high levels in one's body, and that is a past *kammā*. The same is true for bile (*pita*), gas (*vāta*), body fluids (*sannipāta*), change in climate (*utu*), careless behavior (*visama*), others' harmful actions (*opakkama*).

11. There are three *Suttā* (SN 36.21, AN 5.104, and AN 10.60) that the reader Siebe mentioned in the discussion forum ("Could Bodily Pain be due Causes Other Than Kamma Vipāka?," that list 8 such possible "secondary causes" for bodily pain:

- One should read that discussion topic to get a good understanding of how this discussion evolved, but let me briefly describe the background.

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12. **Those other seven "causes" (except *kammā*) are not root causes.** They all have past *kammā* as the root cause. Nothing in this world happens without a connection somewhere to the six root causes: *lobha, dosa, moha*, and *alobha, adosa, amoha*.

- One may get an idea to stand on one's leg. But if one is mindful, one can see the bodily pain associated with that action and decide not to go through with it. Note that the *kammā vipāka*, in this case, came initially as a mental input (through *mana indriya*). But one has the CHOICE not to go along with that. Therefore, a second *kammā* **of actually standing on one leg (one's willingness to go along with it) is needed for the *kāya vedanā* to arise.**
- The first case above in #10 (cancer etc) illustrates the *vipāka* solely attributed to past *kammā*. Pain due to standing on a leg is also an immediate *kammā vipāka*. Other cases involve those *vipāka* arising due to the seven other types of causes that are discussed in the *Suttā* mentioned in #11.

13. **Therefore, sometimes it may not be easy to figure out what is the cause and what is the effect, because the result of a past action itself can act as a (new) cause.**

- The above example of standing on one's leg is a good example. The *kāya vedanā* WOULD NOT arise unless one lets the initial *kammā vipāka* (came through the *mana indriya*) to proceed. One has the ability to stop that *kāya vedanā* from arising.
- On the other hand, one cannot stop the cancer by will. One could take actions (called *upakkama* or *prayoga*) to alleviate a bodily *vedanā* due to a *kammā vipāka*. By the way, *upakkama* is one of the eight mentioned loosely as causes in those *Suttā* that mention possible eight causes for *kammā vipāka*.

14. Those *upakkama* or *prayoga* can work in the following way too. A *upakkama* by person A may cause harm to person B. For example, when person B detonate a suicide bomb, person A may die as a result of that action.

- But here again, person A MUST have a pending *kammā vipāka* for that action by person B to cause harm for him. As I have mentioned many times, we have collected innumerable *kammā vipāka* and they are waiting for such conditions to appear to give *vipāka*.
- (Twenty four such conditions are listed and discussed in "Paṭṭhāna Dhammā." So far, I have discussed only a few).
- Some people escape such attacks "miraculously." There is no miracle, just the fact the there may not have been a suitable *kammā vipāka* waiting to be ripened, OR, a past good *kammā* could overcome even some pending bad *vipāka*.
- This is why the Buddha said that it is impossible for a human to figure out the causes of *kammā vipāka*.
- Another such special case is the demise of all living beings in the realms BELOW the *abhassara brahma* realm at the destruction of the "material world" (*loka vināsaya*); over a long time, all beings in the lower realms are reborn in higher realms above the *abhassara brahma* realm until a new world (new Earth in our case) is formed over billions of years. We will not get to discuss this for a while, since more background material is needed.

15. One would think that the Buddha's good *kammā* done in his last life would be more than enough to override any *kammā vipāka* from the past. However, remnants of *vipāka* of an *anantariya kammā* were there, and also there could have been other strong *kammā*. That is the only exception, and that is the *kammā vipāka* listed among the eight other possible causes. **The other seven are really not the root causes, but actually effects that appear as causes.**

- The Buddha is said to have to face 12 *kammā vipāka* ("WebLink: suttacentral: Pubbakammapilotikabuddhaapadāna ; Therāpadāna." An English translation is at: "WebLink: ancient-buddhist-texts.net: The Connection with Previous Deeds – Pubbakammapilotika-Buddhāpadānaṁ"). Much merits to the two readers who sent me the reference!).

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- Five of those 12 were due to **remnants** of *anantariya papa kammā* involving verbally or physically hurting Buddhas in past lives. Two were for killings, two for abusing sages, one for breaking the back of a wrestler, one for giving wrong medication intentionally, and another for watching others engaged in fishing and enjoying it.
- By the way, Moggallana *Thero* was beaten to death due to remnants of a *kammā* of killing his parents in a past life. He paid for most of his *kammā* in a *niraya* (worst realms in *apāyā*).

16. Finally, I would caution that material in the *Milindapanha* are based on conversations that took place between Ven. Nagasena and King Milinda more than 100 years after the Buddha's *Parinibbana*. Even though most of the material in *Milindapanha* seems to be compatible with the *Suttā*, it is possible that Ven. Nagasena referred to those extra seven causes as "root causes" just because those three *Suttā* in #11 above (SN 36.21, AN 5.104, and AN 10.60) did not elaborate on the deeper explanation that we discussed above.

- Furthermore, as reader Akvan pointed out in the discussion forum, Ven. Nagasena's statement about Buddha not having to face *kammā vipāka* is not correct (I have not personally read that account in *Milindapanaha*, if it is there).

17. One's understanding in how *kammā/kammā vipāka* operates will grow only with an understanding of basic concepts. Until then, one's ingrained belief systems will be operating based on the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. **There are actually two levels of *micchā diṭṭhi***. First one needs to remove the **ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi***.

- Then one can start on the Noble Eightfold Path AFTER learning about the deeper level of *micchā diṭṭhi*. That is to realize that it is a wrong view to believe that things in this world can bring long-term happiness. **This second level** of wrong views are dispelled when one comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa*, the Three Characteristics of this world: ***anicca, dukkha, anatta***.
- The strongest immoral deeds are done by the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. They inevitably lead to suffering and can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*.

18. One can attain *Nibbāna* only by getting rid of the second level of *micchā diṭṭhi*, i.e, only by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*. **Thus ultimate and permanent happiness can be attained only by getting rid of the second level of *micchā diṭṭhi***.

- Both types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are discussed in the post: "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

4.9.2.3 Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means

February 25, 2017; revised January 3, 2018; September 23, 2018; November 1, 2018; July 25, 2019; May 17, 2020

1. "Mental formations" and "formations" are conventional translation for *saṅkhāra*. Certainly the latter is a better translation. But it is much better to grasp the idea of *saṅkhāra* and just use that word. I recommend the same for most key Pāli words like *saññā* and *viññāṇa*.

- It comes from "*san*" + "*khāra*" or actions that involve "*san*"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- However, all *saṅkhāra* arise in the mind. When they lead to conscious thinking or speech, they are called *vacī saṅkhāra*; those that lead to bodily actions are *kāya saṅkhāra*; those that arise automatically in the mind are *mano saṅkhāra*.
- Therefore, "*san*" is associated with anything that one is thinking about doing or actually doing.

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- ***Saṅkhāra* are responsible for just getting things done to live the current life (everyday activities). They can also lead to moral/immoral actions that can bring results (*vipāka*) in future lives.**
- The latter type (those that can bring *vipāka* in future) are called strong *saṅkhāra* or *abhisaṅkhāra*.

2. Let us look at some examples now.

- Thinking about going to the bathroom is a *vacī saṅkhāra* (*kammically* neutral). One gets the body to move to the toilet using *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- Thinking about killing a human being and carrying it out is a *saṅkhāra* with great *kammic* consequences or a *vacī abhisaṅkhāra*; doing the actual killing is done with *kāya abhisaṅkhāra.* Such *vacī* or *kāya abhisaṅkhāra* are *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* (or *apuññābhisaṅkhāra*). They can lead to a birth in the *apāyā.*
- On the other hand, *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* (or *puññābhisaṅkhāra*) (thoughts responsible for proper speech and actions) have good *kammic* consequences and can lead to "good births." Even more importantly, they are essential for making progress on the Path.
- Good or bad *kammā* are done via those types of *saṅkhāra*. They can bring results (*kamma vipāka*) immediately, in this life, or in future lives. However, not all *kammā* lead to *kamma vipāka*; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

3. The word *saṅkhāra* is commonly used to indicate those with *kammic* consequences, as in "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," where it really means, "*avijjā paccayā apuññābhi saṅkhāra*" or "*avijjā paccayā puññābhi saṅkhāra*."

- Here *abhi saṅkhāra* means "strong *saṅkhāra",* and the word *apuññābhi* comes from "*apuñña*" + "*abhi*," which combine to rhyme as *apuññābhi.* Here *"apuñña"* means "bad" or "immoral." Thus, *apuññābhi saṅkhāra* means strong immoral *saṅkhāra.*
- In the same way, *puñña* + *abhi* + *saṅkhāra* becomes *puññābhi saṅkhāra* (for strong good *saṅkhāra*).
- So, one really needs to pay attention to exactly what meaning need to be taken in a given case.

4. All our thoughts, speech, and bodily actions are based on *saṅkhāra* that arise in the mind. Therefore, it is essential to realize that *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra* also arise in the mind. One speaks and acts based on those such thoughts.

- ***Saṅkhāra* are thoughts. *Kammā* are actions based on such thoughts**.
- *Kāya saṅkhāra are* "conscious thoughts" that make our bodies move. Killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct are *apuññabhi kāya saṅkhāra*.
- ***Vacī saṅkhāra*** are "conscious thoughts that we silently generate" and also those thoughts that lead to a speech by moving the lips, tongue, etc. Hate speech is due to *apuññābhi vacī saṅkhāra*. Thinking about a *Dhamma* concept is a *puññābhi vacī saṅkhāra*; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."
- On the other hand, ***mano saṅkhāra*** are "unconscious thoughts" that arise automatically. We are not aware of when they appear. They arise due to our *gati* (character/habits) and can indicate our level of *moha* or *avijjā*. Since they arise unconsciously, *mano saṅkhāra* are unlikely to be *abhisaṅkhāra* that have substantial *kammic* consequences.
- The fact that *cetanā* plays a vital role is evident when we look at the following definitions: "*kāya sancetanā kāya saṅkhāra*," "*vacī sancetanā vacī saṅkhāra*," and "*mano sancetanā mano saṅkhāra*."

5. Let us take some examples to illustrate these three types of *saṅkhāra*.

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- To move the body, the mind or the mental body or the *gandhabba* must first generate thoughts about moving the body. Then that thought is executed with the help of the brain that sends necessary signals to the leg muscles, say, to move the legs.
- So, those *kāya saṅkhāra* are responsible for moving the legs. Now, if the purpose of moving the body was to go somewhere to commit an evil deed, then it becomes an *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*. These thoughts would have *asobhana cetasika* (like greed or hate) in them.
- If the purpose were to go somewhere to do a good deed, then it would become a *puññabhi saṅkhāra*. These thoughts would have *sobhana cetasika* (like faith and compassion) in them.
- If the purpose were to go the bathroom (*kammically* neutral), then it would be just a *kāya saṅkhāra*, not an *abhisaṅkhāra*. Breathing involves moving body parts (lungs), done without conscious thinking, but they are *kāya saṅkhāra* too. Those thoughts would not have *sobhana* or *asobhana cetasika* in them.
- Therefore, the *kammic* nature of an act is decided by the intention that is in the mind, i.e., type of *cetasika* (mental factors) that arise with those thoughts; see, "What is Intention in Kamma?."

6. Now, if a person gets angry at another person, he may not move any body parts, but may generate evil thoughts like: "I wish I could hit this person right now"). Those are *vacī saṅkhāra*; see "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

- When those *vacī saṅkhāra* build-up energy, one may actually say those words out. They are still called *vacī saṅkhāra*.
- Whether one is just talking to oneself or actually speaks out such evil words, they are both *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*.
- Of course, *vacī saṅkhāra* can be *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* too. Person X watching a good deed by person Y, may be generating good thoughts about Y; those are *puñña vacī saṅkhāra*.
- Those also will be distinguished by the type of *cetasika* as in *kāya saṅkhāra* above.

7. Whether they are *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra*, if they have *asobhana cetasika* in them, they tend "heat up" or "stress" the mind (Pāli word is "*thāpa*").

- On the other hand, if *sobhana cetasika* arise as *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra*, they have the tend to "cool" a mind.
- In the earlier post, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika," it was discussed in detail why understanding this fact is the pre-requisite for the *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life," and "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure."
- Just by comprehending this fact, one can start cultivating *nirāmisa sukha*.

8. All other thoughts that arise in the mind without conscious thinking are *mano saṅkhāra*.

- For example, when one gets hit by a cane, say, one feels the pain associated with it, and one realizes that another person hitting with a cane caused the pain. So, the *mano saṅkhāra* that arise at the beginning have two *cetasika* of *saññā* (recognition of what happened) and *vedanā* (pain caused). **Another way to say it: *mano saṅkhāra* are involved in the *vipāka stage*.**
- However, based on that "sense input" of getting hit, now one could start generating *vacī saṅkhāra* and even *kāya saṅkhāra*. Such *vacī saṅkhāra* may involve just creating evil thoughts about that person or actually saying bad things to him. If the pain was intense, one might generating bad *kāya saṅkhāra* and hit that person.

9. So, it is essential to realize that all of the following involve thoughts : automatically thinking (*mano saṅkhāra*), "just talking to oneself" or speaking out (*vacī saṅkhāra*), or using the body movements (*kāya saṅkhāra*).

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- Those thoughts arise in the *gandhabba*, and become the commands to the brain to carry out the tasks of speaking and body movement. That is how the mental body (*gandhabba*) controls the physical body; see, "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba."

10. Those initial *mano saṅkhāra* are automatically in mind due to one's *gati*. Then subsequent *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* are generated, and we do have control over those; see, for example, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

- So, the seeds for thinking, speaking, and acting start at the instant of the first sense input, say, seeing something or hearing something that gets one's attention.
- If the sense input is substantial (and one gets interested in it via like or dislike), one will start many such *citta vīthi* in a short time. This leads to corresponding *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* to "talk to oneself", speak out or to do bodily actions.

11. Without getting into details, conscious thinking that could lead to speaking and physical actions occur in the seven *javana citta* in a *citta vīthi*.

- *Vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra* arise due to many *citta vīthi* running one after another. As we discussed previously, billions of *citta vīthi* can run in a second; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- Another critical point is that the *javana citta* in subsequent *citta vīthi* gets stronger and stronger. This is why when we start thinking about a person that we like or dislike, we can keep generating increasingly stronger feelings about the situation.
- Sometimes, we can see people getting angry by the minute. They are generating a lot of *vacī saṅkhāra* even without getting a word out. But one can see the person getting highly agitated: the face gets red and facial expression can show how angry he/she has become.

12. Therefore, even if we may start generating *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*, we may not become aware of it for a short time. If one gets angry one may lose control and may not even realize that one is getting into a bad situation.

- "Catching oneself early" in the process of becoming angry is the key to control anger management. When one understands how this process happens and that it can escalate quickly into a bad situation, one can determine to catch it earlier next time.
- We can prevent a lot of suffering in this life by catching such *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* early.
- As we discussed in the *desanā* in the post,"Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life", this is the key to *ānāpāna* and *satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.

13. In the previous post, "Vedanā – What It Really Means", we discussed how "*samphassa jā vedanā*" could arise in our minds after initial *vipāka vedanā*.

- Those "*samphassa jā vedanā*" arise when we generate *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra* as a result of the initial *vipāka vedanā*.
- Those "*samphassa jā vedanā*" are all made by us consciously. However, for someone who has not cultivated *satipaṭṭhāna* or *ānāpāna* (the correct versions), this may not be obvious.

14. If one is mindful, one could see for oneself when one starts consciously having good or bad thoughts about sensory input. With practice, one can "catch oneself" before generating too many "*samphassa jā vedanā*" or — to say the same thing differently — before making a lot of *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra*.

- This concept may need a bit of thinking, but let us take some examples to clarify.

15. We first need to pay attention to those "*samphassa jā vedanā*" that arise due to immoral thoughts, i.e., due to immoral *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.

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- Suppose person X starts generating bad *vacī saṅkhāra* because he is verbally abused by enemy Y. Such *vacī saṅkhāra* give rise to a "bad state of mind" or *domanassa* via "*samphassa jā vedanā*." If the situation escalates, stronger *vacī saṅkhāra*, i.e., thoughts of hitting Y, may arise and may lead to *kāya saṅkhāra* of hitting Y.

16. On the other hand, when one is eating a delicious food, one will taste it as pleasant, whether one is an average human or an *Arahant*. It is a "*kāma guṇa*" associated with the human realm; see, "Kāma Guṇa, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha." That is not an immoral thought.

- The difference is that while a normal human will have a **craving** for that food, an *Arahant* will not.
- One generates *mano saṅkhāra* automatically based on one's *gati*. Then, conscious *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra* lead to the critical ***upādāna* (willingly binding or craving)** stage; see, "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna."

17. All this is put together at the *viññāṇa* stage. The discussion on *viññāṇa* will complete our simplified discussion on the four aggregates that are associated with the mind or the mental body, *gandhabba*; see, "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

- Furthermore, we will see that *vedanā* (excluding "*samphassa jā vedanā*") and *saññā* are associated with *mano saṅkhāra*, which arise automatically due to *kamma vipāka*.
- Starting with such *mano saṅkhāra*, we then consciously generate *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* initiating new *kamma*. Furthermore, "*samphassa jā vedanā*" arise during that process.
- When *kamma vipāka*, in turn, lead to making new *kamma* (thus giving rise to more *kamma vipāka*), the whole process repeats itself over and over. This is how the rebirth process rolls on forever unless one determines to stop initiating new *kamma*, especially strong immoral *kamma* via *apuññābhi vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.

18. I recently came across the following "wise words" on the internet:

- Watch your thoughts; they become words.
- Watch your words; they become actions.
- Watch your actions; they become habits.
- Watch your habits; they become your character.
- Watch your character; it becomes your destiny.

Those statements summarize what I have been trying to explain above and also in posts on *Paticca Samuppāda*. Our thoughts or *saṅkhāra* define and guide our destiny.

19. Further details on *saṅkhāra* and *abhisaṅkhāra* at "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – What Is "Intention"?"

- Also, see "Paticca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'."
- Difference between *saṅkhāra* and *dhammā* at, "Difference Between Dhammā and Saṅkhāra."

4.9.3 Viññāṇa Aggregate

November 30, 2017

Viññāṇa – What It Really Means

Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter

Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means

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4.9.3.1 Viññāṇa – What It Really Means

May 26, 2017; revised May 16, 2020

Two Types of *Viññāṇa*

It is a good idea to read the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" first. More at "Essential Abhidhamma – The Basics."

1. So far, in this subsection on the mental aggregates, we have discussed *saññā*, *vedanā*, and *saṅkhāra* in simple terms, mainly focusing on their relevance to stay on the Path. See, "Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa." My main goal is to provide the key and essential aspects of these terms so that one can see "how to cool down the mind" and progress towards *Nibbāna*.

- *Viññāṇa* can be said to **encompass (include)** all those three mental categories: *saññā*, *vedanā*, and *saṅkhāra*. So, we can say that *viññāṇa* is the overall effect our awareness encompassing our perceptions (*saññā*), feelings (*vedanā*), and our likes and dislikes (*saṅkhāra*).
- **But *viññāṇa* represents a bit more** — mainly "our hopes and desires that we want to from this world." That is the more critical aspect — which makes the connection with *rūpa* — that we need to understand, **but first, we need to know that there are two types of *viññāṇa*.**

Vipāka Viññāṇa

2. When we see something, a *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises. A split second later we may hear something, and *sota viññāṇa* arises. When we watch a movie, it seems like we are seeing and listening at the same time, but it only appears that way because our mind is so fast.

- Basically, six types of viññāṇa can arise via our six senses: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind, called *cakkhu, sota, ghāna,jivhā, kāya*, and *mano viññāṇa*. They are all ***vipāka viññāṇa*.**
- Therefore, ***vipāka viññāṇa* can be six types,** and they will bring *vipāka* even for an *Arahant* until the death of the physical body.
- We don't have control over them once they arise. But we can, of course, avoid some. For example, if we don't want to watch a movie, we can decide not to view it.

Kamma Viññāṇa

3. Then, based on that *vipāka viññāṇa*, *kamma viññāṇa* CAN arise, IF we get attached to that *vipāka viññāṇa* via greed, hate, or ignorance.

- For example, person X may see a person Y that X dislikes. That seeing event is a *vipāka*, and thus the *viññāṇa* generated is a *vipāka viññāṇa*.
- But as soon as X sees Y, hateful thoughts may come to X's mind, with which X can generate NEW *KAMMA*. Those thoughts have *kamma viññāṇa*.
- *Kamma viññāṇa* ALWAYS arise in the MIND door (not at the other five doors) i.e., ***kamma viññāṇa* are ALWAYS *mano viññāṇa*.** That is in contrast to *vipāka viññāṇa* which can arise at any of the six sense doors.

Six Types of *Vipāka Viññāṇa*

4. So, a *vipāka viññāṇa* can arise due to any of the six senses. Seeing a *rūpa* with eyes ("*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*"), hearing a sound with ears ("*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ*"),…*dhamma* with *mana indriya* ("*manañca paṭicca dhammē ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*").

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- Note that *vipāka viññāṇa* DO NOT arise via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa.*" They ALWAYS appear via eyes seeing a *rūpa*, ears hearing a sound, etc.
- We are all familiar with how "visual awareness" or *cakkhu viññāṇa* arise due to seeing a *rūpa.* Similarly, auditory awareness arises due to hearing a sound, etc. But most of our *vipāka viññāṇa* occur due to "mental awareness" or *mano viññāṇa* resulting via *dhamma* impinging on the *mana indriya*; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!".
- Note that *rūpa* that we see with our eyes are *rūpa rūpa* (or *vaṇṇa rūpa*); they usually are just called *rūpa*, but this can lead to confusion if someone is not aware of this detail.

5. In general, all we experience in this world are *rūpa*: *rūpa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phoṭṭhabba rūpa*, and ALSO *dhamma*.

- *Dhamma* are not called *rūpa*, simply because they are below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. They have not yet "condensed" to the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage; see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka".
- They are very subtle *rūpa* that cannot be seen or touched: "*anidassanan appaṭighan*"; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!".

Based on *Vipāka Viññāṇa* We Initiate *Kamma Viññāṇa*

6. To summarize: *vipāka viññāṇa* can arise at any of the six senses, and thus can be *cakkhu, sota, jivhā, ghāna, kāya*, or *mano viññāṇa*.

- If the *vipāka viññāṇa* is strong (i.e., if the experience liked or disliked), then because of *avijjā*, **we start generating *saṅkhāra* about it**, which lead to a *viññāṇa* that we create on our own, a *kamma viññāṇa*.
- Therefore, in contrast to *vipāka viññāṇa*, *kamma viññāṇa* arise via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa.*"
- They start automatically as *mano viññāṇa*, via *mano saṅkhāra*. But then we consciously start generating more via *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*, and that will strengthen *kamma viññāṇa*.
- We have discussed how *mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically due to our *gati*, and then we consciously generate *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*: "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?".

Examples of *Vipāka Viññāṇa*

7. Let us first consider a couple of examples of *vipāka viññāṇa*.

- We may get to eat a tasty food item. The experience of that food on the tongue generates taste (*jivhā viññāṇa*), which is a *vipāka viññāṇa*. We got to taste that as a result of a previous good *kamma vipāka*. That experience includes identifying what food it is (*saññā*), and the taste it gives (*vedanā*).
- If we get a headache, that is bad *kāya viññāṇa* that arose due to a past bad *kamma*, i.e., a *kamma vipāka*. We know it is a headache (*saññā*), and we feel the pain (*vedanā*).
- **When the sense input first comes**, we just become aware of it. There are no *kamma* done with *vipāka viññāṇa*.

Examples of *Kamma Viññāṇa*

8. Based on those six types of *vipāka viññāṇa* that arise, **we generate** new mental states on our own. These are called ***kamma viññāṇa***.

- In the above first example, if we like the taste, we immediately start getting attached to it and begin generating *saṅkhāra* about that food. We begin to create *vacī saṅkhāra* (talking to ourselves) about how good the food is. **That is a different mental state that we make on our own.** Of course, we are

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likely to generate *kāya saṅkhāra* also when eating that food again. We have discussed the three types of saṅkhāra in "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

- A *kamma viññāṇa* arises within a fraction of a second after the *vipāka viññāṇa*, so that we usually cannot differentiate between the two mental states. (For those who are familiar with *Abhidhamma*, this is discussed at the end of this post).
- Of course, *vipāka viññāṇa* lasts while we eat the food. A large number of *jivhādvāra citta vīthi* run while we eat. *Kamma viññāṇa* also arise later in the same citta *vīthi*, but they also occur well after the meal. We can recall eating that food later at night (with a *mano viññāṇa*) and generate more *kamma viññāṇa* (mainly via *vacī saṅkhāra*) by consciously thinking how good it was.
- In the second example above, a split second after we start experiencing the headache (*vipāka viññāṇa* and the associated feeling of pain), we start getting depressed and generating *vacī saṅkhāra* about how this is going to ruin the day and mess up all our plans.

Kamma Viññāṇa Create *Kamma Bija*

9. In both those examples, our first mental state (*vipāka viññāṇa*) was so strong that we — on our own — generated a *kamma viññāṇa* which also gives rise to a *kamma bīja*.

- **That *kamma bīja* can come back to our mind later as a *vipāka viññāṇa*** (this is a *mano viññāṇa*). That is how we recalled our experience with tasty food later at night.
- If that headache was terrible, we might be able to recall it days or weeks later.

10. Thus the important point is that a *kamma bīja* is the same as a "***dhammā***" that makes contact with the mind to give rise to a "mind sense event"; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!."

- Just as a seeing event arises when the *cakkhu indriya* makes contact with a *rūpa* ("*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*"), a "mind event" occurs when a ***dhammā*** makes contact with the *mana indriya* ("*manañca paṭicca **dhammē** ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*").
- One may attach to the taste of that delicious food. While thinking about how to taste it again in the future, many strong *javana citta* can lead to a *kamma bīja.*
- **Don't be put off by those Pāli words.** Once you get to know the meanings behind these words, it will become easy to see what happens.

More *Kamma Viññāṇa* Lead to Strengthening of *Kamma Bija*

11. The strength of a given *kamma bīja* determines how likely would it to come back and make contact with the mind later on. For example, if it were a regular sandwich, one would not make craving for that and thus would not create strong *kamma bīja* or a "*dhammā."* Then it is likely that one would have forgotten that meal in a few hours.

- However, if the meal were delicious, one would be thinking about it many days after leaving the restaurant, and each time one generates *javana citta,* one will be making that *kamma bīja* stronger. The more one thinks about it (i.e., generates *vacī saṅkhāra*) about it, the more robust it gets.
- See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra" to see how thinking itself can lead to *kamma* generation.

Three Types of *Saṅkhāra*

12. This is how one becomes an alcoholic gradually. One starts remembering past "drinking events" and generate a lot of *mano* and *vacī saṅkhāra* even when not drinking.

- By the way, drinking is a *kāya saṅkhāra*, since it involves moving body parts.

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- *Mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically when one first think about a past drinking event (due to "*manañca paṭicca dhammē ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ."* Then when one starts consciously thinking about that past event, one starts generating *vacī saṅkhāra*; see, "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?".
- All three types of *saṅkhāra* contribute to "feed the *viññāṇa* for alcohol" via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" *Paṭicca Samuppāda* step. While we do not have control over *mano saṅkhāra* that arise AUTOMATICALLY, we do have control over *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* that one generates CONSCIOUSLY, as discussed in the above post. That is the key to *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.

Transition from *Vipāka Viññāṇa* to *Kamma Viññāṇa*

13. Let us look at the time-line of how these two types of *viññāṇa* arise. *viññāṇa* is not an "entity" that is always there. As with *saññā*, *vedanā*, and *saṅkhāra,* a given *viññāṇa* arises with a thought.

- When thoughts are not there, the mind is in the *bhavaṅga* state. Sometimes we see people — usually when they are not alert — staring out into space. Unless they are in deep thought (which is also possible), their minds are likely to be in the inactive *bhavaṅga* state.
- Our minds are moved away from the dormant *bhavaṅga* state to conscious thoughts first via a *vipāka viññāṇa*. Then if get attached (*taṇhā*) to that, we start generating *kamma viññāṇa*, which will bring future *kamma vipāka*.
- It is essential to recognize this time-line. We start with a *vipāka viññāṇa* and then begin generating *kamma viññāṇa*. Of course, *kamma* leads to more *vipāka* later, and the whole process continues without end. That is how we go through the rebirth process.
- To stop this, we need to be mindful and stop generating *kamma viññāṇa*. Especially those lead to bad *kamma vipāka*. That is the key to *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā*.
- That is a lot of information to grasp. One may need to re-read and also read relevant posts to fully understand.

The transition from *Vipāka Viññāṇa* to *Kamma Viññāṇa* is Fast

14. Finally, the time delay between *vipāka viññāṇa* and *kamma viññāṇa* is unimaginably small.

- In *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* with 17 thought moments, the *vipāka viññāṇa* arise at the beginning of the *citta vīthi* with the *pañcadvārāvajjana citta. Kamma viññāṇa* generate in *javana citta* that occur towards the end of the *citta vīthi*. Of course, many more *pañcadvāra* and *manodvāra citta vīthi* run if one gets attached to that object (*ārammaṇa*).
- When *dhamma* impinges on the *mana indriya* to start a *manodvāra vipāka* event, a *manodvāra citta vīthi* with around ten *citta* runs, with the initial *vipāka viññāṇa* arising at the mind-door adverting thought-moment. Again, *kamma viññāṇa* generate at *javana citta* at the end of the *citta vīthi.*
- Those who are into *Abhidhamma* can consult, "Citta vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs" for details.

Viññāṇa is the Link Between Mind and Matter

15. ***Viññāṇa* is the link between mind and matter**, even though it is in the "*nāma* or mind category" sometimes.

- In the Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, *nāma* is defined as only the first three *khandha*: "*Tattha katamaṃ nāmaṃ? Vedanākkhandho, saññākkhandho, saṅkhārakkhandho—idaṃ vuccati "nāmaṃ."* That is a clear indication that *viññāṇa khandha* does not belong in the "*nāma* or mind category."

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- Information in these posts on *viññāṇa* could be new to many readers but are critically important. If one can grasp them, one will have the "***nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa***." See, "Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Pariccheda Ñāṇa."
- One must read a couple of more posts before making that critical connection. See "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

Next, "Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter", …

4.9.3.2 Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter

November 30, 2017; revised February 6, 2020

Vipāka Viññāṇa Versus *Kamma Viññāṇa*

1. In the previous post in this series, we discussed that there are two types of *viññāṇa*: *vipāka viññāṇa* and *kamma viññāṇa;* see, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

- We don't have control over ***vipāka viññāṇa***, but we do have control over ***kamma viññāṇa*** (via controlling our *saṅkhāra*,) and that is why it is possible to attain *Nibbāna*.
- We cannot do anything about the ***vipāka viññāṇa***. Even in an *Arahant* they arise as *kamma vipāka;* he/she will also see, hear, etc like anyone else.
- ***Vipāka viññāṇa*** can arise via any of the six sense doors, i.e., as *cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā, kāya,* or *mano viññāṇa*. Based on those, WE initiate new ***kamma viññāṇa***, as we discussed in the above-mentioned post. This process is analyzed in detail in, "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?."
- What we can — and need to do — is to stop "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" — **specifically strong *vacī* and *kāya abhisaṅkhāra*** — leading to new strong *kamma viññāṇa*. ***Kamma viññāṇa*** ALWAYS arise first as *mano viññāṇa*.

Controlling *Kamma Viññāṇa*

2. *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* involve controlling *kamma viññāṇa* by being mindful of the *mano saṅkhāra* that AUTOMATICALLY arise and controlling them with *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* that we consciously generate. The basis of this critical fact is discussed at, "Root of All Suffering – Ten Immoral Actions."

- In formal sitting-down meditation, this means just controlling our *vacī saṅkhāra* (conscious thoughts), since we do not move our bodies or speak.
- However, during all waking hours we need to control both *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* (i.e., our conscious thoughts, speech, and bodily actions); see, "Root of All Suffering – Ten Immoral Actions."
- By the way, please do not ignore the initial posts in the "Living Dhamma" section, such as the above mentioned post. **It is not possible to grasp complex posts like this one without that basic knowledge.**

Paticca Samuppāda Has *Kamma Viññāṇa*

3. In *Paṭicca Samuppāda* **it is the *kamma viññāṇa*** that comes into play in, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*," NOT the ***vipāka viññāṇa.***

- All *saṅkhāra* are generated in our minds. While *mano saṅkhāra* arise automatically, we CONSCIOUSLY generate *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*, leading to *kamma viññāṇa*; see, "Root of All Suffering – Ten Immoral Actions."
- This is why *saṅkhāra* are food for the *viññāṇa*, specifically for the *kamma viññāṇa*.

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4. Furthermore, the next step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*." As you can see, this is where the connection to *rūpa* is made. We will discuss in detail below.

The KEY POINT is that *kamma viññāṇa* is not totally mental: The mind — when attached to something — will create an energy (i.e., a *kamma bīja* or a *dhammā*) that will be recorded in the *kamma bhava*.

- Then in the future, that *dhammā* can come back to the *mana indriya* and trigger a mind-sense event via "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*." that we discussed in "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!."
- Then, in the latter part of that *citta vīthi*, more *kamma viññāṇa* are created; see, "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?."
- Thus it is a feedback process that gets strengthened with time.

Kamma Viññāṇa Make *Kamma Bīja*

5. That *kamma viññāṇa* can be building up a *kamma bīja* (or a *dhammā*) in the *kamma bhava* overtime via the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process: "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*", "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*", "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*", "*phassa paccayā vedanā*", "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*", "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*", and "*upādāna paccayā bhava*."

- Then under suitable conditions (see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya"), that *kamma bīja* (or a *dhammā*) can come back — as a *vipāka* — and start that process all over again; see, "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?."
- A *dhammā* with energy or a *kamma bīja* created previously can come back to the mind as a *vipāka viññāṇa* via "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*."
- Every time one generates *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra* relevant to that *viññāṇa,* that makes *viññāṇa* stronger.

Nāmarūpa Are Precursors to *Rūpa* Created by the Mind

6. As *viññāṇa* gets stronger, "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" makes *nāmarūpa* stronger. **This *nāmarūpa* is the first stage of a *rūpa* that is created by the mind**, with the *viññāṇa* acting as the intermediary.

- It is also important to remember that *dhammā* includes not only *kamma bīja*, but also any record of anything that has been done by a given person. So, we can also recall events that have nothing to do with *kammic* energy, for example, remembering talking to someone or seeing something or solving a math problem; see, "Difference Between Dhammā and Saṅkhāra."

7. For example, an alcoholic has a "*viññāṇa* for drinking." He (she) constantly thinks about drinking, and will build up a "drunk existence (*bhava*)", which comes back to his mind as a *dhammā* to trigger more thoughts about drinking.

- Until he breaks that loop by willfully controlling his thoughts and actions involving drinking, that *viññāṇa* will grow with time.
- The only way to break that habit of drinking is to be mindful about the bad consequences of drinking and to forcefully suppress any thoughts about drinking (*vacī saṅkhāra*) and abstain from drinking (*kāya saṅkhāra*).

Kamma Viññāṇa Is the Link Between Mind and Matter

8. What we discussed above is quite important. ***Kamma viññāṇa* is the link between mind and matter. It is an energy made by the mind. A *kamma viññāṇa* creates tiny amounts of matter (*rūpa*) below**

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the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. It is important to fully understand this point for one to fully grasp the meaning of "*mano pubbaṅgamā dhammā*…." This is in fact how the mind (*mano*) is creating *dhammā* via *viññāṇa*.

- This is confirmed in the WebLink: suttacentral: Majjhe Sutta (AN 6.61), **where it is stated that *nama* is at one end, *rūpa* is at the other end, with *viññāṇa* in the middle:** "*nāmaṃ kho, āvuso, eko anto, rūpaṃ dutiyo anto, viññāṇaṃ majjhe.*" ["Name (*nāma*), friends, is one end; form (*rūpa*) is the second end; consciousness (*viññāṇa*) is in the middle; and craving is the seamstress." For craving sews one to the production of this or that state of existence. It is in this way that a *bhikkhu* directly knows what should be directly known; fully understands what should be fully understood; and by doing so, in this very life he makes an end of suffering.]
- It would be helpful if one had followed the preceding posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.

9. The goal of a given mind is to extract sense pleasures from the outside world, which is made of *rūpa* both above and below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

- We all are familiar with sense enjoyment via the five physical senses. But the most enjoyment we experience is through the sixth sense, the mind.
- The five physical senses only bring in imprints of the five types of "solidified *rūpa*": *rūpa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa*, and *pottabbha rūpa* (in other words, sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches).
- All those sense imprints that come in are enjoyed by the mind. In addition, the mind can also enjoy thinking about such past sense experiences AND also any planned future events. The "fine *rūpa*" involved here are "*dhammā*"; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!."

Connection to *Dhammā*

10. How does the mind enjoy past sense experiences or future expected experiences? The answer to this question leads us to the concept of ***dhammā***, those *rūpa* that are below the *suddhaṭṭhaka*, and thus are really energies.

- Just like we "bring in" external *rūpa* (or *rūpa rūpa* or *vaṇṇa rūpa*) with our eyes, external sounds with our ears, etc, we bring in external *dhammā* through the *mana indriya*, as explained in "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!." [***vaṇṇa*** : [m.] colour; appearance; colour of the skin; sort; caste; a letter; quality.]
- **Some of those *dhammā*** are made by the mind via *kamma viññāṇa*! That *kamma viññāṇa* had created a *dhammā* that got deposited in the *kamma bhava* as *kamma bīja* or **dhammā with energy**. This is the connecting piece of the puzzle. We discuss this in different ways, in order to grasp this key idea.
- All *dhammās*, including *nāma gotta* and *kamma viññāṇa* (also called *kamma bīja*) are in the *nāma loka*; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

Rūpa Generation Process

11. The point is that "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" starts the "*rūpa* generation process" the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" completes it.

- In *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles leading to rebirth, this *nāmarūpa* is the blueprint for the new existence via "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*," a new set of *indriya* are formed. In the case of a human birth, this is the single cell (zygote); see, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."
- In *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles operating during a lifetime, this *nāmarūpa* just gives rise to new sense events via "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*," where existing *indriya* become *āyatana* for a new sense event.

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- Note that our *indriya* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa,* etc) do not always act as *āyatana.* Only when we act with *lobha, dosa, moha* that they act as *āyatana* to lead to new *kamma*.

Connection to *Gati* (Habits/Character)

12. In many posts at the site, we have discussed how our *gati* lead to the creation of *viññāṇa* for certain things we crave (and dislike); see, for example, "2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms" and "3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."

- We have also discussed how such *viññāṇa* arise due to our *gati*, see, for example, "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control," "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)."
- So, *gati* and *kamma viññāṇa* are related to each other, feed on each other, and enhance each other.

We Don't Have Control Over *Vipāka Viññāṇa*

13. *Vipāka viññāṇa* are results of previous *kamma*, and cannot be stopped. What we need to stop is *kamma viññāṇa* that AUTOMATICALLY arise due to our *gati*; see, "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."

- Now we are essentially putting together the pieces of a puzzle to come up with the Buddha's world view to illustrate how the mind creates the world. Key pieces to the puzzle are in various sections of the website. In the "Living Dhamma" section all those components are put together starting from the basic components.
- The picture will become more clear with the next post in the series, "Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāṇa."

4.9.3.3 Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means

January 6, 2018; revised October 10, 2019

Introduction

1. I have seen several discussion forums discuss the verse, "*viññāṇāṁ anidassanaṁ anantaṁ sabbato pabhaṁ..*" Many times I have seen it be referred to as "there is controversy as to the precise meaning of this enigmatic phrase."

- Most common translations say something like, ""Consciousness non-manifest (sometimes as consciousness without surface), infinite, radiant all around."
- Such incorrect translations have then led to another drastic error by saying that "*anidassana viññāṇa*" is the same as the "*pabhassara citta*" and even as *bhavaṅga*. All these are astonishingly wrong!

What Is *Viññāṇa*?

2. *Viññāṇa* is a central and critical concept to understand. I have started an in-depth discussion of *viññāṇa* in an advanced subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section: "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

- In this post, I describe a meaningful translation to the verse, "*viññāṇāṁ anidassanaṁ anantaṁ sabbato pabhaṁ.*" that is consistent with all the *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka*. I would welcome any evidence to the contrary.
- Now we are getting into deep concepts. I would urge reading other related posts mentioned above first. Depending on one's background, it may take time to grasp these concepts.
- One needs to read the posts in the subsection "Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa" of which "Viññāṇa Aggregate" is a part. If one does not understand those concepts, one could keep going back to earlier sections in the "Living Dhamma" section. It is designed to go from simple to profound.

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What Does *Anidassana* Mean?

3. First, let us find the meaning of "*anidassana*" from the *Tipiṭaka*. The meaning of the word *nidassana* means an 'illustration' that is visible. *Anidassana* implies something that is not visible.

- For example, *dhammā* impinge on the *mana indriya* and gives rise to *mano viññāṇa* via "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*." Those *dhammā* also cannot be seen; *dhammā* are just energies lying below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage.
- These dhamma are, "***anidassanaṃ*** *appaṭighaṃ dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rūpaṃ*" or "**cannot be seen**, cannot be touched, and can make contact only with the *dhammāyatana";* see, "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!."

4. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Kakacūpama Sutta (MN 21): "..*Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, puriso āgaccheyya lākhaṃ vā haliddiṃ vā nīlaṃ vā mañjiṭṭhaṃ vā ādāya. So evaṃ vadeyya: 'ahaṃ imasmiṃ ākāse rūpaṃ likhissāmi, rūpapātubhāvaṃ karissāmī'ti. Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, api nu so puriso imasmiṃ ākāse rūpaṃ likheyya, rūpapātubhāvaṃ kareyyā"ti? "No hetaṃ, Bhante." "Taṃ kissa hetu"? **"Ayañhi, Bhante, ākāso arūpī anidassano.** ."

Translated: "..*Bhikkhus*, a man may come along bringing off white or yellow or dark green or crimson colors, and may say: 'I will draw shapes in the sky, I will make material shapes appear. What do you think about this, monks? Could that man draw pictures in the sky with those colors?" "No, *Bhante*. **It is not possible to draw shapes in the empty sky that are visible**, that can manifest as figures."

5. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Nibbāna*-The Mind Stilled" series, Venerable Kaṭukurunde Ñāṇananda has provided more evidence that "*anidassana*" means "something that is not visible" or 'something that does not manifest"; see, Sermons 7 and 8 in Volume II, which can be found under the references at, "Katukurunde Ñāṇananda Thera." [WebLink: PDF File: seeingthroughthenet.net: Books by Venerable Kaṭukurunde Ñāṇananda]

- However, his explanation of *viññāṇa* is critically wrong, as I explain below. That is a common mistake that I see in many current interpretations.

Viññāṇa Is More Than Consciousness

6. Even in *Theravāda* textbooks, *Viññāṇa* is loosely translated as "consciousness" or "awareness." But it is much more than that. ***Viññāṇa* represents much more: "our hopes and desires that we want from this world."** This is the critical point — that makes the connection between mind and matter (*rūpa*).

- We believe that things in this world will provide us with long-lasting happiness. Thus we do *vacī* and *kaya saṅkhāra* to achieve them. Then, "*saṅkhāra paccayā* ***viññāṇa***" leads to the cultivation of a corresponding *viññāṇa.*
- *Viññāṇa* means without *ñāṇa.* When one follows the Noble Path, one will comprehend the Three Characteristics of nature (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*). Then one realize the unfruitfulness of having such false hopes, i.e., cultivate *paññā.*

7. That is quite clear from *Paṭicca Samuppada*: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra; saṅkhāra paccayā* ***viññāṇa****; viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana, saḷāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, marana,* ***soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti***."

- **All future suffering** arises because we act with *avijjā* (i.e., generate *abhisaṅkhāra*) to achieve pleasurable worldly things and thereby create ***viññāṇa***.

Two Types of *Viññāṇa*

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8. Each individual *citta* of a human — which exists only for a billionth of a second — is contaminated in 9 stages. Then it is added to the *viññāṇakkhandha*! See; "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."

- **A *kamma viññāṇa* is a contaminated *citta.*** Those arise via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." However, *vipāka viññāṇa* are just consciousness or "awareness"; see, "Viññāṇa – What it Really Means."
- The contamination of a *citta* manifests in *saññā* and *vedanā*."
- See detail in "Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa."

9. It is stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saṅgīti Sutta (Digha Nikāya 33)": "*Tividhena rūpasaṅgaho—sanidassanasappaṭighaṃ rūpam, anidassanasappaṭighaṃ rūpaṃ,* ***anidassanaappaṭighaṃ*** *rūpaṃ*."

Translated: "Threefold classification of *rūpa* (matter) – visible and graspable, invisible and graspable, **invisible and ungraspable**."

- Three types of *rūpa* are sensed with the six sense faculties -five physical senses and the *mana indriya*.
- Those *rūpā* detected with the *mana indriya* are *dhamma*: "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*"; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!."
- These are the *rūpa* of the third kind: **invisible and ungraspable** (***anidassan*** *aappaṭighaṃ*): "*anidassanaṃ appaṭighaṃ dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rūpaṃ*"; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!."
- Those *rūpā* of the third kind are same as *nāmarūpa* that arise due to *viññāṇa: "*Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāṇa."
- That is explained systematically in the subsection: "Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa."

Viññāṇa Is The Link Between Mind and Matter

10. ***Viññāṇa* is also the link between mind and matter**, even though it is in the "*nāma"* or mind category" most of the time.

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, *nāma* is defined as only the first three *khandha*: "*Tattha katamaṃ nāmaṃ? Vedanākkhandho, saññākkhandho, saṅkhārakkhandho—idaṃ vuccati "nāmaṃ*." This is a clear indication that *viññāṇa khandha* does not really belong in the "*nāma* or mind category."
- Even though *vipāka viññāṇa* is conclusively in the "*nāma*" category, *kamma viññāṇa* have energies, and thus fall into the *rūpa* category. Sometimes *viññāṇa* is not included in the "*nāma*" category for this reason.
- That was pointed out in the post, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means." You may want to read that first. As pointed out in that post, *kamma viññāṇa* are different from *vipāka viññāṇa* in that *kamma viññāṇa* have energies embedded in them.
- Solid confirmation is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Majje Sutta (AN 6.61), **where the Buddha stated that *nāma* is at one end, *rūpa* is at the other end, with *viññāṇa* in the middle:** "*nāmaṃ kho, āvuso, eko anto, rūpaṃ dutiyo anto, viññāṇaṃ majjhe*."

Viññāṇa Is The Cause For Rebirth and Suffering

11. The real nature of *viññāṇa* as cause for suffering is clearly stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Dvayatānupassanāsutta (Sutta Nipata 3.12)":

"*Yaṃ kiñci dukkhaṃ sambhoti,*

Sabbaṃ viññāṇapaccayā;

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Viññāṇassa nirodhena,

Natthi dukkhassa sambhavo."

Translated: "Whatever suffering that arises, all that arises due to *viññāṇa*; With the not arising of *viññāṇa*, there is no existence with suffering."

- That should lay to rest any arguments about *viññāṇa* being the same as *Nibbāna, pabhassara citta*, or *bhavaṅga.*
- A critical point that I have been trying to make is that when one sees such dramatic contradiction somewhere, one should be skeptical about the trustworthiness of that source. That is the only way to make progress.

Brahmanimantanika Sutta (MN 49)

12. The phrase "*viññāṇāṁ anidassanaṁ anantaṁ sabbato pabhaṁ*." appears in the WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 49). I will first provide the essential parts of the Sutta that are relevant to discuss the meaning of this verse.

Here is the essence of the Sutta in plain English:

At one time, The Buddha saw that the following wrong view came to the mind of the Baka *Brahmā* (who is the leader of the Mahā Brahma realm; see, "31 Realms of Existence"): "My existence is permanent, it is stable, it is eternal, and is not liable to passing away."

In order to correct the wrong view of the Mahā Brahma, vanishing from near the great sāl-tree in the Subhaga Grove at Ukkaṭṭhā, the Buddha appeared in that Brahma-world.

Baka *Brahmā* saw the Buddha coming, welcomed him, and told him: "*Idañhi, mārisa, niccaṃ, idaṃ dhuvaṃ, idaṃ sassataṃ, idaṃ kevalaṃ, idaṃ acavanadhammaṃ, idañhi na jāyati na jīyati na mīyati na cavati na upapajjati. Ito ca panaññaṃ uttari nissaraṇaṃ natthī'ti.*"

Translated: "This existence, good sir, can be maintained to my liking, it is stable, it is eternal. It encompasses all, not liable to passing away. It is not born, nor does it age or die or to pass away or uprise. There is not another further release from this existence."

The Buddha replied: "You are ignorance. You say your existence can be to your liking, but that is not so, it is not permanent as you say…" (*yatra hi nāma aniccaṃyeva samānaṃ niccanti vakkhati, addhuvaṃyeva samānaṃ dhuvanti vakkhati*).

- By the way, here it is important to note that the Pāli word for "permanent" is "*dhuva*", and not "*nicca.*"

The Buddha added, "..although you say there is no further release that can be attained, there is indeed a permanent release" ("*santañca panaññaṃ uttari nissaraṇaṃ "natthaññaṃ uttari nissaraṇan"ti vakkhatī'ti.*"

- Then there is an account of how Māra the deva, having entered a particular company of Brahmā, spoke to encourage the Brahma. I will skip that account, in order to get to the crux of the matter.

Baka *Brahmā* then replied to the Buddha: 'But, good sir, I say "nicca" because it is so, I say "stable" because it is stable, I say "eternal" because it is eternal. There is no more suffering,…I have escaped from the cravings for *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo dhātu.*" (meaning he has overcome *taṇhā* for the sensual pleasures available in the *kāma loka* comprised from the *cattāro* (four) *maha dhātu*).

The Buddha told the Baka *Brahma* that indeed he knew that the Baka *Brahma* had transcended the *kāma loka*, and was fully aware of his powers. The Buddha added that there were things in this world that the Brahma was not aware of: (1) There are higher Brahma realms, (2) Mahā Brahma himself was in the

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Abhassara Brahma realm, died there and was now reborn in this lower Brahma realm. The Buddha told the Baka *Brahma*: "you neither know nor see those higher realms, but I know and see them."

Here is the really relevant part of the Sutta where the Buddha tells Mahā Brahma: "*Pathaviṃ kho ahaṃ, brahme, pathavito abhiññāya yāvatā* ***pathaviyā pathavattena ananubhūtaṃ*** *tadabhiññāya pathaviṃ nāpahosiṃ, pathaviyā nāpahosiṃ, pathavito nāpahosiṃ, pathaviṃ meti nāpahosiṃ, pathaviṃ nābhivadiṃ…*"

Translated: Brahma, knowing *pathavi* to be just *pathavi* (devoid of life), knowing the true nature of *pathavi*, I do not take *pathavi* to be me (No attachment to things in the *kāma loka* made out of the *cattāro* (four) *mahā bhūta*)."

- Then he repeated the same verse for the other three *mahā bhūta* of which the bodies of beings in *kāma loka* are made of *āpo*, *tejo*, *vāyo*.

Finally, he summarized it all in the following verse, which we discussed in the last post: "***Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ****, taṃ pathaviyā pathavattenaananubhūtaṃ, āpassa āpattena ananubhūtaṃ, tejassa tejattena ananubhūtaṃ, vāyassavāyattena ananubhūtaṃ, bhūtānaṃ bhūtattena ananubhūtaṃ, devānaṃ devattenaananubhūtaṃ, pajāpatissa pajāpatittena ananubhūtaṃ, brahmānaṃ brahmattenaananubhūtaṃ, ābhassarānaṃ ābhassarattena ananubhūtaṃ, subhakiṇhānaṃ subhakiṇhānaṃ subhakiṇhattena ananubhūtaṃ, vehapphalānaṃ vehapphalattena ananubhūtaṃ, abhibhussa abhibhuttena ananubhūtaṃ, sabbassa sabbattena ananubhūtaṃ..*"

Translated: "*Viññāṇa* is unseen, infinite, and leads to the rebirth process for all. With *viññāṇa* (defiled consciousness), one cannot comprehend the real nature of *pathavi*, *āpo, tejo, vāyo, bhūta, deva, pajapti brahma, abhassara brahma, subhakinha brahma, vehapphala brahma*, etc., i.e., everything in this world (*sabba*)."

- See, "Bhūta and Yathābhūta – What Do They Really Mean."

Then, the Buddha concluded: "Thus Brahmā, I am not merely on an exact equality with you as regards super-knowledge; I am indeed higher in knowledge."

Then the Brahma challenged the Buddha, saying that he is going to disappear and If the Buddha is indeed of higher knowledge, try to find him. But he was unable to hide from the Buddha.

Then the Buddha said, "'Now I am vanishing from you, *Brahmā*. Find me if you can." Of course, the Brahma was unable to find the Buddha and thus had to concede defeat.

That is the essence of that long *sutta*, that is relevant for this discussion.

There Is No Refuge In Any of The Thirty One Realms

13. We have to realize that indeed the *Mahā Brahmā* has a very long lifetime of a quarter of the age of our universe (several billion years).

- Furthermore, since *Brahmā* do not have solid bodies like ours, they are not subject to diseases or bodily pains. So, they live a peaceful life until the end of their *bhava*. So it is no surprise that the Baka *Brahma* thought that he had overcome all suffering by getting rid of the human body. See the post on "Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya" for details on bodies of beings in other realms.
- Of course, Brahmā can still have future births in the *apāyā*. Unless they had attained at least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna,* they have only suppressed *kāma rāga,* and have not removed any of the ten *saṃyojana*.
- That should give us a lot to think about our suffering-causing body that lasts only about 100 years! There is absolutely nothing to be proud of one's physical body or to think that it is worthwhile to take this foul body to be "mine." That is one way to get rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi.*

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- **The question is not whether there is a "self" or not. It is wise to think that it is worthwhile to have the perception of a "self"? The wrong perception of a "self" only leads to immoral actions and thus suffering in future lives.**

14. I hope this post — together with the other posts in this subsection — makes it clear what *viññāṇa* is, and what is meant by the famous verse, "*viññāṇaṁ anidassanaṁ anantaṁ sabbato pabhaṁ*."

- Please make any comments/suggestions/criticisms in the discussion forum, so that everyone can benefit from the discussion.

4.9.4 Sakkāya Diṭṭhi

August 30, 2018

Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?

4.9.4.1 Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?

August 30, 2018

You may want to read the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" first to have the proper background.

1. Let us take a step back and systematically see what happens when we "see" a tree for example. Please don't just read through, but stop and think about each point. There is a lot of information condensed in this post (true for most posts, but especially this one).

- Light reflected off of the tree falls on our eyes and an image of the tree is formed in the back of the eye. That is a really small image that falls on the retina, but we "see" its numerous leaves, individual flowers, fruits in great detail. How is that possible?
- Anyway, that image is transmitted to the brain in terms of a chemical signal. How does the brain "see" the tree?
- Someone who has thought a lot about this issue is Jeff Hawkins, who is actively engaged in artificial intelligence. In his book, "On Intelligence", he discusses current scientific knowledge on vision and other sense inputs.

2. Starting on p. 55 of his book, Hawkins discusses how the image that falls on the back of the eye is transmitted to the brain: "Visual information from the outside world is sent to your brain via a million fibers in your optic nerve...",

- "You can visualize these inputs as a bundle of electrical wires or a bundle of optical fibers..." and "The inputs to the brain are like those fibers, but they are called axons, and they carry neural signals called 'action potentials' or 'spikes', which are partly chemical and partly electrical...."
- As discussed there, not only visual signals but all sense inputs (sounds, taste, smell, and body touch) to the brain are of the same type. You hear sound, see light, and feel pressure, **but inside your brain there isn't any fundamental difference between these different types of neural signals**. An action potential is an action potential.
- Scientists have not been able to figure out how the brain distinguishes those different types of signals. Moreover, they have no idea how the mind "sees light" or an image of that tree.

3. To quote more from that book: There is no light inside your head. It is dark in there. There is no sound entering your brain either; it is quiet inside. In fact, the brain is the only part of your body that has no senses itself. A surgeon could stick a finger into your brain and you would not feel it. All the information that enters your mind comes in as spatial and temporal patterns on the axons.

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- **So, it is a mystery how those chemical and electrical signals coming to the brain are sensed as vision, sound, taste, smell, and body touch by the mind.**
- Scientists are trying to solve this puzzle by looking for answers in the brain. They have come to the end of the line here.
- Now let us see how the Buddha described these processes.

4. **Actual "seeing" (and hearing, smelling, etc) goes on at the *hadaya vatthu* located in the *gandhabbā* or the mental body.** The *gandhabbā* is like a very fine mesh overlapping the physical body, with the *hadaya vatthu* located close to the physical heart. That is what gives life to the physical body.

- At the death of the physical body that fine *gandhabbā* is pulled off the physical body like a ghost. It is so fine that we cannot see it. But we all know that a body can be alive one second and then become totally inert (like a piece of wood) at death.
- Of course, when the *gandhabbā* comes out **temporarily (as in the case of those who can do astral travel or in the case of out-of-body experiences)**, it is still "attached" to the physical body and keeps the physical body alive. In "astral travel" terminology, it is said that the mental body is attached to the physical body via an invisible "silver cord."
- Such cases are discussed in, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

5. Another key point is that in the fine body of the *gandhabbā*, there are five "*pasāda rūpa*" located around the *hadaya vatthu*: *cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā,* and *kāya*, that correspond to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touch. **Here is the "missing part" of the puzzle that the scientists will never be able to solve just by dealing with the brain:**

- The brain is like a very sophisticated computer that analyzes those chemical and electrical signal discussed above in #2 and #3.
- **Those chemical and electrical signals (which come in packets of about 10 millisecond duration per scientists) are converted to electromagnetic (EM) waves and are transmitted through air to the *pasāda rūpa* located around the *hadaya vatthu*.**
- This is what the Buddha taught 2000 years ago and until scientists make this connection, they will not be able to proceed too far from where they are now.

6. Of course, the Buddha did not explain it in terms of EM waves. These waves are called "*kirana*" in Pāli or Sinhala.

- This is explained in the post, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises" and other posts in the following subsection: "Citta and Cetasika."
- It will take a real effort to understand the details, but it will be worthwhile the effort for those who are serious about learning *Abhidhamma*. Otherwise, just try to get the basic idea.

7. As an example, let us take the case of seeing a tree. A continuous series of "data packets" (chemical and electrical signals per #3, #4 above) that come to the brain from the eyes are processed by the brain and are converted to EM waves (*kirana*).

- Those waves then travel to the *cakkhu pasāda* that is located close to the *hadaya vatthu.* These waves from the brain to the heart area of the body travel in air much faster than those chemical/electrical signals traveling from the eyes to the brain via axons.

8. When such an EM wave (*kirana*) packet arrives at the *cakkhu pasāda*, it hits the *hadaya vatthu* and "transfers" that visual information about the tree to the mind. **The mind is actually born momentarily during this transition for the duration of that signal.**

- This is what is meant by, "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*." Here *cakkhu* is the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* **(not the physical eye)** and *rūpa* (in "*rupeca*") **is the signal from the brain**

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that carries the visual signal about the tree (not the actual tree!). [***uppajjati*** : [u + pad + ya] to be born; **arises**.]

9. This is CRITICALLY important to realize. What meant by a "*rūpa*" is NOT the same as what our visual object is. We DO NOT see a man, woman, or a tree. What comes to the mind is a "*rūpa* signal" that is generated by the brain. That signal has all the INFORMATION about that visual object.

- The reception of the visual signal (***rūpa***) by the *cakkhu pasāda* (***cakkhu***) happens at the very moment that the *cakkhu pasāda* transfers that signal to the *hadaya vatthu* by "hitting it." **And at that very moment, *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises**: "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*."

10. These are critical points to understand, even if all the details are not understood. The visual consciousness arises **for a brief moment** when that information about the visual object is transferred to the mind.

- However, within that split second, not only the object (the tree in this case) is recognized, but also *vedanā*, *saññā* (recognition), and other mental factors also arise.
- For example, if we have seen that tree in the past, the *mansikāra cetasika* is able to feed that information too, so we will know the name of the tree instantly; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

11. In another example, let us think about what happens when we tap a glass with a spoon. Of course, we will hear the tapping sound.

- Now, where did that sound come from" Was it in the glass? No. Was the sound in the spoon? No.
- The sound was emitted as a result of the spoon hitting the glass. If the spoon did not hit a glass, there would not be a tapping sound.
- In the same way, unless a "*rūpa*" or an image taken in by the eyes came to *cakkhu pasāda* and made it hit the *hadaya vatthu*, there would not be a "seeing event" or a *cakkhu viññāṇa*.

12. **So, there is no "entity" called the mind.** The mind arises when we receive sense inputs via the five physical senses as described above.

- What we loosely call the "mind" is actually the *viññāṇakkhandha* that arises in a billionth of a second, after going through a fast process of *citta, mano, manasan*, ..: "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- We can not only hear the tapping sound, but we can also see the glass and the spoon at the same time too. But those two events do not really happen "at exactly the same time."
- What comes to the mind is a series of sense inputs (via all five physical senses) in rapid succession. We just perceive it all to happen at the same time.

13. How this is possible is explained in the post, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises" and other posts in the following sub section: "Citta and Cetasika."

- As explained there, the process is similar to how a motion picture works. When making a movie, what is actually done is to take many many static pictures and then play them back at fast enough speed. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a certain "projection rate", it looks like real motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:

  WebLink: youtube: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion - TED-Ed

14. When we see the outside world, what happens is very similar to the above. At the end of the video it is stated that the "movie" we see is an illusion, **and as the Buddha explained, that holds for real life as well.** In real life when we see someone coming towards us, what we actually see is a series of "static pictures" or *citta* projected at a very fast rate in our minds, giving us the illusion of a "movie like experience."

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- The mind is very fast. The Buddha said that there is nothing in this world that is faster than the mind. So, this is why we feel that all types of sense inputs come to "one's mind" at the same time. **In reality, they are discrete snapshots, just like movie frames!**
- But just like we see a continuous movie (that is really a large number of individual picture frames), **we feel like we have a continuous mind.**

15. Now to the second issue on the mind. Why do each of us experience the outside world our own way, and have our own feelings and perceptions about a given sense input (love or anger when seeing the same person, for example)? That is why we feel like "I have **my own mind**."

- The key is to realize that our response to the external sense inputs is unique because we have our "own way" of perceiving and the evaluating those sense inputs based on the set of *gati* that we have.

16. As we discussed in the previous post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)," **our feelings as well as our initial responses reflect our personality or our *gati*.**

- There we also discussed why the types of sense input also plays an important role. So, our INITIAL response to an external sense input depends on BOTH; one's *gati* AND the types of sense input.
- That was an important post, so it may be beneficial to go over it again. In this series of posts, I am going to try to highlight some key features of Buddha Dhamma that will truly help to get rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. That is the key to the *sotāpanna* stage.

17. In other words, our "state of mind" depends on both our *gati* and the sense inputs that we are subjected to. Furthermore, we don't have "a fixed mind"; it can change very rapidly.

- If you think back, I am sure you can remember times where you felt like your mind was filled with greed; other times with love; yet another time with anger, …
- As one progresses on the Path, these extreme swings of "one's mind" will become less, and that is the key to *nirāmisa sukha* which eventually leads to *Nibbāna*.
- Each of us does not have a fixed mind. That means we don't generate "our own" *saññā, vedanā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa.* In other words, we do not have our own *saññākkhandha*, *vedanākkhandha*, *saṅkhārakkhandha*, and *viññāṇakkhandha*.
- Moreover, it is not fruitful to take any of them as "mine." That perception is part of *Sakkāya diṭṭhi.*

18. *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* can be stated as: "I am my body", "I am my *vedanā*," "I am my *saññā*," "I am my *saṅkhāra*," and "I am my *viññāna*." The last four can be lumped together to label as, "I am my mind." But a better way to remove *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* is to realize that: "All those entities are not worthwhile to be taken as mine."

- We tend to think automatically that "I have my own body" and "I have my own mind", and "it is fruitful to be taken them as mine."
- Let us first analyze the mind and see whether that statement is true. In the next post, we will address "I have my own body" and "it is fruitful to be taken as mine."
- In order to understand what the mind is, the Buddha analyzed **how the mind arises** step-by-step, by breaking down the process. That is why he called himself a "*Vibhajjavādi*"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Subha Sutta (MN 99)": "*Vibhajjavādo kho ahamettha, māṇava; nāhamettha ekaṃsavādo*.." or "Young man, I am a *Vibhajjavādi* (one who analyzes from many aspects by dividing a given process to parts), I do not hold a fixed view based on just one aspect."

In the next post, we will discuss why it is not fruitful to take one's body as "one's own." But it is important to know that the perception of "me" goes away only at the Arahant stage; see, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?."

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4.9.5 Nāmarūpa Formation

Dec 12, 2017

Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāṇa

4.9.5.1 Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Pariccheda Ñāṇa

December 12, 2017

1. *Nāmarūpa* can have few different meanings depending on the context, i.e., where it is used. But the most important meaning is associated with the "*nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*."

- When one has the *nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*, one understands how the mind is related to matter, i.e., how *viññāṇa* acts as the critical link between mind and matter.
- Here "*pari*" means "complete" or "comprehensive"; "*uccheda*" means to "cut off" or "eradicate." Thus *nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa,* means the knowledge or understanding how *nāmarūpa* via *kamma viññāṇa* at the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS).
- The two previous posts in this series provided more related information. This post wraps up that discussion; see, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means" and "Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter."

2. It is also important to note that *nāmarūpa* can be of several varieties:

- When written as two words — *nāma rūpa* — *nāma* refers to mental attributes and *rūpa* refers to matter. There, *nāma rūpa* refer to mind AND matter.
- **With *viññāṇa*, *nāma* COMBINES with *rūpa* and creates *nāmarūpa* — imprints for future rebirths** — which eventually lead to fully-formed living beings. This happens at the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step in PS.
- These are very fine *rūpa* which are below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage created by *viññāṇa*, and are **part of** *dhammā*. Thus *nāmarūpa* are distinct from the more dense *rūpa* that we experience with the five physical senses; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!."
- We also talk about *nāmarūpa* referring to visuals in our minds; these are also related to the fine *rūpa*. For example, an alcoholic will be visualizing scenes of a drinking party that he/she is planning to attend. That comes in *Pavutti* PS; see, "Akusala-Mūla Pavutti (or Pravurthi) Paṭicca Samuppāda."

3. Here, it is significant to note that in PS, it is the *"viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa"* step that separates the previous steps involving the mind to those involving *rūpa.* Now we have "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*," leading to internal *rūpa.*

- Then those *saḷāyatana* making contact (*phassa*) with with external *rūpa*: "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*."
- Note that *phassa* means contact of internal *rūpa* (*saḷāyatana*) with external *rūpa,* and giving rise to *vedanā*: *"phassa paccayā vedanā*." Now we are back to just *nāma* , i.e., *vedanā*.
- So, we can clearly see that *kamma viññāṇa* plays a key role in bridging *nāma* with *rūpa*.

4. *Kamma viññāṇa* with *kammic* energy are created in *javana citta.* That *kammic* energy may start small but can grow with repeated generation of *abhisaṅkhāra* and can grow to be a *kamma bīja* that can give rise to a new *bhava*. That *kamma bīja* then gives rise to a very fine mental body (*gandhabba*) which will provide the "seed" for the dense physical body.

- This happens at *"upādāna paccayā bhava"* step giving rise to a *gandhabba*, which is a very tiny *rūpa* which is really a "packet of energy."

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- Then at the *"bhava paccayā jāti"* step, *gandhabba* enters a womb and starts a new physical body.
- Just like a tiny seed can grow to a huge tree by taking in water and nutrients from the soil, an unimaginably small *gandhabba* gives rise to the heavy human body by taking in food. The only difference is that while a *gandhabba* or a human has a mind, a seed or a tree does not.

5. Our solid physical body starts with a *gandhabba* — smaller than the first cell made by the reunion of mother and father (zygote) — descending to a womb and taking hold of that zygote in the womb. We recall that the Buddha also called this event as "a *viññāṇa* descending to the womb"; see, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka," and below. From the posts in this series, now we know why the "*gandhabba* descending" can also be called "*viññāṇa* descending."

- The complex process of this single zygote growing into a adult human is discussed in, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."
- **Therefore, the "seed" to bring up this physical body of several hundred pounds (tens of kg), was the *kammic* energy created in the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* which gave rise to a *gandhabba* consisting of just a few *suddhaṭṭhaka*.**

6. This basic mechanism of how a *suddhaṭṭhaka* — the smallest unit of matter (billion times smaller than an atom in modern science) — is created with the mind was discussed in the post, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka" in the *Abhidhamma* section. But in this subsection on *nāmarūpa*, we are discussing it with a more simple, fundamental analysis that everyone can understand (if the fundamentals are grasped).

- Furthermore, those with *abhiññā* powers can intensify the *kammic* power in *javana citta* in *jhānā* (specifically in *jhāna samāpatti*), and create matter directly too. This enhancement can be compared to the difference between a regular lamp that puts out a bit of light, and a laser which puts of intense light that can cut through metal; see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."
- When we dive deeper into Buddha Dhamma we will be able to see that some phenomena that seem "supernatural" (like creating a flower using mind energy) are indeed possible. But that ability to create matter requires purifying the mind to very high levels.

7. The Buddha described how the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* (which is the same as the *gandhabba*) "descends" to the womb of the mother and starting the process in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Nidana Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya 15)" where he has the following exchange with Ven. Ānanda:

'*Viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpan'ti iti kho panetaṃ vuttaṃ, tadānanda, imināpetaṃ pariyāyena veditabbaṃ, yathā viññāṇapaccayā nāmarūpaṃ. Viññāṇañca hi, ānanda, mātukucchismiṃ na okkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ mātukucchismiṃ samuccissathā"ti? "No hetaṃ, bhante." "Viññāṇañca hi, ānanda, mātukucchismiṃ okkamitvā vokkamissatha, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ itthattāya abhinibbattissathā"ti? "No hetaṃ, bhante." "Viññāṇañca hi, ānanda, daharasseva sato vocchijjissatha kumārakassa vā kumārikāya vā, api nu kho nāmarūpaṃ vuddhiṃ virūḷhiṃ vepullaṃ āpajjissathā"ti? "No hetaṃ, bhante." "Tasmātihānanda, eseva hetu etaṃ nidānaṃ esa samudayo esa paccayo nāmarūpassa—yadidaṃ viññāṇaṃ.*

Here is the English translation:

"It was said: 'With consciousness as condition there is *nāmarūpa* (normally translated as **mentality-materiality; which in this case is the *gandhabba***).'

How that is so, Ānanda, should be understood in this way: If consciousness (*viññāṇañca*) were not to descend (*na okkamissatha*) into the mother's womb, would that *nāmarūpa* take shape in the womb?"

"Certainly not, venerable sir."

"If, after descending (*okkamitvā*) into the womb, consciousness were to depart (*vokkamissatha*), would that *nāmarūpa* be generated into this present state of being?"

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(**Note**: this happens in the case of a natural termination of pregnancy, where the *gandhabba* comes out of the womb on its own, because it is not a suitable match).

"Certainly not, venerable sir."

"If the consciousness of a young boy or girl (*kumārakassa vā kumārikāya vā*) were to be come out, would that *nāmarūpa* grow up, develop, and reach maturity?"

"Certainly not, venerable sir."

"Therefore, Ānanda, this is the cause, source, origin, and condition (*eseva hetu etaṃ nidānaṃ esa samudayo*) for *nāmarūpa*, namely, defiled consciousness (*yadidaṃ viññāṇaṃ*).

8. Therefore, it is quite clear that it is the *kammic* energy of the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* that "descends" to the womb and gives rise to the physical body. *gandhabba* is another term for *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* descending to the womb; it is also called "*manomaya kāya*."

- Sometimes the *gandhabba* in a human body can come out in a stressful situation; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." The Buddha compared a *gandhabba* (sometimes also called a *Tirokutta* or a *Tirokuddha*) coming out of a physical body to a sword being pulled out of the sheath that it is stored in.

9. The erroneous concept of a *paṭisandhi* taking place in a womb is nowhere to be found in the *Tipiṭaka*. Note that in the above verse in #7, the term *okkanti* is used to describes the descent of the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* to the womb, and the word "*paṭisandhi*" is not there. *Paṭisandhi* took place in the previous life, at the end of that *bhava* , see, "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

- Furthermore, if *paṭisandhi* took place in the womb, then a human *bhava* would last only until the death. Then, since human *bhava* is so rare (see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm"), all those rebirth stories cannot be accounted for (where children recall their previous human lives only several years before).
- The concept of a *gandhabba* is criticized by some saying that it is a Mahāyāna concept about an "*antarā bhava*." Of course there is no *antarā bhava*, i.e., there is no gap between two adjacent "*bhava*": *cuti* (end of one *bhava*) is followed by the grasping of the next *bhava* in the next thought moment, see, "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

10. A human *gandhabba* may be born with a human body many times before the *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* runs out and he/she is born in another existence (as a *deva*, animal, etc); see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- During that whole time, the human *gandhabba* lives moving from one body to another and spending the time "in between successive human bodies" in *para loka*; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."
- I keep repeating things, because these are important points. In case there are still questions, the "Search" box on top right is a good resource to find relevant posts. The Pure Dhamma – Sitemap is another good resource.
- You can also use the "Comments" box to send a comment or ask a question. I will be opening the discussion forum soon too.

11. This connection between mind and matter (*nāma* and *rūpa*) — combined via *viññāṇa* to create *nāmarūpa* — is what the Buddha meant when said that, "*mano pubbangamā dhammā*," i.e., "the mind is the precursor to all *dhamma*."

- When one understands that point one is said to have the "*nāmarūpa pariccheda ñāṇa*."

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- We have essentially all the major components in place now, and there may be some who can see the "whole picture" at least vaguely. But there are still more minor pieces that needs to be added to make the picture much clearer.
- However, if a key piece cannot be understood, the picture may not become clear. Please do not hesitate to comment if you have questions. Even if it is clear to me, I may not be conveying it in a optimum way, and I can make it better with your input.

12. I must emphasize that one could be a *Sotāpanna* and may not even know about these details; I do not want to discourage those who are not really into *Abhidhamma*.

- What is needed for the *Sotāpanna* stage is a grasp of *Tilakkhaṇa*, the *anicca* nature of this world.
- The details discussed in this subsection are to dispel any doubts about the consistency of Buddha Dhamma, and to illustrate that it can explain mind phenomena to profoundly deep levels. Furthermore, it can give confidence to those who have any remaining doubts about the validity of key concepts in Buddha Dhamma (laws of *kamma*, rebirth, *gandhabba*, etc).

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5.1 Dhamma and Science – Introduction

Revised January 22, 2019; August 22, 2019; February 26, 2020

1. Whether it is a scientist or a Buddha, each is "discovering" the way nature works, i.e., reveal to the world what the fundamental laws of nature are. To appreciate what a Buddha does in comparison to a scientist, contemplate the following. The scientific knowledge we have today is the CUMULATIVE effort of thousands of scientists, each one taking the knowledge-base a little further. As Newton said, "I was fortunate to stand on the shoulders of giants to see further."

- Not all scientists make similar contributions. Galileo, Newton, and Einstein made "giant leaps" in comparison to the smaller steps taken by other scientists.
- Now with cumulative effort over many hundreds of years, science has made significant advances concerning understanding some of the fundamental laws relevant to INERT MATTER.
- On the other hand, there is virtually no progress in understanding how the mind works; see, "Cosciousness – A Dhamma Perspective."

2. As I build up this site, anyone will be able to see that Buddha Dhamma is the ultimate Grand Unified Theory. It explains the behavior of inert matter and living beings that we can see. And it also describes the existence of an infinite number of worlds with living beings in 29 other realms (other than the human and animal realms that we cannot see). See, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- Buddha Dhamma is not a religion in the sense of providing salvation. The Buddha was not a God, a prophet, or a messenger. He was a human being who purified his mind to perfection so that he could see the whole of existence.
- The Buddha was the greatest scientist who investigated the problem of existence and found a complete solution. We all need to find our salvation by following the Path that he prescribed to purify our minds.

3. Newton could not have discovered the laws of gravity if it were not for the efforts of scientists like Brahe and Copernicus. Similarly, Einstein could not have discovered relativity without the knowledge passed down by other scientists. Quantum mechanics would not have been possible without the efforts of multiple scientists who moved forward with the evidence gathered by hundreds of other scientists.

- The Buddha, in comparison, discovered the complete set of laws about the WHOLE EXISTENCE by his efforts. That includes not only the way inert matter behaves on this Earth but all of existence in the 31 realms that science is not even aware of). That includes the way inert matter behaves in all 31 realms AND the minds of beings in those 31 realms.
- I recently proposed an explanation for the existing controversy over the "non-locality" issue in quantum mechanics. Everything in this universe inter-connected (or entangled) at a deep level; "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

4. We could say that the minds of the caliber of Newton and Einstein appear roughly every 100 years. The mind of a Buddha is infinitely more advanced and appears once in many billions of years if beings are lucky. Normally, the gaps are much more wider.

- There have been four Buddhas in this *Mahā kappa*, but the last Buddha before them was born 30 *Mahā Kappas* ago. Thus, there was a gap of 30 *Mahā Kappas* (roughly a trillion years) without a Buddha appearing in this world.
- The Buddhas use a method that is different from the "scientific method" used by scientists. Instead of conducting experiments on inert matter, they conduct mind experiments. Answers to ultimate questions on the existence of living beings who have complex minds can be found only by PURIFYING a human mind to the ultimate level. That is what a Buddha does.

5. I will try to provide at least some details of the complex world view that was provided by the Buddha on this website. Buddha Dhamma has been been muddled and distorted within the past 2500 years.

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- "Our world" is much more complicated than what is grasped by our senses; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- And our lives do not end with this one; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Those two facts constitute the basis of the true nature of existence. They need to be thought about carefully. One cannot comprehend the message of the Buddha until one at least has some idea about this "big picture."

Now let us examine one case where it took 2500 years for science to come to be consistent with one part of Buddha Dhamma's world view.

It Took 2500 Years…

Here is a picture of our Milky Way galaxy. We can see only a couple of thousand stars. But there are hundreds of BILLIONS of stars in our galaxy, and there are about an equal number of GALAXIES in our universe. Thus for each star in our galaxy, there is a whole galaxy out there. It is truly mind-boggling.

Milky Way

1. Even a few hundred years ago, even scientists believed our Earth was at the center of the universe: WebLink: WIKI: Geocentric model

- Therefore, Buddha's view of the universe as consisting of innumerable "world-systems" was not looked at favorably even a few hundred years ago.

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- Of course, that has changed now. Buddha's statement that "there is no discernible beginning to life" is also becoming vindicated with each new scientific discovery.

2. In Buddha Dhamma, there is no First Cause (no Creator): Life always existed, and will always exist. Each living being has gone through innumerable birth-rebirth processes without a conceivable beginning. However, everything in the "world around us" is impermanent, including our universe (a "major world system" in Buddha Dhamma).

- Everything is born, has a transient existence, and finally decays. And this includes our universe as well. Star (and associated planetary systems), like everything else, come to existence and eventually fade away.

3. if there is no beginning to life, then where did life exist before the "big bang," i.e., before our universe came into existence? (actually, life is believed to have evolved on Earth very much later).

- People who lived even a hundred years ago had to take Buddha's words on this point solely on faith. But we are lucky to be assured by the fact that modern science give us some rather persuasive reasons to believe that life existed forever. Let us look at the emerging evidence.

4. Even as recently as at the beginning of the 1900s, Lord Kelvin (one of the top scientists of the day), estimated that the age of the Sun was < 40 million years. He estimated that time based on gravitational contraction (scientists did not know about nuclear fusion at the time). Our knowledge of the universe was also pretty much limited to the Solar system. So, this meant the age of our "known universe" was very short, and thus the Buddha's teachings on a beginning-less *saṃsāra* seemed like a myth.

- Vindication of the Buddha's teachings started at the beginning of the 1900s with the advent of quantum mechanics and relativity. Discovery of radioactivity in 1898 by Becquerel and Einstein's explanation of the photoelectric effect in 1905 led to the quantum theory of atomic structure. That, in turn, led to the correct picture of nuclear fusion as the source of solar energy.
- So, by 1956, the age of the solar system was known to be > 4 billion years, and the age of the universe was estimated to be around 14 billion years. Even billions of years are hardly the same as "beginning-less time"!

5. By 1929, Edwin Hubble proved that the distant galaxies were moving away from each other. And that our galaxy is but just one of many galaxies. That was a vast understatement since now we know that there are 400 billion galaxies in our observable universe!

- The currently accepted theory on the "big bang" is the inflationary theory of Alan Guth. See, "The Inflationary Universe" by Alan Guth, 1997).
- However, there are a minority of scientists who do not believe in the "Big Bang." They have proposed alternate theories; see, "Endless Universe" by Paul J. Steinhardt and Neil Turok (2007). In this view, universes are destroyed and reborn.

6. Buddha's world view does not have a "Big Bang" beginning either. Life always existed, and it will always exist in the future.

- I will start discussing some aspects of "the origins" later, when I have enough background material at the web site.
- Some key concepts discussed in the post, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

7. By the way, there are several theories currently being explored in quantum mechanics that are related to cosmology. There is one theory that requires a universe being existing for each possible event! So, there may be an infinite number of parallel universes. For example, see "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011). In all these theories, there are multiple universes always exist.

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- In any case, the Buddha, of course, did not say which of these theories is correct. He just said life always existed, and it always will. But he did say that "star systems" — like our Solar system — come into being, survive for long times, and destroyed at the end.
- And that process repeats over and over!

8. More information at, "Dhamma and Science" and "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

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5.2 Origin of Life

Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin

Human Life – A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)

Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya"

Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception replaces (11Nov2018) "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Contraception?"

Cloning and Gandhabba

Living Cell – How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?

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5.2.1 Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin

July 10, 2019

Why Is This Issue Important?

1. As I explained in my previous post, we CREATE OUR OWN future lives, as described by *Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda*; "Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)."

- *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." As long as there is *avijjā* (no comprehension of the Four Noble Truths), one is bound to do (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra* — and generate *kamma* — there will be *bhava* and *jāti* (i.e., rebirth). That cycle will continue forever (just as it had no beginning).
- All types of births (*jāti*) lead to suffering, without exception.
- **This cycle ends ONLY WHEN one's *avijjā* is removed via comprehension of the real nature of this world of 31 realms and one voluntarily gives craving (*taṇhā*) for existence in this world of 31 realms.** That is the attainment of *Nibbāna* or *Arahanthood*.
- This understanding is the FOUNDATION of Buddha Dhamma.

2. Therefore, the question, "What is the origin of life?" is very much relevant to UNDERSTANDING Buddha Dhamma.

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- Most scientists believe that our universe came to existence only about 14 billion years ago with the "Big Bang."
- Furthermore, current scientific theories say that life first formed in a primitive state (single-cell entities) and evolved to more complex life forms. And that humans came into existence less than five hundred thousand years ago.
- Most scientists do not agree with the "Creation hypothesis" that is the foundation of Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) simply because it is not compatible with the Principle of Causality. It says nothing can come to existence without a cause(s). If a Creator created life, how did that Creator come into existence?
- The compatibility of a "Big Bang" origin with causality is also not clear. Scientists are exploring possibilities like the "multiverse theory", but those are still speculative.
- **However, our focus in this series of posts is not the actual origin of the universe, but the origin of life on Earth.**

Buddha's Explanation

3. According to the Buddha, life has no traceable beginning. This is certainly compatible with causality.

- For example, in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Gaddulabaddha Sutta (SN 22.99)": "*Anamataggoyaṃ, bhikkhave, saṃsāro*" means **"*bhikkhus*, there is no discernible beginning to the rebirth process."** It also describes how living beings are bound to *saṃsāra*, because they do not realize the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature, which we recently discussed: "Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhana."
- The above verse appears in all *suttā* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Saṃyutta (SN 15.1 ~ 15.20)" of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, where each *sutta* gives a simile to illustrate how long each of us has been in this rebirth process and **how much suffering we have endured.**
- **However, it must be noted that Buddha's message is NOT a depressing one.**
- Whether there is a Buddha in the world or not, this suffering exists. This suffering is real but there is a way to overcome that suffering.
- Without a Buddha, we will not even be aware of this hidden suffering. **Furthermore, a Buddha FOUND A WAY (Noble Eightfold Path) to stop this perpetual suffering. That is the uplifting message.**

4. As many of you may have observed, learning deeper aspects of Buddha Dhamma is not easy. It requires one to spend a considerable time learning and then contemplating.

- Without an understanding of how long the *sansāric* journey is and how much suffering is encountered in most births, it is difficult to generate the MOTIVATION to study Buddha Dhamma. Most people turn to Buddha Dhamma only when they come down with a harsh suffering, seeking relief. But the best time to learn is when one is healthy with a sharp mind, and I hope I can motivate those people too with this series.
- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Upanisa Sutta (SN 12.23)," the Buddha discussed the proximate causes/conditions (*upanisa*) for various factors leading to *Nibbāna*. Understanding how various births (*jāti*) arise and how ALL those births give rise to *dukkha* (suffering) is the key.
- That understanding cannot be attained until one can clearly see that there has not been a BEGINNING to this rebirth process, and we all have suffered so much in each and every birth. Regarding the perpetual suffering, I will also discuss the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pathama Niraya Sagga Sutta (AN 10.211)" in the future. It explains the causes of rebirth in good and bad realms, and why most births are in bad realms.

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5. Life has always existed, but planetary systems (like our Solar system) are destroyed periodically and re-formed over long times.

- This is the only explanation that is consistent with the Principle of Causality: There is no "first beginning to life." Life always existed, and it evolves according to the Principle of Causality, which is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*; see my previous post: "Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)."
- If we go by the Principle of Causality (which is THE basis of modern science), there CANNOT be an origin of life, unless life can start with inert matter.
- **What the video below explains is that it is NOT POSSIBLE to create EVEN A SINGLE CELL (basic building block of life) in the laboratory starting with inter matter.** If it cannot be created in a laboratory under controlled conditions, it WILL NOT be possible for life to arise in a natural process starting with inert matter.

Evolutionists Versus Creationists

6. Of course, there is an ongoing debate between the evolutionists and creationists. **Evolutionists** believe that life evolved into complex entities like humans over billions of years. Furthermore, they believe that even the first cell (which is the building block of all life forms) evolved in the early Earth starting with inert molecules. **Creationists**, on the other hand, believe that a Creator God created life.

- I am providing a few references at the end of the post for both sides.
- It is to be noted that most evolutionists do not discuss the origin of a cell that much. They mainly focus on the "evolution of the species" STARTING WITH a fully functioning cell and progressing into more complex species with more and more cells of complex structure. **Evolutionists are just speculating that a cell evolved in the primitive Earth due to random events.** For example, Dr. Richard Dawkins writes in the reference given below, "How long would we have to wait before random chemical events on a planet, random thermal jostling of atoms and molecules, resulted in a self-replicating molecule? Chemists don't know the answer to this question" (p. 144).
- On the other hand, creationists focus on the issue of why it is not possible to "create a cell" via evolution. Many of them agree that complex life possibly evolved starting with simpler life forms.
- I agree with the creationists that it is not possible for a cell to come to existence "starting with inert molecules" via random events. You can decide for yourself based on the videos below (and the references if you are really interested). Of course, we can discuss at the discussion forum.

7. The video below is by a scientist (Dr. James Tour) who has a different viewpoint than most other scientists. He provides solid evidence that life could not have evolved starting with inert matter. It is too complex to have been evolved by natural processes.

- At the end of the video, Dr. Tour comes to the conclusion that since life is too complex to evolve, it must have been CREATED by a Creator God. That is the other extreme view.
- According to Buddha Dhamma, life did not evolve from inert matter, nor it was created by a Creator God. Life always existed and it just takes different forms when a given "lifestream" is reborn a human, animal, *deva*, etc. We all have been born in most of the 31 realms in our deep past! When the conditions on Earth became suitable cells came to existence via *kammic* energy.

Mind Is the Creator of (New Forms of) Life! No Beginning to Life

8. Of course, it is very likely that Dr. Tour is not aware of the extensive and scientific explanation by the Buddha in the *Aggañña sutta*: Life has ALWAYS existed. A given lifestream (you or I) have existed without a traceable beginning.

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- I will not be able to discuss that complex process any time soon. But I have discussed the main points in the *Aggañña sutta* in the post:"Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
- It is just that we ourselves CREATE OUR OWN future lives, as described via *Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda* (which I discussed in my previous post).

9. A cell is the building block of life. Setting aside a complex life form like a human (made of trillions of different types of cells), science WILL NOT be able to create even a single cell. In fact, even in any living being, individual cells are not formed. Instead, an existing cell divides to make two cells, and that is how more and more living cells come into existence!

- **Each of our bodies started with just a single cell (zygote), and it became alive only when a gandhabba (or patisandhi vinnana) "descended to the womb" and merged with that single cell**. It is cell division that led to the current physical body with trillions of cells; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- No scientist has been able to CREATE even a primitive single cell. In cloning experiments, they deal only with existing cells; see, "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- As explained by Dr. Tour, a living cell is very complex and is like a working factory. He does a good job in his explanations.

  WebLink: youtube: James Tour: The Mystery of the Origin of Life

Here is an introductory video on a living cell:

WebLink: youtube: Introduction to Cells: The Grand Cell Tour

REFERENCES

For evolution:

Richard Dawkins, "The Blind Watchmaker: Why the Evidence of Evolution Reveals a Universe without Design" (2015).

Jerry A. Coyne, "Why Evolution is True" (2010).

(Note that both these and other books/research papers do not provide ANY evidence for the evolution of a cell)

For creation:

Stephen Meyer, "Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design" (2010).

Richard Behe, "Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution" (2006).

Both evolution and creation not adequate:

Thomas Nagel, "Mind & Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False" (2012).

- Professor Nagel (who is a philosopher) obviously has had no exposure to Buddha Dhamma. But I am very much impressed that he came to the conclusion that mind MUST play a central role. I will write more on that in future posts.

5.2.2 Human Life – A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)

July 15, 2019; revised July 16, 2019

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Current Scientific Understanding of a Human Birth

1. Of course, science assumes that life is only associated with a physical body and when the physical body dies, that is the end of the story. This is what we called "*uccheda diṭṭhi*" in the post, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views." Here is a summary of the current scientific understanding of the beginning of a human life.

- During the mother's menstrual cycle, one **egg (ovum)** is usually released from one of the ovaries and is swept into the funnel-shaped end of one of the fallopian tubes.
- After intercourse with the father, If a **sperm** penetrates the egg there, fertilization results and the **fertilized egg (zygote)** moves down the fallopian tube and ends up in the uterus. This zygote divides into two cells, those two to four cells, etc.
- This collection of cells enters the uterus in 3 to 5 days. In the uterus, the cells continue to divide, becoming a ball of cells called a **blastocyst**. Inside the uterus, the blastocyst implants in the wall of the uterus, where it develops into an **embryo** attached to a placenta and surrounded by fluid-filled membranes; see, WebLink: merckmanuals.com: Stages of Development of the Fetus

2. This cell division is what causes that baby to grow (first inside the womb and then outside the womb) to become a full-grown human with trillions of cells. **It is that first cell (which cannot even be seen with the naked eye) that eventually multiplied to a mass of trillion of cells in a grown human!**

- However, there is much confusion about WHEN that zygote becomes alive, i.e., when it can be called "a human." This "time of conception" varies widely based on personal and religious beliefs.
- Some people believe life starts at the moment of the merger of the egg and sperm (to form the zygote). At the other end, some say the actual birth of the baby (i.e., coming out of the womb) is the start of the human life! Some others define the life to start when the embryo's heart starts beating.
- This confusion goes away when one understands the complete process described by the Buddha.

Buddhist Description of a Human Life – *Bhava* and *Jāti*

One needs to understand the concepts of ***bhava***, ***okkanti***, and ***jāti*** in order to understand how a human being is conceived in the womb (conception) and is born 9 months later.

3. According to the *suttā* as well as *Abhidhamma* in the *Tipiṭaka*, **a new human existence (*bhava*)** does not start in a womb. It starts at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment when the previous *bhava* comes to an end. For example, if a *deva* dies and becomes a human, a human *gandhabba* (fine mental body) will be formed at the time of death of that *deva*; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- A human *bhava* can last thousands of years. On the other hand, a physical human body lasts only about 100 years. In between successive births with "human bodies", the *gandhabba* (mental body) lives in what is called "*para loka*." The *para loka* co-exists with our human *loka*, but we cannot see those fine mental bodies of *gandhabbas;* see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- It must be noted that all living beings have a mental body and it is called "*manomaya kāya*." *Gandhabba* is a special case of a *manomaya kāya*; see #12 below.
- That human *gandhabba* will have to wait until a suitable womb becomes available. By "suitable" it means that the *gati* (loosely related to character/habits) of the *gandhabba* have to match those of the parents, especially the mother. *Gati* is an important concept in Buddha Dhamma that has been ignored for a long time; do a search for "*gati*" on the top right search box to find about "*gati*." A starting post is, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- Anytime after the egg and sperm are merged to form the zygote, a "matching *gandhabba*" can descend to the womb. Now a new human life starts with a mental body and the seed for a physical body (zygote).

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4. Therefore, the time of conception is very precise in Buddha Dhamma: It happens at the time when the lifeless zygote becomes "alive" with the merging of the *gandhabba*. That is the time of conception and it happens very early, normally within a day after intercourse.

- In *suttā*, this is called "***okkanthi***" (a *gandhabba* or a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* descending to a womb); see, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka." When the baby is born that is ***jāti.***
- The moral issues involving contraception and abortions are discussed in the post, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

5. What happens in a womb (when an egg is fertilized with a sperm) is just to provide the "material basis" (zygote or the "first cell") for the *gandhabba* to start a new "human being" that will eventually grow to become an adult with trillions of cells.

- The "blueprint" for that physical body (i.e., the *gandhabba*) was created at the dying moment in the previous life. The *gandhabba* brings his/her own *gati* as well as a set of *kamma vipāka* that would come into play during the existence of that human body.
- However, the physical body will also take into account the features of the mother and father via that zygote; see, #1 above.
- Therefore, the new baby will have a complex mixture of physical and mental characteristics of all three.
- All this is discussed in more detail in several posts, including "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body", and a more technical description in "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

Connection to *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*

6. I will take this opportunity to point out that is it only series of events that lead to a "new human being." **That *gandhabba* which led to a new life arose due to a "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*," which is nothing other than a "packet of *kammic* energy" created in a previous life. Therefore, it was NOT an existing "living being" that "became the new human being."**

- This is why the Buddha said there is no "self" traveling from life-to-life. Any living being just CREATES energy (*kammic* energy in terms of a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*) to start a new "life form."
- However, there is a "continuity of life" that was CAUSED in a previous life (when a strong *kamma* was done and this *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* was created). **Therefore, it is also not correct to say that a new life arises without a previous life making causes for it.** There is a causal connection between adjacent lives.
- If one can grasp this key point, that will help to remove *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (which is the key to the *Sotāpanna* stage).

7. There is no NEW living being and there has not been a FIXED living being (i.e., a "soul" or an "*atma*") either. Life just moves from one existence to another based on what types of *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* have been created in the past!

- For example, one may be born many times with a human body while in the "human *bhava*," but when the energy for that "human *bhava*" runs out, that life-stream gets hold of a new *bhava* (as a *brahma*, *deva*, animal, etc) which is the strongest *paṭisandhi viññāṇa,* i.e., the strongest *kamma* (good or bad) done in the past.
- If one is able to follow that "chain of past lives", one will go through billions of past lives per minute, but will never be able to find a "beginning" life!
- According to the Buddha, life has no traceable beginning. "WebLink: suttacentral: Gaddulabaddha Sutta (SN 22.99)" is about how long the rebirth process. At the very beginning of the *sutta*: "*Anamataggoyaṃ, bhikkhave, saṃsāro*" means **"*bhikkhus*, there is no discernible beginning to**

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the rebirth process." This verse is in many *suttā* including all the *suttā* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Saṃyutta."

A Mental Base (*Gandhabba*) and a Material Base (Cell)

8. **A human life requires two basic components: a mental body (*gandhabba*/*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*) and a physical body (consisting of cells).**

- A mental body or *gandhabba* (in different forms) has existed forever with any existing life-form, as explained in #6 and #7 above.
- The material body starts with a single cell created by the union of mother and father; that single cell (zygote) multiplies over time and the body of an adult has trillions of cells.

9. As I pointed out towards the end of the previous post, a cell is the basic building block of a live physical body. All living things (sentient beings and plants) are made of cells.

- **Each of these cells comes into existence from pre-existing cells! No new cells are produced individually.** This is a very important point.
- However, the first cells that appeared in the Earth were created by *kammic* energy (in *javana cittā*); I will discuss this below.
- **Therefore, both mental and physical components of a human life have origins in the MIND.**

10. Of course, there are many scientists today with the view that a "first cell" was created solely with inert matter early in Earth's history, within a billion years of the formation of the Earth.

- This "first formation time" comes just from archeological studies. As new studies find fossilized cells going back to earlier rocks, the time it took to form the "first cell" has now been pushed back within 300 million years of the formation of the Earth!
- However, living is cell is too complex to be formed via random combinations of inert molecules no matter how long a time is given. It not just forming complex molecules of DNA, **but those DNA strands have a built-in program for life**, just like a computer program.
- Random re-arrangement of inert molecules CANNOT lead to the formation of a "programmed cell." More on that in the next post.

All Life on Earth is Made of Cells

11. All life that we see (whether sentient or not, i.e., whether have a mind or not) are made of cells. To be more precise, human and animal bodies — and plants — are made of cells.

- Some of them (plants) are not conscious, i.e., they do not have a mind.
- On the other hand, humans and animals are also made of cells, but they have a mind too.

12. So, we must realize that being alive and being conscious are two different things. Plants are alive but they cannot think: plant cells just mechanically perform "pre-programmed" functions. On the other hand, humans and animals are also made up of cells, but there is an additional entity associated with them: ***gandhabba* or the mental body!**

- (It must be noted that all living beings have a mental body, and it is called ***manomaya kāya***. A *manomaya kāya* of a human or an animal is called a *gandhabba* because it can inhale aroma — *gandhabba* comes from "*gandha*" + "*abba*" or "taking in aroma or scents" –, and become dense; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)").
- It is amazing to see that even plant cells are very active, buzzing with activity. All cells are programmed for various functions. Of course, different types of cells are programmed for carrying out different tasks.

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This is an interesting topic that we do not want to get too much involved in, because that can be a real distraction to the main task of learning Dhamma and following the Noble Eightfold Path.

- However, having at least a rough idea about the complexities of life can be a motivation to learn more about Buddha Dhamma.

Complex Structure of a Cell

13. Here are two videos that explain the current status of understanding of cells. I will get to more relevant aspects in the next post.

WebLink: youtube: Organelles of the Cell (updated)

14. Energy for ALL cells come from Solar energy. Plant cells first convert Solar energy to forms of energy that can be used by animal cells. Therefore, plant cells play a major role in sustaining human and animal life!

WebLink: youtube: Cells: Structure and Function

5.2.3 Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya"

July 19, 2019; revised September 8, 2019

Introduction

1. There are words in Pāli that can have similar meanings. But one word may be better than another word in a particular situation. That is also true in English or any other language.

- In Buddha Dhamma, several Pāli words are used in different contexts regarding the "mental body." They are *manomaya kāya, kammaja kāya*, *gandhabba,* and *paṭisandhi viññāṇa.* I will try to make things a bit clear in this post.
- We need to keep in mind that the mind is very complex, and living beings in different realms have different types of "mental bodies." It is good to have a basic idea of these differences.

2. Most important here is to realize that these "mental bodies" are very different from the "physical bodies" we see in humans and animals.

- In particular, a *brahma* does not have a physical body at all. Then how can a *Brahma* see and hear without physical eyes and ears, and a brain to process those signals? These are questions that naturally arise in our minds. That is because we are not used to the concept of a "living being" without a solid body.
- The following discussion lays out a simple picture (with a few omissions to keep it more uncomplicated).

Mental Body and Physical Body

3. All living beings have a "mental body" ("*manomaya kāya*"). Living beings in some realms also have a "physical body" (*āhāraja kāya*).

- So, the very first thing we need to realize is that such a "*kāya*" is not the same as a "physical body" that we are used to, weighing tens of kilograms or hundreds of pounds. **The Pāli word "*kāya*" means a collection.** Even in English "body" is sometimes implies a collection of parts. Some examples are, a "body of evidence" or "a body of water." [***kāya*** : (m.), a heap; a collection; the body.]
- **"*Manomaya*" means "made by the mind."** Therefore, a *manomaya kāya* is a collection of very fine parts (*hadaya vatthu* and several *pasāda rūpa*) that are necessary for any living being. A *manomaya*

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kāya arises out of *kammic* energy created in our thoughts (*citta*). *Abhidhamma* is even more specific and says that our *javana citta* generates this energy.

- **"*Kammaja kāya*" is the primary component of the *manomaya kāya*.** This is because it is the first ***kāya*** "created by *kammic* energy."

4. Now we can look at the two words *kammaja kāya* and *āhāraja kāya*. Here each composite word is made from two parts: The common component, in this case, is "*ja*," which means "generated by" or "born due to."

- The collection of parts that arise due to *kammic* energy is "*kammaja kāya*." This "*kāya*" or "body" is very fine. A whole "*kammaja kāya*" is a billion times smaller than an atom. But as we will see, this "*kāya*" is the more powerful one. That is where the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) and the five real sensing elements of "*pasāda rūpa*" are located.
- Those six elements are made of the smallest units of matter (*suddhaṭṭhaka*) in Buddha Dhamma.
- Therefore, a whole "*kammaja kāya*" is unimaginably small, by our standards. One would not be able to see one even with an electron microscope. As we see below, that is all a *brahma* has!

5. **"*Āhāra*" means 'food," and thus āhāraja kāya is the "collection of body parts" that grows via eating food.** In humans and animals, this is the "physical body" that we see.

- Therefore, an "*āhāraja kāya*" is a "collection of heavy components of a body" like the head, arms, legs, eyes, ears, etc. That is what we call the "physical body." A physical body grows by using energy intake from the food we eat.
- For beings like us with solid physical bodies, the sensory signals are first received by the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body). Then the brain processes those signals and sends them to the *manomaya kāya*. The *manomaya kāya* senses those signals.
- Eyes and ears, for example, do not actually see or hear. Eyes and ears pass those signals to the brain. The brain processes those signals send them to the corresponding *pasāda rūpa* in the *manomaya kāya*; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- In other words, for beings like us with physical bodies, the sensory signals received by the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body). Then processes those signals and send to the *manomaya kāya*. The *manomaya kāya* senses those signals.
- As we have discussed in recent posts in this series, a physical body (of a human or an animal) starts with a single cell called a zygote. The development of a complete human body, beginning with that one cell is another fascinating story. Scientists have no idea how that happens via a program that is in the DNA of that single cell. Who designed that program? See "Origin of Life."

Beings in *Brahma* and *Deva* Realms

6. *Brahmā* do not have an *āhāraja kāya*, and just have the *kammaja kāya*. The *kammaja kāya* of a *brahma* has only a *hadaya vatthu* and TWO *pasāda rūpa* (*cakkhu* and *sota*) for seeing and hearing. Still, they can see and hear with that ultra-fine "body" without having any eyes or ears (and brains) like ours. Of course, it is tough for us to imagine such a living being.

- Therefore, a *brahma* with just a *manomaya kāya* has a mass less than that of an electron. We cannot see even a cell or an atom, let alone an electron. Now we can understand why we should not think of "*Brahma* bodies" in the same sense as a "solid body."
- Those *Brahmā* cannot taste the food, smell odors, or touch things physically like we do. In other words, they do not have *ghāṇa, jivhā*, and *kāya pasāda rūpa*.
- By the way, *Brahmā* do not need food. *Kammic* energy sustains their lives. Only the *hadaya vatthu* and the two *pasāda rūpa* of *cakkhu pasāda* and *sota pasāda* need to be maintained.

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7. *Devās* do have *āhāraja kāya*, but that is much finer, and we would not a *deva* if we come face-to-face with one.

- They have all five physical senses. Their food is just a drink called "*amurta*." That is probably not the correct Pāli word, but that is the Sinhala — and probably Sanskrit — name for it.
- Therefore, we need to be careful not to carry over our perceptions of "heavy bodies" to bodies of other beings in other realms. Millions of *devas* and *Brahmā* were present to hear the first discourse by the Buddha, according to the Vinaya Piṭaka. However, those five ascetics probably did not even realize that at that time.

What is *Gandhabba*?

8. A human (or an animal) has a both a *manomaya kāya* and a *āhāraja kāya*. But the *manomaya kāya* of a human has a special name of *gandhabba* due to the following reason.

- A human *bhava* starts with the generation of a *manomaya kāya* (or *kammaja kāya*) by *kammic* energy. For example, if an animal dies and gets a human *bhava* (which is extremely rare), a human *manomaya kāya* will come out of that dead animal. If a deva dies and gets a human *bhava*, a human *manomaya kāya* will appear in the human realm.
- That human *manomaya kāya* has a *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa* as mentioned above. However, it has the ability to absorb aroma (scents from plants and even food), and to get a bit denser (unlike a *brahma*). **Thus the name *gandhabba* ("*gandha*" + "*abba*" or "inhaling aroma") for the *manomaya kāya* of a human (or an animal).**
- Therefore, the name *gandhabba* is used only for the *manomaya kāya* of humans and animals.
- Normal humans cannot see that relatively dense "body" of a *gandhabba*. They are in the "*para loka*" (which is within the human realm).

What is the Connection of *Gandhabba* to *Paṭisandhi Viññāṇa*?

9. Another phrase used in some *suttā* to indicate a *manomaya kāya* of a human or animal (i.e., a *gandhabba*) is *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*.

- As we had discussed before, a human *gandhabba* could live for thousands of years until the end of that human existence of "human *bhava*." During that time, it can give rise to many "human lives" (*jāti*) with different physical bodies.
- For example, suppose one of those human *jāti* ends. At that moment, the *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body and waits for another "matching womb." (*Gati* of the *gandhabba* has to match those of the parents, especially the mother). When a matching womb becomes available, *gandhabba* is drawn to that womb. That is described in the post, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- The WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Taṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 38), describes that as "descending of the *gandhabba* to the womb." WebLink: suttacentral: The Mahā Nidana Sutta (Dīgha Nikāya 15) it is stated as "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa* descending to the womb." That is because a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* created that *gandhabba*. That is discussed in detail in the post, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka."

The Physical Body Shields *Manomaya Kāya* of Humans and Animals

10. A question may have come up in the mind of some readers. Why cannot a *gandhabba* in a human physical body directly sense the outside world without the help of the five physical senses (eyes, ears, etc), if the *brahmā* can do that?

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- The dense physical body shields the *manomaya kāya* of the *gandhabba*. As long as the *gandhabba* is inside the physical body, it is unable to get those "sense inputs" directly. Those sensory inputs come through our "sense doors", eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body. The brain processes those signal and transmit them to the *gandhabba* (*manomaya kāya*). See, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- We can compare this situation to a human operator inside an enclosed military tank. That operator cannot see or hear anything outside. Audio and video equipment mounted on the tank sends those signals to an on-board computer, which analyzes and displays them for the operator.
- In that analogy, video camera and audio equipment mounted on the tank act like the eyes and ears of a human. The computer is like the brain. Without getting those signals, the operator is totally blind and deaf to the outside world. In the same way, the *manomaya kāya* cannot receive those sense inputs if the eyes are ears are damaged.
- A detailed discussion at: "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba."

11. But that *manomaya kāya* can be "kicked out of the physical body" in a traumatic situation, mostly in cases of heart operations; such claims are categorized as "out-of-body experiences" (OBE). In such cases, some patients have reported being able to see doctors perform operations on their own bodies from the ceiling (with their *manomaya kāya*).

- It may also happen to people whom the doctors thought had died, but "come back to life" within a short time. They report being able to travel with their *manomaya kāya.* Such cases are "near-death experiences" (NDE).
- Some others report being able to do "astral travel" with their *manomaya kāya* whenever they like, see, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Astral projection." At least some reports in this category seem to be valid. Reports of OBE and NDE are more trustworthy, because doctors and nurses confirm the accounts of those patients.
- These are discussed in the post, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

5.2.4 Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception

Revised with a new title: November 10, 2018; revised November 14, 2018 (rewritten and replaces What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?); revised January 5, 2020; revised #8 on December 28, 2020

Introduction

This completely revised post is necessary to continue our discussion on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*: "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'."

1. Buddhist explanation of conception is in several *Tipiṭaka suttā*. Following is a simple account based on those *suttā.* It is compatible with modern science but provides more details than science.

- **Moral issues regarding abortion and birth control have clear answers in Buddha Dhamma. In particular, at what stage of pregnancy does a human life first appear in a womb?**
- Modern science cannot determine the "time of conception" or "when a human life starts in a womb."
- Let us first review the current scientific knowledge base.

Current Scientific Knowledge

2. First of all, there must be a fertilized egg (zygote) in the womb. The fertilization happens when a sperm from the father combines with an egg from the mother to form a zygote or a fertilized egg.

- During the mother's menstrual cycle, one **egg (ovum)** is usually released from one of the ovaries and swept into the funnel-shaped end of one of the fallopian tubes.

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- After intercourse with the father, If a **sperm** penetrates the egg there, fertilization results, and the **fertilized egg (zygote)** moves down the fallopian tube toward the uterus.
- The "live zygote" enters the uterus in 3 to 5 days. In the womb, the cells continue to divide, becoming a hollow ball of cells called a **blastocyst**. Inside the womb, the blastocyst implants in the wall of the uterus, where it develops into an **embryo** attached to the placenta and surrounded by fluid-filled membranes.
- See,"WebLink: merckmanuals.com: Stages of Development of the Fetus."

3. It is important to note that science does not have an answer to the question of why all zygotes do not result in pregnancies, and why some couples who could not have babies for many years all of a sudden have success.

- Science cannot explain how an inert zygote (a cell) becomes "alive" and a living baby comes out of the womb.
- Furthermore, science cannot say WHEN that inert cell, the zygote, becomes alive. Some say a live baby is there as soon as a zygote is formed, and others say there is no life there until a heartbeat can be seen.
- For more details on the controversy on the "time of conception" see, "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Beginning of pregnancy controversy."

Buddhist Explanation – Mind is in the "Mental Body" or *Manomaya Kāya*

4. We humans have two "bodies." *Manomaya kāya* is the "mental body" (with a trace of matter) born at the beginning of the human existence or human *bhava*.

- Here is "body" means a "collection." The physical body is a collection of "physical body parts." The mental body has only a trace of matter and is a collection of "mental parts" (vedanā, saññā, Saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa.) For details, see "Human Life – A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)" and "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of 'Kāya'." Those two were posted earlier in this series of posts.
- The mental body is referred to as "gandhabba" in the Tipiṭaka. See, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipitika." However, for the current discussion, we do not need details on the *gandhabba*.
- Thus, a "human *gandhabba*" has only a trace of matter, and thus, we cannot see it. Some *suttā* refer to the *gandhabba* state as "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*." See, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipitaka."

A Human Existence Can Last Thousands of Years

5. A human existence (*bhava*) can last thousands of years, and that is the lifetime of the *gandhabba* or the mental body.

- On the other hand, a physical human body lasts only about 100 years. With the death of the physical body, the *gandhabba* comes out and waits for another womb. Thus, there can be many births (*jāti*) as a human within a given human existence (*bhava*). See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."
- In between successive births with "human bodies," the *gandhabba* (mental "body") lives in the "*para loka*." The *para loka* co-exists with our human *loka*, but we cannot see those subtle "mental bodies" of *gandhabbas*.

6. A new human existence (*bhava*) does not start in a womb. It begins at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment when the previous *bhava* comes to an end. For example, if a *deva* dies and becomes a human, a human *gandhabba* (fine "mental body") will be formed at the time of death of that *deva*.

- Then that human *gandhabba* will have to wait until a suitable womb becomes available. By "suitable," it means that the *gati* (loosely related to character/habits) of the *gandhabba* have to match those of the parents, especially the mother.

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- *Gati* is an essential concept in Buddha Dhamma. But it is absent in modern texts. Search "*gati*" on the top right search box to find about "*gati.*" I have discussed *Tipiṭaka* references in several posts. See, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)" and references therein.

A Zygote Becomes Alive When a *Gandhabba* Takes Possession of It

7. With the above background, now we can make the connection to current scientific understanding and extend that understanding. As science has shown, human life arises with a single cell called a zygote; see #2 and #3 above.

- A *gandhabba* may have to wait for even many years until a suitable womb becomes available. Then, *kammic* energy will pull it into that womb. And the *gandhabba* will merge with the zygote in the womb that was created by a sperm fertilizing an egg.
- A *gandhabba* entering a womb is sometimes referred to as "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa* descending to a womb" as stated in the *Mahā Nidāna Sutta* (DN 15.) In the *Mahā Taṇhāsaṅkhaya Sutta* (MN 38) it is stated as, "a *gandhabba* descending to a womb."
- As we saw above, Nature automatically matches the "*gati*" the parents (we can say that matching the zygote that was formed by the union of the mother and father), and a "matching" *gandhabba* will be "pulled in" by the *kammic* energy.
- However, the *gandhabba* concept is different from the idea of a "soul." A *gandhabba* will keep changing during its lifetime. Furthermore, it will make a drastic change when the lifetime of the human *bhava* comes to an end. At that time, it can become an animal, a Deva, a Brahma, etc.

8. Therefore, a zygote just provides the "material basis" (zygote) for the *gandhabba* to form a physical body. (That zygote develops when an egg combines with a sperm.)

- The "blueprint" for that physical body (i.e., the *gandhabba*) is in the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*. However, the physical body will also take into account the features of the mother and father via that zygote; see #3 and #4 above.
- If the mother (and father) are unable to have a child due to a previous *kamma vipāka*, the resulting zygote will be a "dud." Thus no *gandhabba* can "descend to the womb," i.e., pregnancy is not possible.
- All this is discussed in more detail in several posts, including "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body," and a more technical description in "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."
- Once a *gandhabba* takes possession of a zygote that zygote grows into a baby in the mother's womb via several steps (consistent with current science.) Those stages are listed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Indaka Sutta* (SN 10.1)"

The 'Time of Conception" is Precise

9. **A *gandhabba* can take hold of that fertilized egg (zygote) any time after its formed.**

- Therefore, the conception of a new baby happens when the life-less zygote becomes "alive" with the merging of the *gandhabba*. **That is the time of conception, and it happens very early, generally within a day after intercourse.**
- Once a *gandhabba* merges with the zygote, the cells of the zygote start repeatedly dividing as the zygote moves down the fallopian tube. **Thus cell division and the formation of a baby DOES NOT start unless and until a gandhabba merges with the zygote.**

Effects of Condoms/Birth Control Pills

10. Now let us see what happens with a condom or with birth control pills.

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- With the use of a condom, an egg will not be able to come to contact with a sperm to form a zygote. Thus there will be no "material basis" or a zygote in the womb.
- If the mother is taking birth control pills, again, that will prevent the formation of a zygote for a *gandhabba* to start a new life.
- **Thus it is clear that there are no moral issues involved in either of those two cases. Terminating a life does not happen in either case.**

If a *Gandhabba* Is in the Womb, There Is a Human There

11. On the other hand, once a *gandhabba* "is in the womb," then there is a living being in the womb.

- **Any procedure to remove the live gandhabba after this "real conception" is equivalent to killing a human. The exact time of the removal procedure does not matter. It could be a month before the birth of the baby or just a day after the *gandhabba* came into the womb.**
- The only uncertainty about the "time of conception" is a few days. Conception happens when the *gandhabba* takes hold of the zygote. That could happen immediately after intercourse or a few days after sex.
- Thus Buddha Dhamma provides an unambiguous picture of the moral issues involved in the birth control process.

Other Aspects

12. The death of a physical body of a human does not mean its existence as a human has ended. If there is remaining "*kammic* energy" for the human *bhava* left, the mental body (*gandhabba*) will come of the dead physical body and will wait for another suitable womb.

- However, if the "*kammic* energy for the present human *bhava*" is exhausted at the time of death, then the transition to the next "*bhava*" or existence happens at the dying moment. If that new existence is that of a cat, a "cat *gandhabba*" will leave the dead body.
- Here again, the "cat *gandhabba*" will have to wait until a suitable "cat womb" becomes available. At that time it will go into the womb of the "cat mother." And a baby cat will be born later on.
- However, except for humans and animals, a *gandhabba* is not involved in most other realms. That is true, for example, in *Deva* and Brahma realms.

13. Sometimes the child may have different "*gati*" compared to the parents. For example, a "fairly moral" couple may have a child with violent character qualities. That could be due to a drastic change in the mindset of the mother during that "conception window." (Between the formation of the zygote and a *gandhabba* "descending" to the womb.) Violent rape is one possibility.

- Furthermore, this is also why mothers who could not get pregnant for years, suddenly get pregnant. This happens during a time when the mother most likely has a "personality shift" or a significant change in her mental state.

Cloning – A Detailed Analysis

14. I have revised and updated another relevant post, "Cloning and Gandhabba."

- More details on the formation of the zygote are discussed there, before the discussion on cloning.
- We will make the connection to *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in the next post.

5.2.5 Cloning and Gandhabba

March 5, 2018; revised January 5, 2020; January 8, 2020

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Introduction – Cloning of Dolly the Sheep

1. Cloning of various types of animals has become common since Dolly was cloned in 1996. Three sheep contributed to the birth of Dolly. One provided the egg, another the DNA (donor), and a third (surrogate mother) carried the cloned embryo to term.

- Obviously, a clone has most similarities with the donor and there is no "father" involved (no sperm is needed). Are these consistent with the Buddha Dhamma, and how does a *gandhabba* play a role?
- Also, there are some myths associated with cloning, such as whether "totally unexpected creatures or monsters" can result from cloning.
- Therefore, it is good to review the key steps in the cloning process and to clarify these issues.

What Happens in a Normal Conception?

2. But, first, we need to look at what happens in a "normal conception" where an egg and a sperm combine to form the unique cell called a zygote. This was explained in the post, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception." Here, we will first extend that discussion.

- The "material base" for a new life is a zygote. In a natural conception, the zygote is formed by the fertilization of a female egg by a sperm from a male. Then a *gandhabba* can come into the womb and provide the "mental basis" for the new life, as explained in the above post.
- There are two things REQUIRED to make a zygote. **The first requirement** is the egg that comes from the mother and is unique. However, eggs have only 23 chromosomes instead of 46 chromosomes in all other cells. Therefore, **the second requirement** is to somehow have 46 chromosomes in the nucleus of an egg.
- Let us discuss the two factors in a bit more detail since this was not discussed in the previous post.

An Egg Is Unique

3. Eggs are the most remarkable of cells. They can give rise to a completely new individual within a matter of days or weeks in some animals. **No other cell in a higher animal has this ability**. Egg cells also contain many mitochondria which supply the energy required for cell replication and division.

- **However, an egg must be "activated" first in order to start the cell division process.** It is activated only when its nucleus has a full complement of 46 chromosomes or 23 pairs.
- You can read more about the role of the egg at, "WebLink: discovermagazine.com: How Does a Single Cell Become a Whole Body?."

Activation of the Egg by the Presence of 46 Chromosomes

4. Now, to the second factor. Most cells in a body have **23 pairs** of chromosomes, **for a total of 46**. The egg and sperm are different. **Each egg and each sperm has only one set of 23 chromosomes, not a pair.**

- When fertilization occurs in normal conception, the 23 chromosomes from the egg combine with the 23 from the sperm to create a zygote or *a fertilized egg* with the full complement of **23 pairs** of chromosomes. This is shown in the following diagram (**Fertilization**. Zygote is egg plus sperm genetically different individuals. Fusion of two haploid gametes to form a diploid zygote):

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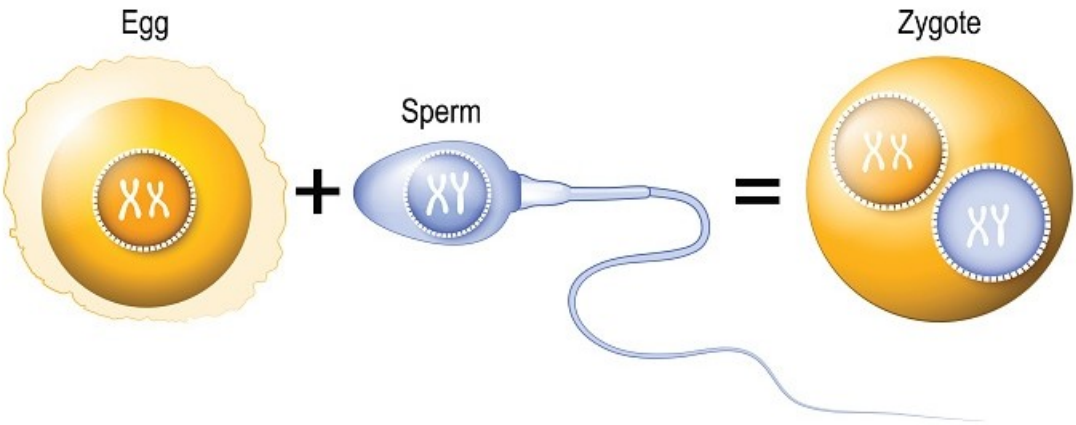

- **In this case of normal conception, those two nuclei from mother and father will combine to form a single nucleus in the yellow cell (egg), which is now the zygote.**
- So, we see that in normal conception, the nucleus of the zygote — or the result of the merger of the egg with the sperm — will be a cell with a nucleus that has half chromosomes from the mother and the other half from the father. Thus, DNA from mother and father BOTH contribute to the zygote in normal conception. This is why the baby will have bodily features from both parents (a mix).

Science Cannot Explain Why Some Zygotes Are "Duds"

5. When the above process is complete, the egg becomes a zygote. At this point, the cell division is supposed to activate. However, some zygotes do not activate and thus do not lead to a fetus or a baby.

- Scientists do not know why the zygotes formed by the union of some couples do not lead to cell division, i.e., why certain couples cannot have babies.

It Is a *Gandhabba* That "Activates" the Zygote!

6. The only difference in Buddha Dhamma is that the cell division starts ONLY IF (and when) a *gandhabba* descends to the womb and merges with that zygote.

- A new animal or human life cannot be initiated without a *gandhabba* (or the "mental body" or "*manomaya kāya*.")
- In the case of a natural conception, the matching *gandhabba* (or *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*) will descend to the womb and will be merged with that fertilized egg to complete the conception. However, if a previous *kamma vipāka* for the mother and father does not allow a conception, a *gandhabba* WILL NOT be drawn into the womb.
- Otherwise, a matching *gandhabba* with *gati* that are a mix of *gati* of mother and father will be drawn into the womb. That is why a child is likely to have *gati* which are a mix of the two parents. That is in addition to having physical features of the parents.

A *Gandhabba* (Mental Body) Makes the Zygote Alive

7. Without the "mental component" or the *gandhabba*, there is no life! **A zygote is an inert cell and has no "sentient life."** The zygote that results from the merger of the egg and the sperm is just the "material base" and not a "new life."

- It is only when the *gandhabba* descends to the womb and takes possession of that zygote that it "becomes alive."

The Procedure of Cloning Versus Natural Conception

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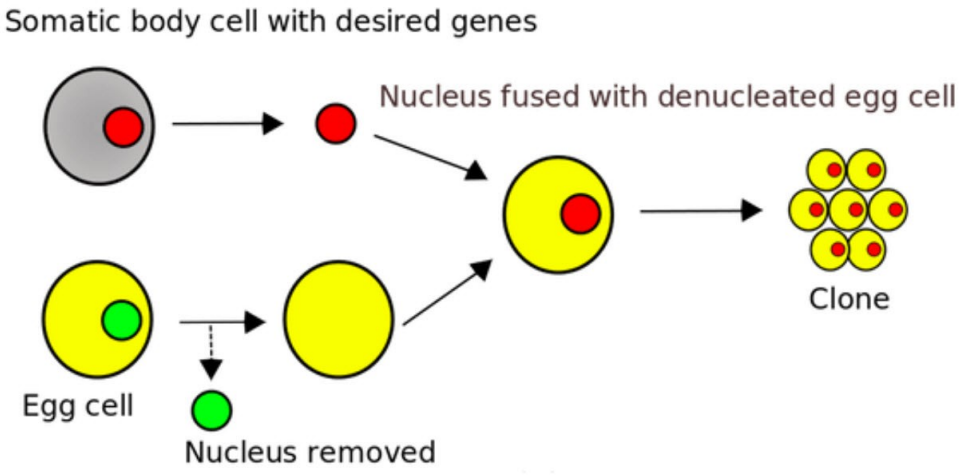
8. **The zygote formation is different in cloning compared to the natural conception.** In the case of cloning, a sperm from a father is not involved.

- Here the nucleus of the egg is REMOVED, and the nucleus of the "donor cell" with the full set of 46 chromosomes is INSERTED in the egg. That is the key difference in cloning. So, now the nucleus of the egg has the full set of chromosomes needed to start cell division. The basic process involved in **cloning** is nicely represented by the following diagram:



9. However, it seems that is not enough to initiate the cell division. An electric shock is required to activate the process (i.e., to initiate cell division of this artificially created zygote.) This is the second difference compared to the natural process.

- Therefore, the artificially modified egg is placed in the womb of the surrogate mother, and an electrical shock is applied to start the cell division.
- The above figure is from the article, "**20 years after Dolly: Everything you always wanted to know about the cloned sheep and what came next**." You may want to read that article too.

A *Gandhabba* Is Still Needed in Cloning

10. Even though that is the whole picture according to science, Buddha Dhamma says, there MUST be a *gandhabba* merging with that cell in order to "give it life."

- Just like in the case of natural conception we discussed above, there is no "new life" created with cloning. It just created a suitable "temporary home" for the *gandhabba*.
- When that physical body dies, the *gandhabba* would come out and wait for another womb to be ready. Dolly has now died and it is possible that she was reborn as another sheep somewhere.

Genetic Material Is From One Cell in Cloning

11. The main thing from the above figure in #8 on cloning for our discussion is that the **yellow cell is the egg from the mother**. The other **cell on the top is from the "donor."** It is not sperm but any kind of cell. No sperm is in the picture. Instead of half the genetic material coming from sperm and half from an egg, it all comes from a single cell.

- The unique feature of the **egg** from the mother is that it allows the growth of a whole animal **(with many body parts for doing very different things) just starting with that single cell**.
- However, the egg needs to have a full set of 46 chromosomes to form the zygote. In cloning, the whole set comes from the "donor" as shown in the above figure. In a natural conception, half of the

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chromosomes come from the mother (egg), and the other half comes from the father (sperm), as shown in the figure above in #4.

- When an egg starts cell division, it splits — first into 2, then 4, then 8, 16, 32, 64, and so on — it is not merely splitting. It is a complex process that produces descendant cells with a huge variety of shapes and functions: bone cells, nerve cells, red and white blood cells; the cells of the eyes, fingernails, stomach, skin, etc.

More Information From Scientific Studies

12. Now, in the case of cloning, the following should be clear, according to science:

- The mother that provides the egg, provides the all-important platform for cell division that leads to the formation of the new offspring.
- However, 99% of the DNA comes from the donor. Therefore, the physical resemblance of the offspring would be to the donor, as is the case with Dolly the sheep.
- The surrogate mother who carries the embryo to term would provide no real contribution to the physical appearance of the offspring, according to science.

No "Monsters" Will be Created With Cloning

13. Studies done over the past 20 years with different types of animals show that:

- Some people are afraid that cloning can lead to unexpected outcomes like "creating monsters." However, from the above discussion, it is clear that monstrous creatures **cannot** be expected to form due to cloning. This is because the source of DNA is the donor. **Therefore, the clone will look like the donor.**
- It is not possible to clone an animal that is identical to the donor. Even if they look similar, their character traits are different.
- The success rate is low, around 10%.
- Those are observations from the cloning studies over the past 20 years. They are consistent with our picture of the *gandhabba* having *gati* close to that of the donor. No two animals can be the same. In the case of natural birth, *gandhabba*'s *gati* will be close to those of both parents.

Additional Points From Buddha Dhamma

14. That is pretty much the picture in Buddha Dhamma too, but with the following exceptions:

- All three involved in the cloning process would contribute to some extent to the "mental qualities" in selecting a matching *gandhabba* (which happens automatically.) However, the major contribution is likely to come from the donor.
- Of course, we can only make a guess, since the Buddha never had to explain this particular case. The Buddha specifically mentioned that the "mental state of the mother" at the time of *gandhabba* descending to the womb is a factor. This is why even the most moral mother may, in a few cases, end up with a baby who turns out to have immoral *gati*.
- Therefore, the surrogate mother — within whose womb the actual descending of the *gandhabba* would occur — could play some minor role in determining the behavior of the baby, but not the physical appearance, i.e., the developing embryo would be affected by the mood and health of the surrogate mother.

Conclusion – New Life Cannot Be Created

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15. The word "clone" is defined as, "an organism or cell produced asexually from one ancestor or stock, to which they are genetically identical."

- However, a clone will NEVER be exactly the same as the "donor." They are two different "life-streams." The Buddha taught that each life-stream has existed "forever" and we discussed *Tipiṭaka* references in, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."
- All living beings in existence now have been in the rebirth process forever. The Buddha said that there is no discernible beginning to any living being.

16. The main point from Buddha Dhamma is that a new life cannot be created by any means, whether in a laboratory or anywhere in the universe. This is the only inconsistency with science here, and it is a major inconsistency.

- Living beings just keep switching from realm to realm, but most are trapped in the lower realms. While in the human or animal realms, they spend a lot of time as *gandhabbas*; see, "Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- So, an animal like Dolly would be switching from a "sheep *gandhabba"* to a sheep to a "sheep *gandhabba"* to a sheep…until the *kammic* energy for the "sheep *bhava*" or "sheep existence" runs out.
- When the *kammic* energy for the "sheep *bhava*" runs out, it will grasp another existence. There is no end to this process until reaching the *Arahanthood*.

17. So, I hope it is clear that cloning itself is consistent with Buddha Dhamma, and specifically with the concept of *gandhabba*.

- I wrote this post in response to a question at the discussion forum: "Gandhabba and Cloning." If there are more questions or comments, we can discuss them there.

5.2.6 Living Cell – How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?

July 24, 2019

Relevance to Buddha Dhamma

1. A discussion on the origins of a first cell will help understand the fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma, in particular, **the power of *kammic* energy**.

- This discussion is about how modern science is beginning to confirm Buddha Dhamma. Modern science (biochemistry) provides additional information from a "material aspect," i.e., on the basic building block of a physical body (cell). Even though many scientists believe that a living cell can arise by random combinations of inert molecules, there is no evidence to support that hypothesis.
- Of course, science has not yet even realized that there is a "mental body" too, i.e., the vital role of the *manomaya kāya*.

2. Human life requires two primary components: a mental body (*manomaya kāya* or a *kammaja kāya*) and a material body (*āhāraja kāya*), as I pointed out in the previous post; see, "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya."

- The mental body has existed forever (in different forms); **it is called a *gandhabba* for humans and animals.** Even though we are all humans at present, we had been born *devās*, *brahmā*, animals, and of course "hell beings"; it is just an unbroken "lifestream."
- A cell is the basic building block of a physical body, which starts with a single cell (zygote) created by the union of mother and father. That single-cell multiplies over time (the physical body of an adult has trillions of cells); see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."
- **For any given conscious living being, there is no traceable beginning to a first *manomaya kāya.*** When an existing *manomaya kāya* dies, mental energy or *kammic* energy creates a "new *manomaya*

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kāya." **Furthermore, cells make up human (and animal) bodies, and the "first cells" on this Earth were created by *kammic* energy long ago as we discuss below. All cells of current living beings come from those first cells!**

How Cells Come to Existence

3. Biochemistry says all cells existing now come from pre-existing cells. How did the first cells on Earth come to existence? Creationists and evolutionists say those "first cells" could only have come from one of two possible places:

- Spontaneous creation – Random chemical processes created the first living cell.
- Supernatural creation – God or some other supernatural power created the first living cell.
- However, both sides have not even realized that there is a third possibility, i.e., "first cells" were created via *kammic* energy, which is the same as "mental energy."

4. The Buddha taught that there is "no traceable beginning" to life. **Therefore, it is not possible to trace back to a "first *manomaya kāya* (mental body)."** When a human (or an animal) is born, it has a physical body in addition to the ***manomaya kāya***. That physical body is made with cells.

- Of course, the Buddha did not talk about cells. I am just bridging that part of the puzzle, based on modern science and *Aggañña Sutta*; see, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
- Now scientists can perform the "cloning" of animals. **That is not the same as the creation of a new life form.** Two existing cells create a zygote, and then an existing *gandhabba* can the "take possession" of that zygote; see, "Cloning and Gandhabba."

Origins of "First Cells" on Earth

5. **It is essential to realize that Darwin's theory of evolution is NOT about the "evolution of a cell."** It is about the evolution of advanced species of plants and animals STARTING WITH simpler lifeforms with a single cell.

- Most scientists who believe in the theory of evolution of SPECIES do also think that it MAY BE possible that A FIRST CELL also evolved starting with inert matter.
- Some scientists have concluded that random interactions of inert molecules cannot lead to the formation of a living cell. But they erroneously concluded that therefore life must have been created by a Creator God.

6. Since Robert Hook discovered the existence of cells in 1665, scientists have uncovered a lot of information about cells. The current "cell theory" in biochemistry has two fundamental axioms:

i. All living things (living beings or living plants) are made of cells,
ii. New cells are made by "cell division," i.e., by the division of existing cells.

- Biochemistry books do not discuss how "first cells" came into existence!

7. Therefore, the question remains as to how the "first cells" on Earth came to life. Evolutionists say random combinations of inert molecules created them.

- Despite what you may have heard in science fiction or popular science literature, scientists are NOT EVEN CLOSE to making even the simplest cell in a laboratory.
- They will NEVER be able to do so. Once we discuss the current status of cell research, you will see why.
- On the other hand, creationists say a Creator God created all life.

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Buddhist Explanation of Life

According to Buddha Dhamma, a conscious living being has a mental body (*manomaya kāya*), and some **may** have a physical body (*āhāraja kāya*). In *Brahma* realms, there are no physical bodies like ours (therefore no cells).

8. A NEW living being can never be created starting from scratch. **A dying *manomaya kāya* gives rise to a new one**. Any living being creates CAUSES and CONDITIONS that lead to the next existence (*bhava*)!

- For example, one may be born many times with a human body while in the "human *bhava*," but when the energy for that "human *bhava*" runs out, that lifestream gets hold of a new *bhava* (as a *Brahma, deva*, animal, etc.) because of a strong *kamma* done in the past, as we discussed in previous posts. **Therefore, it is *kammic* energy that gives rise to a *manomaya kāya*!**
- A new *manomaya kāya* is ALWAYS associated with a past life. It is just that the form of the *gandhabba* keeps changing from *bhava* to *bhava*, i.e., an "animal *gandhabba*" or "*Brahma manomaya kāya*" is different from a "human *gandhabba,"* but the same lifestream can take all those various forms.
- If one can follow that "chain of past lives," one will go through billions of past lives a minute, but will never be able to find a "beginning" life! The Buddha did that upon attaining the Buddhahood, and stated: **"*bhikkhus*, there is no discernible beginning to the rebirth process."**; see, for example, "WebLink: youtube: Gaddulabaddha Sutta (SN 22.99)":

9. A physical body for a human or an animal is a collection of cells. It starts with a single cell (called a zygote) and grows to a large mass with trillions of cells after a *gandhabba* (born of a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*) "descends to the womb" and gets possession of that zygote. For *Tipiṭaka* references, see, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipitaka."

- On the other hand, a *brahma* has no physical body made of cells. It is just the mental body (*gandhabba*) with a trace of matter at the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level.
- Below, we will discuss how "first cells" on Earth came to existence. We first need to consider how complex a cell is.

The complexity of a Cell

10. Even the simplest cell is very complex and surprising. Even though nanotechnology has made significant advances, it is nowhere close to being able to make a functioning cell.

- The critical issue is not making new complex DNA molecules, but the following: **Those DNA strands in a cell nucleus are "coded with information," just like a computer is programmed.**
- Just like a computer program can run by itself and manage a factory, information coded in those DNA strands in the nucleus of the cell control cell's functions.
- This "information" comes not by a Creator and not created via random jostling of molecules in early Earth. It comes from *kammic* energy, just like a *gandhabba* is created by *kammic* energy.

11. In the following video, one can get a good idea about the basic layout and the complexity of a cell.

WebLink: youtube: Organelles of the Cell (updated)

12. It becomes even more impressive when we look at how small an animal cell is. Here are some rough numbers (in comparison, a mustard seed is 1 to 2 mm in diameter):

- **Cell** (per side) 0.050 mm (or 50 micrometers).
- Cell membrane 0.000007 mm thick.

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- Nucleus (diameter) 0.007 mm.
- Nucleolus (diameter) 0.0025 mm.
- Endoplasmic reticulum: each layer 0.0002 mm (0.0001 mm gap between layers)
- Golgi complex 0.007 mm thick, each layer.
- Ribosomes 0.00003 mm (30 nanometers) in diameter.

13. But the most amazing thing is not that such a small cell has all that complexity. It is that a cell has a "built-in computer-like program" that manages all cell functions, including what kind of proteins are to produce. Yes. A living cell is a factory that makes proteins in addition to making copies of its DNA.

- In humans, a copy of the entire **genome**—more than 3 billion DNA base pairs—is contained in **all cells** that have a nucleus. The DNA from a single human cell has a length of ~1.8 m or about 6 feet (but at a width of ~2.4 nanometers).
- This genome has the blueprint for a given human (animal) body.

14. The machinery and the activities inside a cell — which we cannot see with the naked eye — are impressive. As mentioned, a living cell is a pre-programmed, very sophisticated factory. Whatever progress that nanotechnology has made cannot even come close to the level of a cell, as can be seen with the following video:

WebLink: youtube: Ron Vale (UCSF, HHMI) 1: Molecular Motor Proteins

First Cells on Earth Created via *Kammic* Energy (Same as a *Gandhabba*)

15. At present, the division of existing cells creates new cells of different properties (scientists do not understand how!). A new human baby starts with a single cell (zygote) that is formed by the merger of two cells from the mother and father.

- **In the newly-formed Earth, *kammic* energy created the first cells.** That happened a long time after the "first humans" who were without physical bodies. The early humans had very subtle bodies (like *brahmā*), and thus, they did not have physical bodies with cells. Hundreds of million years later, those early (*Brahma*-like) humans got back their "human *gati,*" and their bodies become visible with a physical body made of cells.
- The "first cells" come into existence via *kammic* energies from the past. Once they get started, then the "normal method" of cell division led to more cells (what we see now).
- In the same way, there are no new *gandhabbas* in the sense of starting a new lifestream. When an existing *gandhabba* dies (at *cuti-paṭisandhi*), a new *gandhabba* takes its place because of a new *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* (via *Paticca Samuppāda).*
- Therefore, the MIND is the precursor to EVERYTHING. Even plant life has origins in collective *kammic* energies of all conscious beings on Earth. Thus the Buddha declared, "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.." or "mind is at the forefront of everything in this world."

16. It is essential to realize that the dense physical body, say of a human being, is not directly created by mental energy.

- Mind energy provides the two seeds: *gandhabba* and the first cell, the zygote. The fusion of two cells from mother and father creates a zygote.
- When a *gandhabba* merges with a zygote in a womb, that starts a process where no more *kammic* energy is needed. That first "live cell" multiplies and leads to more and more cells using sustenance from the mother, and that is how an embryo grows. After birth, a baby grows by eating its food.

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17. Another critical point is that the cells of ALL LIVING THINGS are similar, and they depend on each other.

- Cells of humans and animals are very similar. The differences come from the variations in the genome (DNA that is inside the cell nucleus).
- Even cells of plants are not that different. The main difference in a plant cell is the presence of chloroplast, which generates energy using sunlight.
- Energy to sustain bodies of humans and animals can be traced back to plants. Even though humans and animals do eat other animals, it is those animals like cows who first extract energy from plants.
- Now we can see how inter-related and inter-dependent ALL LIFE is. And how complicated life is, even at the physical level.
- The mental body (*gandhabba*) is even more complicated. Only a Buddha can sort out these complexities of life. We are fortunate to live at a time when modern science helps us clarify some of his teachings.

5.2.7 Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?

July 28, 2019; rivised June 9, 2020

Introduction

Some phenomena may be labeled "mystical" or "incomprehensible" only because there are no rational explanations yet. However, logical explanations become available as science makes progress.

1. There are two essential points to make regarding the series of posts on the "origin of Life," and in general, regarding Buddha's teachings.

- Some characteristics of the other 29 realms in this world may not be compatible with our ordinary sensory experiences. Some phenomena are not "perceivable" or "easily understood" to humans. The Pāli word for "perceivable" is "*gocara*" pronounced "gochara."
- The second issue is how *kammic* energy can create a *manomaya kāya* with the ability to "see" and "hear" without physical eyes or ears. Also, how did those "first living cells" on Earth come to existence? See. "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."
- However, with the advances made in science, it is now possible to convince ourselves that such phenomena are scientifically plausible. There are no contradictions with science, at least theoretically (i.e., in principle).
- We are fortunate to live at a time when scientific findings show that some of the "hard-to-believe" phenomena discussed in the *Tipiṭaka* are consistent with science. In this post, I will start with a couple of such issues (associated with "supernormal powers").

Non-Perceivability of Some Phenomena

2. First, let me clarify what I mean by "perceivable" or "easily understood." Our six senses can "detect" only a tiny fraction of the "our world."

- We directly experience only the human and animal realms, where living beings can be "seen with our eyes." We have no idea about the "bodies" those living beings in other realms. If we visit a *Brahma* or a *deva* domain, for example, we may think that there is "no one there." Their bodies are too wispy to be seen with our eyes.
- Even when scientists probe the universe with their best equipment, they also see only a small fraction of "things" out there. At a base level, science today can account for only 4 percent of the mass of our

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universe; see, "The 4 Percent Universe: Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality", by Richard Panek (2011).

- Many things have not been "discovered" by science yet. In particular, nothing significant about the MIND.

Buddha Dhamma Is Self-Consistent

3. Trying to gauge the validity of Buddha Dhamma with just what we can see with our eyes is foolish. That is like a blind man trying to figure out what an elephant is like, by touching just a leg of the elephant; see, "How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Diṭṭhi)?."

- A frog living in a well does not know anything about the wider world of 31 realms. Similarly, an average human — including scientists — faces the problem of trying to figure out the "reality" by only using data available through our limited six senses. With the help of scientific instruments, we are making progress.
- Thus a scientific theory can't be ever "complete" as proven by the mathematician Kurt Gödel; see, "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem." However, science is helping to clarify some concepts.
- Unless one attains *abhiññā* powers and can visit those realms, one would not be able to verify such characteristics of other domains. For example, we cannot see their ultra-fine bodies; see, "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya."
- However, if one spends time learning Dhamma, one would be able to see the truth of them. We will discuss a few examples below. Also, see "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

Touching the Sun – Is That Possible?

4. Some phenomena described in the *Tipiṭaka* seem to be "mystical" or "beyond comprehension." But they are entirely feasible based on the advances in science. I will discuss a couple of examples in the *Tipiṭaka* to illustrate this point. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)", it is stated, ".. *imepi candimasūriye evaṃmahiddhike evaṃmahānubhāve pāṇinā parāmasati parimajjati*.." or, ".. **he touches and strokes the Sun** and the moon, so mighty and powerful..."

- This verse describes the powers of a *yogi* with supernormal capabilities (*Iddhividha ñāṇa*). How can one "touch and stroke the Sun?" Isn't the Sun supposed to be extremely hot?
- Here, the *yogi* is in the *manomaya kāya*, not with his physical body. Of course, a physical body will burn well before it gets close to the Sun. The key is to note that the *manomaya kāya* has just a few *suddhaṭṭhaka*. For example, a human *manomaya kāya* has a *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa* and each is a *suddhaṭṭhaka*; see, "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya."
- **A *suddhaṭṭhaka* is the smallest unit of matter in Buddha Dhamma and is billion times smaller than an atom in modern science.** Therefore, the *manomaya kāya* of a yogi is unimaginably tiny; it is a "packet of energy."

5. An entity at the level of *suddhaṭṭhaka* will not be affected by the Sun's high temperatures or even by a supernova explosion. We can understand that from modern science as follows: A regular fire can burn dense things like wood or paper. At higher temperatures, melting ovens can melt steel bars. But neither of those can burn molecular gases like hydrogen or nitrogen. Those gases burn at even higher temperatures.

- However, even at the temperatures generated by a supernova explosion, matter at the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level is not affected. A supernova is the blowing up of a star.
- **The Earth and the Sun are destroyed at the end of a *mahā kappa*.** However, the *brahma* realms lying at or above the *Abhassara brahma* realm survove. Those Brahmā have very fine bodies (with only a trace of matter) that are not affected even by a supernova; see, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

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- Well before that destruction, all living beings in our world move up to the *Abhassara brahma* realm.
- Now we can see how a *yogi* with a *manomaya kāya* of a *Brahma* CAN indeed touch the Sun. **That is not a miracle. It is just that a *manomaya kāya* is so fine (subtle) that it is not affected by even a supernova, which has much more power than the Sun.**

How Can One Go Through Walls?

6. The same *sutta* (and many other *suttā*) also describe the ability of *yogis* with *iddhi* powers to go through walls and dive into the Earth and come out from a different location, among others.

The following verse appears in many *suttā* in the WebLink: suttacentral: Iddhipāda Saṃyutta of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (SN 51.11 through SN 51.32): "*Ye hi keci, bhikkhave, etarahi **samaṇā vā brāhmaṇā vā** anekavihitaṃ iddhividhaṃ paccanubhonti—ekopi hutvā bahudhā honti, bahudhāpi hutvā eko honti; āvibhāvaṃ, tirobhāvaṃ; tirokuṭṭaṃ tiropākāraṃ tiropabbataṃ asajjamānā gacchanti, seyyathāpi ākāse; pathaviyāpi ummujjanimujjaṃ karonti, seyyathāpi udake; udakepi abhijjamāne gacchanti, seyyathāpi pathaviyaṃ; ākāsepi pallaṅkena kamanti, seyyathāpi pakkhī sakuṇo; imepi candimasūriye evaṃmahiddhike evaṃmahānubhāve pāṇinā parimasanti parimajjanti; yāva brahmalokāpi kāyena vasaṃ vattenti, ..*"

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, a ***bhikkhu* or a *brāhmana*** who has developed supernormal powers (*iddhi*) wields various psychic powers: He can become many copies of himself. He appears and vanishes. **He travels unimpeded through walls, ramparts, and mountains, and dives in and out of the Earth as if it were water.** He walks on water without sinking as if it were the Earth. Sitting cross-legged, he travels through space like a winged bird. With his hand, he touches and strokes the Sun and the Moon, so mighty and powerful. He displays mastery as far as the *brahmā*-realms..."

- It is also evident in this verse that it could be **anyone** who can cultivate these powers, not just Buddhists.
- Let us first clarify a few things with science, and then we will discuss how it is possible to "**go through walls and dive into the Earth.**"
- We need to first discuss some aspects of atoms and molecules uncovered by modern science.

An Atom is Virtually Empty!

7. Here is a simplified version of some relevant properties of an atom. An atom has a tiny nucleus with 99.9% of the mass (or "weight" in ordinary language.) It is surrounded by an "electron cloud" that takes up almost all the "space occupied by the atom." In other words, it is analogous to a miniaturized version of our Solar system, where the massive Sun is at the center, and several planets revolve around the Sun.

- The main difference is that those electrons are not in circular orbits. They have complicated "orbitals," and the easiest is to visualize an "electron cloud" around the nucleus.
- The nucleus is tiny but has all the mass of the atom essentially. Electrons are spread out in a large volume around the nucleus (core.)
- We can use the following analogy to get a perspective on the size of an atom compared to the nucleus. If a mustard seed with a millimeter diameter represents the nucleus, the "electron cloud" would occupy a volume with 100 meters in diameter. We could say a nucleus would be like a grain of sand in the chamber of a large cathedral or a football stadium.

8. Therefore, an atom (or a molecule) is mostly empty. **That means our bodies that we think are very solid are also basically empty.** Even steel or diamond would be similarly "empty."

- **P.S.** If it is possible to take out all that empty space in our bodies (which of course, is not possible), all the matter in the physical bodies of 9 billion humans in the world today would fit inside a sugar cube!
- If our atoms are mostly space, why can't we pass through walls like those ghosts in movies?

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- Electrical repulsion among the electron clouds of neighboring atoms forces them to stay away without getting close.
- **Therefore, we cannot go through walls or any other "solid object" with our physical bodies.**

Go Through Walls and Dive Into the Earth?

9. Even though our physical bodies cannot go through other "solid objects," **our *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) made of very fine *suddhaṭṭhaka* can!**

- That level of "matter" is much more refined and subtle than even electrons. Furthermore, "particles" at the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level are not electrically charged. So, they do not have any problem going through the electron cloud.
- Therefore, modern science (physics) helps us understand why this is not a miracle at all.

10. Those objects that appear to be "highly condensed" — such as walls or even steel — are mostly hollow at the atomic level. An atom has a tiny nucleus surrounded by an "electron cloud." The size of an atom is defined by the electron cloud, which is spreads out over a relatively large volume. Two adjacent atoms cannot come too close to each other because of the mutual repulsion between their electron clouds.

- Therefore, an atom is "virtually empty." The dense nucleus takes only a little volume, and the electron cloud is far away. Therefore, a *manomaya kāya* made of only a few *suddhaṭṭhaka can* freely move through "solid matter" made of atoms and molecules.
- A *yogi* with such *abhiññā* powers could use the *manomaya kāya* to travel through "solid objects."
- One with even more developed abilities may be able to reduce one's physical body to the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level, go through the "solid object" and then "reassemble" at the other end. That sounds like science fiction ("teleportation"), but that is precisely how it may be done in the future with further progress in science. Of course, one with such *abhiññā* powers would be able to do that right now.
- **P.S.** An account from the *Tipiṭaka* regarding "teleportation": Ven. Ananda attained the *Arahanthood* only the day before the first Buddhist Council held 3 months after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. Only *Arahants* participated. Everyone was waiting for the arrival of Ven. Ananda. In order to remove any doubts of those who were present that he had indeed attained the *Arahanthood* — complete with all *iddhi* powers — Ven. Ananda is said to have entered the room through the keyhole in the door. So, this is an example of teleportation.

Summary and Other Implications

11. Other "mysterious phenomena" in verse in #6 above can also be explained to be consistent with science. As science makes progress, these clarifications will have more support.

- I will be discussing some of those other phenomena in the future after covering the necessary background material.

12. On a side note, this clarification also helps us understand that our concept of "touching someone" is not as intimate as we think. When we "touch" something, it is only the outer electrons of the atoms (molecules) on our body "touching" the same on the other object.

- I am very serious about this. Suppose you are blind-folded and someone touches you on the arm. If you think it is your girl (boy) friend, that will make you generate sensual thoughts. However, you will 0feel only affectionate feelings of a different kind if you are under the impression that it is your parent. If you think it is a total stranger (and not good looking!), you may barely notice him/her.

Buddha Discouraged "Magic Shows" by Those With *Iddhi* Powers

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13. I must also emphasize that the Buddha not only discouraged but banned in most cases, display of such supernormal powers by *bhikkhus*. The main reason for that was explained to Kevatta by the Buddha in the WebLink: suttacentral: Kevaṭṭa Sutta (DN 11). The English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: To Kevaṭṭa (DN 11)."

- So, there were people at the time of the Buddha who could do such "miracles" using special techniques like "*Gandhāra* magic trick" (*gandhārī nāma vijjā*). Some others cultivated supernormal powers via *anāriya jhāna*. Then such people can put down Buddha Dhamma, saying that "I can also do those things without Buddha's teachings."
- Even today, some magicians perform such "miracles." Here is a video showing "WebLink: youtube: Criss Angel walking on water."

Of course, it is an illusion. But it looks real! Criss Angel discusses these illusions or magic tricks in his book, "Mindfreak" (2007).

- However, only Buddha Dhamma can make it possible to stop future suffering, and that is not possible with magic tricks!

5.2.8 Views on Life

Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism

Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 1

Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 2

Worldview of the Buddha

Buddhist Worldview – Introduction

Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa

How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?

Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa

Is There a "Self"?

Citta – Basis of Our Experience and Actions

Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event

Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)

Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy

Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"

An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation

Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not "Self" or "No-Self"

Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering

Paṭicca Samuppāda – A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā

Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra

Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)

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Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda

Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāna/Kamma Viññāna

Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering

Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections

Paṭicca Samuppāda – From Mind to Matter

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction

Kāma Assāda – A Root Cause of Suffering

Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births – Samsappanīya Sutta

Wider Worldview of the Buddha

The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth

Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths

Sammā Diṭṭhī – Only One Leads to the Noble Path

Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

Worldview of the Buddha – Explanatory Material

Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept

Mental Body Versus the Physical Body

"Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1

"Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2

Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception

5.2.8.1 Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism

August 4, 2019

Introduction

The issue of the origin of life is critical to *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*, which is one of the key wrong views to be removed to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage. I have discussed some background material in the past several posts. It is time to take an in-depth look at each of the three views on the origin of life.

1. As I have already mentioned in the past few posts, there are two wrong views regarding life.

- The materialistic view says life has origins in inert matter. Science says 108 or so atoms make everything in this world. Somehow consciousness with feelings, perceptions, desires, and hopes arise out of inert matter. Many scientists and atheists hold this view.
- Those who are faithful followers of the Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, Islam) or Hinduism believe that there is a separate "mental component" that makes the inert physical body "alive" with

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feelings, perceptions, desires, and hopes (four mental aggregates). A Creator God or *Mahā Brahma* created life according to them.

2. We also need to keep in mind the "endpoints of a life" according to those two views.

- In the materialistic view, one lives only the present life, and it all ends with the death of the physical body. **This view was called "*ucceda diṭṭhi*"** by the Buddha because here the life ends (*ucceda* means "cut off") with the death of the physical body.
- In the opposite view, the "mental body" survives even after the physical body dies. In Abrahamic religions, the "soul" either is born in heaven or "hell" forever. In Hinduism, the "*ātma*" keeps going through the rebirth process until one is born in the *Mahā Brahma* realm, which is again eternal. In either case, one will eventually live forever (in heaven, hell, or the Brahma realm). **This view was called "*sassata diṭṭhi*"** (*sassata* means "eternal") by the Buddha.

3. In refuting those two views, the Buddha taught that there is a "mental component" to life, but that is not a "soul" or "a *ātma*" going from one life to the next.

- That is because everything in this world arises due to causes. Life can many different forms (human, *deva*, *brahma*, animal, *peta*, hell-beings, etc.). **When one such existence ends another of those arise depending on which causes (*kamma vipāka*) come into play.**
- "Good" or "bad" forms of life arise due to "good" or "bad" actions done in the past, and the net result of existence in the "long term" is suffering (mainly because most *kammā* lead to "bad births").
- There is no "soul" or a "*ātma*" that can be considered to be "me" or "my essence." As long as one has that perception, the rebirth process will continue with much suffering.
- When one realizes the truth of this reality, one will stop grasping (*upādāna*) new existences.

The Conception and Birth of a Baby

4. Let us focus on human life. When the fertile mother (i.e., who has ovulated) has sex with the father, that leads to seed for a new life. The following is a summary extracted from "WebLink: Stages of Development of the Fetus."

- During each normal menstrual cycle, one of the ovaries release an egg. The release of the egg is called ovulation. The egg enters the funnel-shaped end of one of the fallopian tubes.
- Within 5 minutes of having sex, sperms from the father move from the vagina to the fallopian tube.
- If a sperm penetrates the egg, fertilization results. **The fusion of the egg and sperm produces a new cell called a zygote,** which is the "seed of life" for a brand new baby.

5. Tiny hairlike cilia lining the fallopian tube propel the zygote toward the uterus. The cells of the zygote repeatedly divide as the zygote moves down the fallopian tube. The zygote enters the uterus in 3 to 5 days.

- In the uterus, the cells continue to divide, becoming a hollow ball of cells called a blastocyst. Between five and eight days after fertilization, the blastocyst attaches to the lining of the uterus, usually near the top. This process, called implantation, is completed by day 9 or 10. The inner cells develop into the embryo, and the outer cells develop into the placenta.
- Some of the cells from the placenta develop into an outer layer of membranes (chorion) around the developing blastocyst. Other cells develop into an inner layer of membranes (amnion), which form the amniotic sac. When the sac is formed (by about day 10 to 12), the blastocyst is considered an embryo. The amniotic sac fills with a clear liquid (amniotic fluid) and expands to envelop the developing fetus, which floats within it.

6. Most internal organs and external body structures get built in this stage. Most organs begin to form about three weeks after fertilization, which equals five weeks of pregnancy. (Doctors date pregnancy from the first day of the woman's last menstrual period, which is typically two weeks before fertilization).

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- At the end of the 8th week after fertilization (10 weeks of pregnancy), the embryo is considered a fetus. Almost all organs are entirely formed by about ten weeks after fertilization (which equals 12 weeks of pregnancy). The exceptions are the brain and spinal cord, which continue to form and develop throughout pregnancy.

- By about 24 weeks: The fetus has a chance of survival outside the uterus. The lungs continue to mature until near the time of delivery. The brain accumulates new cells throughout pregnancy and the first year of life after birth.

Materialistic View

7. The above process describes the steps in the formation of the "physical body" of a new human being. **It cannot identify the time "when the mental stuff" is activated, i.e., when that inert zygote becomes alive.**

- Some say "life of the new baby" starts when the heartbeat starts, and at the other extreme some say when the baby is capable of surviving outside the womb; see, for example, "WebLink: When Does a Human Life Begin? 17 Timepoints."

- According to Buddha Dhamma, the new life starts when a *gandhabba* (or *patisandhi viññāṇa*) "descends to the womb and takes possession of the zygote." That happens very early, within a day or two of the formation of the zygote; see, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

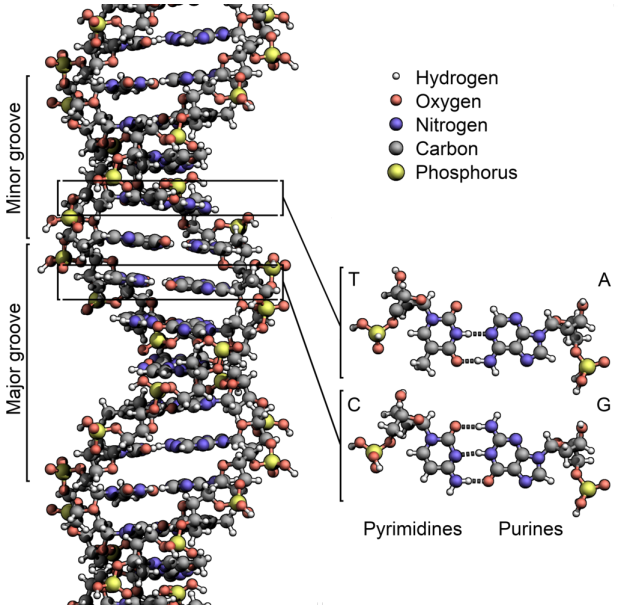
8. Besides the above hurdle, the materialistic view cannot explain how that single cell or the zygote gives rise to a complex human with many trillions of different types of cells.

- Even though we all start with a single cell, the cells in different parts of our bodies are very different. Liver cells are different from heart cells, and the cells in the brain — called neural cells or neurons — are much more diverse.

- Furthermore, how do these cells know when to start building different cells for liver, heart, brain, arms, legs, etc.?

9. These issues have been studied in detail even since Watson and Crick discovered the double-helix structure of the DNA (Deoxyribonucleic acid) molecule back in 1953. We have discussed the complexity of a cell, so now we can summarize these findings as follows: [WebLink: What is DNA?]

- DNA strand in a cell has the necessary "code" (similar to computer code) to how to build the whole body consisting of trillions of cells.
- This DNA, or the blueprint for the whole body, is in every cell. However, the proteins and body parts generated by each cell are different. How does each cell "know" which part of the "code" to read?
- I am skipping a lot of details. Those who are interested should read two excellent books (References 1 and 2 below). The former is by an evolutionist and the latter by a creationist. However, it is not necessary to study this complex issue in detail; it is enough to "get the basic idea."



The structure of the DNA double helix. The atoms in the structure are colour-coded by element and the detailed structures of two base pairs are shown in the bottom right.

Fundamental Problems with the Materialistic View

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10. Two key issues remain unresolved. The first is, how did this complex DNA structure evolve, starting with simple molecules?

- In 1953, Stanley Miller and Harold Urey mixed chemicals in a simulated "early-Earth atmosphere" and produced amino acids — precursors of DNA. It received much publicity as a significant clue to the origin of life. But that is a far cry from making a working cell in a laboratory. No one has even come close to that in the 65 years following that "breakthrough."
- The videos in my previous posts discuss this problem at length; see, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin" and "Living Cell – How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?."

11. There is an even more critical issue: Is it even possible for such a complex "genetic code" to evolve?

- Those of us who have written computer programs know that even a simple program requires "planning" and would not work unless it is free of "bugs." Even though it is relatively easy to "fix a bug" with KNOWLEDGE of the code, it is unimaginable that a bug in such a sophisticated program can "get fixed" via a random "trial and error" process. In such a random process, it is more likely to "add more errors" to code than fixing an existing error.
- The following review paper summarizes current status: "WebLink: pdf file: Koonin and Novozhilov-Origin and Evolution of Universal Genetic Code – 2017."
- For those who like to find more details, I recommend Ref. 3 below. The author is offering 10 million dollars to anyone illustrating the feasibility of the evolution of genetic code; see, "WebLink: evo2.org: Evolution 2.0." I recommend watching the video there. It is not really about the prize; he explains why it is an impossibility.

12. Darwin's original theory of evolution predicted a "gradual evolution" of SPECIES, i.e., simple lifeforms evolving to complex lifeforms. However, "neo Darwinism" of the present time is trying to tackle the following key issues.

- Recent studies reveal that the GENETIC CODE is virtually the same for many species, ranging from mice to humans (in animals with a few cells, the genome is small). In other words, the DNA in mice essentially has the code to start a human life, but those sections in the program are NOT TRIGGERED for mice; see Ref. 1 for details.
- **That is a critical point. The CODE Is virtually the same in many lifeforms, but the "correct sections of the code" must be triggered for each species. It is as if someone had planned for all lifeforms in advance!**
- It is just that different parts of the code get activated for different species! **That raises the second issue. WHO (or WHAT in the code) triggers specific genes to be enabled in different species AND at the right time (e.g., fingers come after the arms)?**
- That is possibly why some evolutionist scientists are switching to the creationist side (Dr. Francis Collins, the director of the Human Genome Project is an example). There has not been a third alternative (because most people do not know — or understand — Buddha's version).

In the next post, I will discuss problems associated with the creationist view (*sassata diṭṭhi*).

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2. "Signature in the Cell" by Stephen C. Meyer (2009).
3. "Evolution 2.0: Breaking the Deadlock Between Darwin and Design" by Perry Marshall (2017).

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5.2.8.2 Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 1

August 12, 2019

Introduction

1. The concept of eternal future life is built into most of the religions today. It comes in two varieties.

- In Abrahamic religions (Christianity, Judaism, and Islam), one is born only once. Then at the end of this life, one is either taken to heaven or hell for eternity.
- In Hinduism, one has born before, will reborn again and again, until one is born in the *Mahā Brahma* realm. Then one will live there forever.
- Both varieties require a Creator (God or *Mahā Brahma*).
- (Please note that the intent of my post is just to lay down the **facts** (to my knowledge). If I have miswritten something, please post a comment at the discussion forum or send me an email at lal@puredhamma.net. I would be happy to correct any errors.)

2. In the time of the Buddha, there was only the latter view associated with a future eternal life. However, in both the above cases, the expectation is that one will have eternal life at the end. Such a view of eternal life was called *sassata diṭṭhi* by the Buddha ("*sassata*" means eternal).

- As we recall from my previous post, "Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism," this is the opposite of the wrong that life ends with death in this life. That was called *uccheda diṭṭhi* ("*ucceda*" means cut off) by the Buddha.
- As we know, the Buddha explained 62 types of wrong views in the WebLink: suttacentral: *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1). However, the two main wrong views REGARDING LIFE are the above. Some of those 62 wrong views are on whether the world is eternal or not, and whether the world is finite or not.

Eternal Life in Hinduism and Abrahamic Religions

3. In the WebLink: suttacentral: *Brahmajāla Sutta* (DN 1), the Buddha explained how some people at that time concluded eternal soul or *atta* (*ātma* in Sanskrit/Hinduism).

- There were *yogis*, even before the Buddha, who could attain (*anāriya*) *jhāna* and with them the ability to recall past lives. Some were able to recall hundreds and thousands of past lives. One may change the form of birth (human, *deva*, etc.), but each birth associated with "oneself."
- Some of them had cultivated *abhiññā* powers to higher levels, where they could "see" very far back. They could see many destructions/re-formations of the world (i.e., many *mahā kappās*). Even for such long times, they could see their "*ātma*" or "*atta*" taking different forms, but it was the "same self" who acquired such various forms.
- The Buddha gave an analogy in the *Brahmajāla Sutta.* A person may live in a particular city for several years during childhood, move to another to go to school, get a job in a yet another city, and eventually retire in yet a different country. But that person has the perception that it was "me" who was at all those different places, with different physical bodies. Going through different lives is similar; there is a perception of "me" or "self" or "soul" (*ātma*/*atta*).

4. Now we can see a difference in views of Abrahamic religions and Hinduism.

- The concept of rebirth is firmly in Hinduism. That is coming for a long time even before the Buddha Gōtama. It is based on the experience of ancient *yōgis* who had cultivated the ability to look at past lives.
- On the other hand, rebirth is entirely absent in Abrahamic religions. So, the origin of human life in Abrahamic religions is purely materialistic. The only requirement is to have a zygote created by the union

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of the mother's egg and father's sperm. Therefore, there is some overlap here with the materialistic view of life; see, "Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism."

- However, as far as the end of life is concerned, both Abrahamic religions and Hinduism have a similar view. That one attains eternal life at the end.

Issues Only Relevant to Abrahamic Religions

5. The other difference between Abrahamic religions and Hinduism is that in the former, one is born only once AND gets only this life to work towards getting eternal life in heaven. If one misses that opportunity, one will be committed to the hell for eternity.

- The Bible clearly says one dies only once and then faces judgment (WebLink: biblia.com: Hebrews 9:27). The Bible never mentions people having a second chance at life or coming back as different people or animals. WebLink: biblia.com: Matthew 25:46 says explicitly that believers go on to eternal life while unbelievers go onto eternal punishment. As I understand, Judaism and Islam have the same concept.
- I wonder what happens to a baby dying very young. Does it go to heaven or hell? What about a mentally disabled person? It does not seem to be fair if they are committed to hell for eternity. If they do get qualified to be born in heaven, it would be better to skip this life (be killed as a baby) and be born in heaven right away.
- I may not be aware of the details on that issue. But it is an important issue. As I mentioned earlier, I welcome comments. The goal is to have a clear and correct picture of different world views.

6. Since this is the "first life" for any human alive today (since there is no rebirth process in Abrahamic religions), the following question arises. Why is it that people are born healthy/with disabilities, poor/rich, beautiful/ugly, etc.?

- To put it another way, is each of us a "new creations of the Creator"? If so, why did he choose to create some of us with disabilities, for example? If we did not have prior lives, there was no basis to differentiate among new births.
- Furthermore, was the "soul" of an existing individual created at the time of his/her conception or birth?
- There are simple questions that need answers, in my opinion.

7. I do understand that the Creator God is supposed to have "breathed life" to Adam and Eve made them in his image. But not to animals; they do not have a soul in Abrahamic religions).

- Animals are made of the same "stuff" as humans. As I discussed in the previous post, many animals have DNA that is 99% the same as those for humans; see, "Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism."
- Animals are supposed to be there for the consumption of humans. That also does not seem to be logical.

Issues Only Relevant to Hinduism

8. The *Purush-Sukta*, a section of the *Rig Veda*, describes the divine origin of human beings into the four social groups, or castes, that comprise Hindu society: *Brahmin, Kshatriya, Vaishya*, and *Sudra*. According to the *Purush-Sukta*, b*rahmins* born from the mouth of the Brahma, *kshatriya* from the arms, *vaishya* from the thighs, and *sudra* from the calves.

- This categorization comes at the beginning of the *Agganna Sutta* (DN 27). Vāseṭṭha, himself a *brahmin*, tells the Buddha that other *brahmins* say to him that he should not associate with lower-caste people. Followers of the Buddha came from all four castes. They tell him that, "Only *brahmins* are genuine children of *Brahmā*, born of his mouth, offspring of *Brahmā*, created by *Brahmā*, heirs of *Brahmā*."
- The Buddha tells Vāseṭṭha that all people today are womb-born.

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- Then he proceeded to give an account of how all "first humans" at the beginning of this *Mahā Kappa* were born instantaneously (*ōpapatika* births) with *brahma*-like bodies, and how they "evolved" over the past several billions of years to end up with "womb-born births"; see, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."
- The current series on the "Origin of Life" will provide more details from that *sutta*. Darwin's theory of evolution is somewhat correct for the appearance of increasingly complex animal species over time. It is not right to say that humans have "evolved from animals." Furthermore, a "first living cell" can't evolve from inert matter to form the primitive animal species either, as we have discussed in recent posts.

9. As in the case of a Creator God in Abrahamic religions, why did *Mahā Brahma* create four classes of humans at the beginning, per #7 above? Why not create them all equal?

- Did *Mahā Brahma* also create animals as well? Can humans be born as animals? If so, do animals have a *ātma*?
- I may be ignorant of these issues. One problem that I have had with Hinduism is that there are so many different versions. One good example is that in some Hindu temples animal sacrifice is carried out regularly. On the other hand, there are other Hindus who abstain from eating meat, let alone killing animals!
- The best way to clarify these issues is to start a discussion at the discussion forum. Then I can revise this post based on that discussion if needed. I have opened a new topic to discuss any of the posts in the "Origin of Life" series: "Questions on Posts in the "Origin of Life" Subsection."

I will discuss apparent problems associated with all creator-based religions in the next post.

5.2.8.3 Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 2

August 19, 2019

In the previous post, "Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 1," we discussed some problems associated with creationism. We will continue that discussion.

How Did the Creator Come to Existence?

Now we can get to the issues which are common to Abrahamic religions and Hinduism.

1. First of all, the inevitable question is, how did the Creator (God or *Mahā Brahma*) come to existence? The Principle of Causality, the foundation of modern science, says things do not happen or materialize without causes.

- The idea of a Creator as "the First Cause" has a long history; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Cosmological argument."
- Logically it cannot be defended, but it has come to be a belief for those who have faith in a Creator.

2. In the previous post, we saw a crucial difference between Buddhism and Hinduism. (Even though the concept of rebirth is there in both.) In Hinduism, there is the belief of an everlasting existence in the *Mahā Brahma* realm (or reunification with the *Brahman*).

- Of course, a similar concept is there with Abrahamic religions too, with eternal life in heaven or hell.
- However, the idea of rebirth is absent in Abrahamic faiths.
- **Let us now focus on the issue of "eternal life" after death,** which is in Abrahamic religions and Hinduism.

3. In Abrahamic religions, the Creator God lives in the heavens. If one lives a moral life, one will get to live "in the heavens" forever; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Heaven in Christianity."

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- In Hinduism, the Creator Brahma lives in a Brahma realm; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Brahma." One can be born there, by living a moral life and by cultivating *jhāna*.
- Therefore, all Creator-based religions assume the existence of a heavenly plane where life is permanent. Once born there, one will live forever without ever dying.

Nothing in This World Is Forever

4. Stars in the heavens appear to be serene and shiny. Even though we see beautiful and calm "starry nights," the outer space is a violent place.

- In reality, a typical star converts *millions of tons of mass into energy every second*, with ***each gram releasing as much energy as an atomic bomb***!
- Within the range of our telescopes, there are several supernova explosions per second. A supernova is the explosion of a star at the end of its lifetime.
- Therefore, even though our ancestors thought that Gods reside among those nice-looking stars, and the heavens are stable and peaceful, the reality is very different.

5. The Buddha's world view (which is based on experience, as we will discuss in upcoming posts) is that no existence is everlasting. Life in any heavenly realm (*Deva* or *Brahma* realms) is finite, even though some can be very long lifetimes.

- At the time of the Buddha, Abrahamic religions were not there. He has addressed the issue of everlasting life in the *Mahā Brahma* realm in several *suttā*. We will discuss that in future posts.
- Before that, let us look at the scientific evidence that any type of matter (which essential for life) has a finite lifetime.

6. A permanently-existing heavenly body is in contradiction with modern science as well as with Buddha's description of 31 realms where every life ends at some point. Even though *Deva* and *Brahma* realms have long lifetimes, they are not free of death.

- In current scientific theories, the whole universe will run down in several billion years.
- Furthermore, each star is either destroyed in a violent blast (some are called "supernova") or will be subjected to "heat death" reaching the white dwarf stage; see the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Star."
- In Buddha Dhamma, clusters of star systems (*cakkavāla*) get destroyed periodically. Even though higher-lying realms do survive, living beings in those realms also have finite lifetimes. After many billions of years, those star systems re-form. So, it is a cyclic process where destruction is followed by rebirth (re-formation), just like for a living being; see, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

The Problem of Suffering

7. Then there is the critical issue of why would a Creator let the man that he created to suffer? He could have created a suffering-free world.

- The general explanation in Christianity is that Adam and Eve sinned.
- But the Creator could have made it not possible for Adam and Eve to sin. Furthermore, it does not make sense for the descendants to punished for the sins of Adam and Eve.
- And why is it that some are born to suffer (mentally retarded or handicapped, for example)? What is the explanation for some people born that way? Also, why are some born poor, compared to others who are born rich?

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8. As I mentioned in a previous post, "Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism," some scientists like Francis Collins and James Tour have given up belief in the theory of evolution. They have become proponents of creationism since they do not see another option.

- We discussed James Tour's views in the post, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."

9. Francis Collins has written a book about why he changed his views to become a creationist. I have written a post to critically examine the issues that he could not explain with creationism: ""The Language of God" by Francis Collins." Please read that post for details, but the following are the key points.

- As I pointed out there, Dr. Collins faced the same difficulties as C. S. Lewis in trying to explain why God left room for suffering.
- Why would God allow the existence of Satan and the associated immoral behavior by people? The main conclusion was that God chose to give the man free will, and the man abused it. But God could have given free will without the existence of Satan or the ability to sin.
- The existence of "Moral Law" (the ability to differentiate right from wrong) is the fundamental basis for his belief in God. However, that argument works for all religions.
- These are critical issues that do not have answers in creationism world views.

Debate Between Materialists and Creationists

10. In the last few posts, I presented the two sides as Evolutionists and creationists. However, some creationists do not have a problem with Darwin's theory of evolution if it just pertains to the "evolution of species."

- The critical issue for them is about the "origin of life" and not the evolution of species. In other words, many creationists agree that once life got started with simple life-forms, more complex life-forms evolved gradually.
- In fundamental terms, the critical question is, "how did the first cell come to existence"?

11. Of course, the evolutionists believe that the first living cell also evolved, starting from inert atoms and molecules.

- However, evolutionists have very little to say about how a first cell came to existence. I have read many books by evolutionists, and they mainly discuss just the evolution of species. They have very little evidence or even feasibility of how complex DNA molecules assembled, starting with simple atoms and molecules in random chemical reactions.
- They have even less to say about how the genetic code could have evolved. As I emphasized in previous posts, it is hard to imagine how such a program could develop in a random process. We know that computer codes do not "evolve." Furthermore, any accidental changes in the working computer code will only break that code, not make it better!

Intelligent Design Argument

12. As I mentioned above, some scientists have convinced themselves that a living cell with DNA code can't evolve. However, they are not comfortable with the concept of a Creator God.

- They have come up with the concept of "intelligent design." They do not explicitly invoke a Creator God but insist that a higher intelligence must have designed a living cell.
- That is also called the "Teleological argument." See the Wikipedia article, "WebLink: wikipedia: Teleological argument."

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13. As explained in that Wikipedia article, the phrase "argument from design" was first used by William Paley, an English clergyman, in 1802. He said that if one finds a clock on the beach, one can safely conclude that the watch must have had a designer. In the same way, complex living beings must have had a "designer."

- Modern advocates of the intelligent design argument point out that a cell is much more complicated than a watch, and that it could not have evolved due to random processes.
- However, that does not solve the problem. Such a "designer" must have super-human capabilities, and thus is not that different from the idea of a Creator. The idea of a creator or a designer runs contradictory to the Principle of Causation, upon which science is based (see #1 above).

Summary

14. The existence of permanent life and suffering are two critical problems with the creator-based origin of life. However, there are many related issues.

- Can the life of a human arise randomly? In other words, why are humans born under very different conditions of health, wealth, beauty, etc.? Neither evolutionists nor creationists (or "intelligent designers") can explain it. They all say, "it just happens that way."
- The second issue has to do with the origin of life (not the evolution of species). How did life originate? For example, how did the first cell with its complex double-helix DNA structure AND the genetic code come to existence? The two sides have different explanations for that issue.

15. Materialists believe that a living cell can arise via random jostling of atoms and molecules which are inert "matter." The critical question here is, is it at all possible for that to happen in a random process? **Another significant issue that we have not even discussed is: How can feelings, perception, desires, hopes, etc. arise from "dead matter"?**

- Creationists (and those who believe that a creator or a designer with super-human intelligence in "intelligent design") created living cells. That creator gave life to inert matter. There the question is, how did that creator or designer come to existence?

Buddhist Explanation

16. **In Buddha Dhamma, this "intelligent designer" is none other than Nature.** The life itself was not created but has existed forever. That is consistent with the Principle of Causality. Of course, Buddha provided (indirect) evidence in terms of a fully self-consistent "theory."

- **Furthermore, the mental qualities of a human are the CAUSES of existence (rebirth)**: It is not possible to create a life-stream. All existing life-streams have ALWAYS existed. That life-form takes different forms in different existences (not only human and animal, but among 31 possible realms). See, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream."
- **Future existences of a given life-stream DEPEND on the "mental qualities" (and actions, speech, thoughts that arise BASED ON those mental qualities) of that life-stream.**
- **Suffering and pleasure exist in this world. Both arise due to previous actions (*kamma*). And one's deeds are based on one's mental state at that time.**

17. **When one understands those key concepts, one will "see" that there is no "*attā*" or "soul" or "*ātma*" going from birth-to-birth.** That is the first stage of *Sammā Diṭṭhi*. Causes (*kamma*) **and conditions** lead to corresponding outcomes (*kamma vipāka*) per *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. That understanding is the key to removing "*sakkāya diṭṭhi*."

- We will first discuss those "mental qualities" next. It is essential to understand those to discuss Buddha's teachings of life. **His world views were not speculation but based on his ability to "see" how life**

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progressed over trillions of years in the past. It is NOT JUST a logical or philosophical argument, even though it is self-consistent.

- It is critical to understand the essential points discussed so far to continue with upcoming posts. I recommend re-reading #16 and #17 until those key ideas are grasped at least vaguely.

5.2.8.4 Worldview of the Buddha

August 26, 2019

Buddhist Worldview – Introduction

Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa

How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?

Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa

Is There a "Self"?

Citta – Basis of Our Experience and Actions

Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event

Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)

Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy

Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"

An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation

Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not "Self" or "No-Self"

Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering

Paṭicca Samuppāda – A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā

Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra

Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)

Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda

Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa

Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering

Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections

Paṭicca Samuppāda – From Mind to Matter

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction

Kāma Assāda – A Root Cause of Suffering

Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births – Samsappanīya Sutta

Wider Worldview of the Buddha

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The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth

Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths

Sammā Diṭṭhī – Only One Leads to the Noble Path

Worldview of the Buddha – Explanatory Material

Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept

Mental Body Versus the Physical Body

5.2.8.4.1 Buddhist Worldview – Introduction

August 26, 2019

Introduction

1. The Buddhist worldview is somewhat complicated but is self-consistent. In the previous three posts, we discussed the two dominant world views of evolutionism and creationism. The Buddha categorized them respectively as *uccheda diṭṭhi* and *sassata diṭṭhi* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmajāla Sutta (DN 1)." **When one removes both those wrong views, one would have removed *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and attained the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.**

- In both those world views, there is the idea of an "existing person." Evolutionists say that "a person" ends with the death of the physical body. Creationists say that the "soul" or the "ātma" of "a person" will get an "everlasting life" at some point. See the discussion so far at "Origin of Life."
- The Buddha taught that the existence of such "a person" is illusory. At each moment, there is an experience that arises due to past causes AND based on prevailing conditions. That "conditional cause and effect" or the Principle of Causality is called Paticca Samuppāda. **However, those experiences and any physical sufferings are real.**

2. Thus, in the Buddhist worldview, "a person," at a given time, may be defined as a "set of *gati*" or "character qualities." Those *gati* are the conditions to bring about the results (*vipāka*) of past actions (*kamma*). When one gets rid of those "*gati,*" that will lead to the stopping of those sense experiences burdened with suffering. That is *Parinibbāna* or "full release from suffering." **However, the perception (*saññā*) of such "a person" will be there until one attains the *Arahanthood*.**

- That is a very brief summary. With this post, we will start discussing the details.

3. The "material or physical world" takes precedence in current dominant world views of evolutionism and creationism. Evolutionists consider mental aspects as secondary and to arise from inert matter. Thus, they believe the mind is an emergent phenomenon.

- Even the creationists do not pay much attention to the diverse mind phenomena. They believe that the mind is separate from matter and that the Creator created both.
- Buddha has taught material aspects briefly but focused on the mind in great detail. Furthermore, he has explained that the opposite of materialism is the correct worldview. **That is, instead of mind phenomena arising from inert matter, the mind is the precursor to matter.**
- That may sound astounding. That is why we need to go through the steps slowly. But it is essential first to remind ourselves that it is not possible to create a brand-new "life-stream" or a "new living being."

A Life-Stream (Rebirth Process) Has No Beginning

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4. All living beings (an infinite number of them) have lived from a time that has "no traceable beginning." That is a cornerstone of the Buddhist worldview.

- The Buddha declared that as, "*Anamataggoyaṃ, bhikkhave, saṃsāro*." That means **"*bhikkhus*, there is no discernible beginning to the rebirth process."** This statement is in every *sutta* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Saṃyutta" in *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (SN).
- You and I have existed "forever." We will continue to live in one of the 31 realms until we attain the Arahanthood and then attain *Parinibbāna*. *Parinibbāna* means "complete Nibbāna." That is completely separating from this world of 31 realms. No more rebirths in this world. No more suffering.
- I have discussed this in detail in the post, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."

5. The above statement of a life existing from a time with no traceable beginning may seem to be contradictory to the fundamental concept that nothing in this world lasts forever. There is no contradiction.

- At any time, a given "life-stream" has a hadaya vatthu (seat of mind) and several *pasāda rūpa* ranging from zero (in *arūpāvacara* realms or planes) to five (in kāma realms). *Hadaya vatthu* and a set of *pasāda rūpa* are the "*manomaya kāya*" that every living being has. It is unimaginably small (smaller than an atom in modern science). **That *manomaya kāya* keeps changing as the life-stream moves among the 31 realms.**
- The *manomaya kāya* is a "mental body." But "body" here means a "collection," the collection of *hadaya vatthu* and a set of *pasāda rūpa*. One's "mental body" weighs much less than a mustard seed. In fact, at the moment of conception ("*paṭisandhi viññāṇa* descending to the womb), our "physical body" consists only of a single cell (zygote), as we discussed in "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya"."
- In humans and animals, this *manomaya kāya* is the same as *gandhabba*. For *brahmā*, *manomaya kāya* is all they have!
- The "mental body" (*gandhabba*) is what controls the massive physical body of a human or an animal.

A Worldview Based on Experience

6. The Buddhist worldview is not a theory or speculation. The Buddha could "see" each of the 31 realms of this world. He could "see" how a life-stream moves from one realm to another based on *kamma vipāka* and prevailing conditions, i.e., *Paticca Samuppāda*.

- Many suttā describe Buddha's and his disciples' visits to *brahma* and *deva* planes. Others describe visits of *brahmā* and devas to the human world (mainly to listen to the discourses of the Buddha and to ask questions from the Buddha).
- For example, in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, it is described that billions of *devas* and *brahmā* were there to listen to the first discourse of the Buddha, *Dhammacappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11). The *Brahmanimantanika Sutta* (MN 49), describes how the Buddha visited the realm of the *Mahā Brahma* to explain to him that his existence is not eternal; see, "Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."
- One time, a brahmin came to the Buddha and asked whether the Buddha believes in the existence of *devas, brahmā, apāyā*, etc. The Buddha told him that he "sees" them and communicates with them. If someone comes across the name of that sutta, please let me know: lal@puredhamma.net. I will add that reference here.
- August 28, 2019: Reader Siebe sent me the following reference: "WebLink: suttacentral: Devadūta Sutta (MN 130)" that describes "hells" or "*niraya*." A translation at: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Devaduta Sutta: The Deva Messengers." A similar sutta about some realms located close to Earth are described in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ātānāṭiya Sutta (DN 23)." A translation there, "WebLink: suttacentral: The Ātānāṭiya Discourse (DN 23)." Also, see my post on August 28, 2019, at the discussion forum on,

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"WebLink: Pure Dhamma Forums: Questions on Posts in the "Origin of Life" Subsection." It discusses "life in hell."

- More information on hells at: "Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?." I revised and updated that post on August 29, 2019.

7. More than 2500 years ago, the Buddha described the "physical world" consisting of billions of galaxies with billions of stars in each galaxy (with different names of course).

- On the other hand, even a few hundred years ago, modern science's view of the universe was that it included only the Solar system.
- In the early 1600s, Galileo invented the telescope. He first saw that the Moon is similar to the Earth in composition, that the stars are no different from our Sun. With more powerful telescopes, we now know that there is an unbelievable number of stars (with planets around them) out there.

8. However, the Buddha taught that studying the physical structure of the universe is not beneficial. While it is an exciting subject, studying that would not solve the "problem of suffering." We have only a limited time in this life, and we must focus on the task of removing future suffering.

- Regarding that aspect, one should focus on one's inner world. In particular, on the issue of how suffering-filled rebirths materialize due to one's thoughts, speech, and actions. We do not need telescopes or other fancy instruments for that. We can use our minds.
- By the way, by focusing on the mental phenomena, one can also find much more about the physical world with billions of galaxies WITHOUT any scientific instrument. That is how the Buddha knew more about the universe than modern scientists.
- Therefore, the Buddhist worldview can provide a complete description of how our world. The Buddha explained how an infinite number of "life-streams" takes different forms in a rebirth process that has no beginning.

What is One's World?

9. A given person's world is what he/she experiences. What exactly do we experience?

- We see forms with our eyes, hear sounds with ears, taste with tongues, smell with the nose, body touches with physical bodies. Those are the five physical sense faculties and the five types of "external entities" experienced by them. Modern science still thinks the mind is an "emergent phenomenon" arising from the brain.
- However, in Buddha Dhamma, the mind is much more critical than those five physical senses, and we will see why.

10. With the mind, we remember past events, think about concepts like mathematics or Buddha Dhamma, and plan for the future. That latter is the most crucial task by the mind. We think about, plan, and initiate activities by generating *saṅkhāra* in mind.

- Most such activities start due to ignorance (*avijjā*) about the real nature of this world. That is why the *akusala-mūla* Paticca Samuppāda cycle begins with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." We create good/bad kamma via *saṅkhāra*, which lead to defiled viññāṇa via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."
- When *viññāṇa* become strong enough, they can become *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* that fuel the rebirth process. We will discuss this later. **That is how the mind creates future existences in the Buddhist worldview.**

Our World Consists of Twelve *Āyatanas*

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11. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" describes in detail the sensory experience in the Buddhist worldview. For an English translation see, "WebLink: suttacentral: The Six Sets of Six (MN 148)." We will discuss this *sutta* in detail.

- In that *sutta*, the Buddha labeled our six types of internal sense faculties as six "internal *āyatana"* (*ajjhattikāni āyatanāni*). Furthermore, he called the six external entities sensed by them as "external *āyatana"* (*bāhirāni āyatanāni*). From now on, we will use the terms "internal *āyatana*" and "external *āyatana*."
- As I emphasize often, it is best to learn what is meant by some critical Pāli words and use those Pāli words. In many cases, there are no exact English translations. Note that in the above English translation of the *sutta*, the word "*āyatana" translated as* "base." When we start discussing *Paticca Samuppāda*, you will see why it is better to use the Pāli term, *āyatana.*
- In summary, our world consists of twelve *āyatana.* Material wise, there is NOTHING ELSE in the world. The Buddha called those twelve "*sabba*" or "all"; see, WebLink: suttacentral: Sabba Sutta (SN 35.23).

12. The WebLink: suttacentral: Āyatanavibhaṅga provides details on the twelve *āyatana*. For example: "*Tattha katamaṃ cakkhāyatanaṃ? Yaṃ cakkhu catunnaṃ mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya pasādo attabhāvapariyāpanno anidassano sappaṭigho, yena cakkhunā anidassanena sappaṭighena rūpaṃ sanidassanaṃ sappaṭighaṃ passi vā passati vā passissati vā passe vā, cakkhumpetaṃ cakkhāyatanampetaṃ cakkhudhātupesā cakkhundriyampetaṃ lokopeso dvārāpesā samuddopeso paṇḍarampetaṃ khettampetaṃ vatthumpetaṃ nettampetaṃ nayanampetaṃ orimaṃ tīrampetaṃ suñño gāmopeso. Idaṃ vuccati "cakkhāyatanaṃ."*

Translated: "What is ***cakkhāyatana***? It is that ***cakkhu pasāda*** derived from the four great elements. It is **invisible (*anidassano*)**, makes contact (*sappaṭighena*) with visible (object)."

- I have just translated the first part with an important fact: One cannot see the ***cakkhāyatana***. **It is NOT the eyes.** We will discuss in the next post how eyes act like cameras, just capturing the signal from the object. The brain processes that signal, which then is passed on to the *cakkhāyatana*.
- **In the same way, *sotāyatana, ghānāyatana, jivhāyatana, kāyāyatana* are all invisible.** Those five are the *pasāda rūpa* that I mentioned above. They are in the *manomaya kāya*, around the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of mind). Also see, "Rūpa (Material Form)."
- The *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa* are in the *manomaya kāya* overlap the heart in the physical body. That is why the *manomaya kāya* comes out when the heart is stressed, like during some heart operations; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

Internal and External *Āyatana*

13. The six INTERNAL *āyatana* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā, kāya*, and *mana*) are responsible for detecting sensory inputs.

- They are all very fine *rūpa* (traces of matter) at the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level, i.e., they are the smallest units of matter.
- However, their ability to detect external *rūpa* comes from the *kammic* energy embedded in them. Those *kammic* energies induce rotation and spin modes, i.e., those *suddhaṭṭhaka* start turning and spinning just like electrons in an atom. That is why they called units of ten or *dasaka*. For example, *cakkhu rūpa* is called a *cakkhu dasaka*. It has a *suddhaṭṭhaka* (eight units of matter) and two units of energy (one in rotation and one in spin). See, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."
- Yes. The Buddha knew about rotation and spin before modern science. "Energy" can be in **spin** (*bramana* in Pāli*; bramana or* බ්‍රමණ in Sinhala) and **rotation** (*paribbramana* in Pāli*; bramana* or පරිබ්‍රමණ in Sinhala). See, "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."

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14. There are six types of EXTERNAL *āyatana* (*vaṇṇa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phoṭṭhabba rūpa*, and *dhamma rūpa* or *dhammā*).

- Most times, *vaṇṇa rūpa* are called *rūpa rūpa* or just *rūpa*. In the *Chachakka Sutta,* they are just called *rūpa*. Those are the ones we see with our eyes. Many people assume that those are the only *rūpa*. That is because they do not perceive sound as a form of *rūpa*, for example. But a sound-wave carries energy.
- Even modern science accepted that energy and matter are indistinguishable only after Einstein found the connection between energy and matter with his famous equation, E = mc^2.
- *Gandha* or smell is associated with fine particles of odor that flow through the air and get into our noses. *Rasa* or taste comes from the food we eat. *Phoṭṭhabba* or touch is with solid matter. So, those are also *rūpa*.
- Yes. Some of *dhamma rūpa* or *dhammā* (sensed by the mind) are also *rūpa*. *Dhammā* are called *sukhuma rūpa* because they are below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. See, "What are Rūpa? – Dhammā are Rūpa too!." Also, the mind can detect memories (*nama gotta*) and concepts (like mathematics) too.

15. We have discussed all types of matter (and energy) in our world within the Buddhist worldview. In the next post, we will discuss how our mental experience (through *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*) arise when internal *āyatana* come into contact with external *āyatana.*

5.2.8.4.2 Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa

September 2, 2019; revised November 14, 2019; January 15, 2021 (#8)

Introduction

1. *Vipāka viññāṇa* arise due to *kamma vipāka.* In the previous post, we introduced the concept that our sensory experiences occur due to six internal *rūpā* and six external *rūpā*.

- Those six types of internal types of *rūpā* are "internal *āyatana."* In mundane terms, those are our eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind.
- With those, we experience sights, sounds, smells, tastes, body touches, and *dhammā* (memories, concepts, and our hopes). Those *rūpā* are external to us, and they are "external *āyatana."*
- You may wish to review the previous post, "Buddhist Worldview – Introduction."

Awareness of Living Things and Living Beings

2. When we look at a tree, for example, that is contact between our internal *āyatana* (eyes or more correctly *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*) and external *āyatana* (tree in this case). That leads to a mental phenomenon that we call consciousness (in this case *cakkhu viññāṇa*). It just means we are "aware of that tree."

- Humans and animals generate such "awareness" or consciousness when seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, external *rūpā.*
- However, we know that plants and trees also seem to be aware of the external world and can even respond in some cases. For example, a plant or a tree can "turn" towards sunlight. Their roots grow towards sources of water, and away from dry soil, etc.

3. There are a couple of "mental factors" (or *cetasika*) that are not exclusively "mental." They can arise even without a mind. Those two are *vedanā* and *saññā*.

- *Vedanā* comes from ("*ve*" + "*danā"*) which means "දැනවීම"(vīma dænavīma meaning "being aware") in Sinhala. That means to "become aware of something." **When we make contact with an**

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"external *āyatana*" via our six senses, we become aware of that external *rūpā*; that is *vedanā*. See, "Vedanā (Feelings)."

- At the fundamental level, *Saññā* means "recognition" of an object or a person or a concept, for example. In general, it is the recognition of an "external *āyatana*" or "external *rūpā*." See, "Saññā – What It Really Means."
- Therefore, plants and trees have a basic form of *vedanā* and *saññā*. **A plant can "feel" when sunlight falls on it (*vedanā*), and recognize that as sunlight (*saññā*).**

4. However, a plant CANNOT generate *saṅkhārā* (thoughts) about those *vedanā* and *saññā*. One may ask: "Then how does a plant turn towards sunlight?."

- Plants are like robots. A moving robot may have sensors that can detect obstacles in the way. That involves *vedanā* and *saññā* in the elementary sense.
- That robot may also have a computer in it which can instruct how to go around an obstacle, for example.
- The working of a plant is very similar. A plant seed has necessary "programs" installed in its cells to deal with the external environment. We discussed this a little bit in my posts on "living cells." See, the old posts in "Origin of Life."
- Therefore, some "live things" like plants can generate *vedanā* and *saññā*, but they CANNOT create *saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa*. We remember that *saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa* arise via, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" and "*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa.*"

Two Types of *Viññāṇa* of a Living Being

5. A **living thing** like a tree may have *vedanā* and *saññā*. But only a **living being** like a human or an animal has a full set of mental phenomena: *vedanā*, *saññā, saṅkhārā*, and *viññāṇa*.

- In other words, only living beings have minds with which they can generate *saṅkhārā* (loosely called thoughts), which in turn leads to *viññāṇa*.
- Now we will focus on two types of *viññāṇa* that arise in a living being upon a sensory contact between one of its "internal *āyatana*" and the corresponding "external *āyatana.*"
- For simplicity, let us consider the contact between *cakkhu* and *vaṇṇa rūpā* (or *rūpā rūpā* or simply *rūpā*). In mundane terms, this means "contact" between eyes and a form or an object (such as a tree).
- However, It is essential to keep in mind that **it is the *cakkhu pasāda rūpā* in the mental body (*gandhabba*) that "sees" the *vaṇṇa rūpā* or the image captured by the eyes**. See, #11 through #14 in the post, "Buddhist Worldview – Introduction."

Vipāka Viññāṇa – No Strong *Kamma* Done

All our INITIAL sensory experiences are due to the results of our past *kamma*, i.e., they are *kamma vipāka*.

6. When eyes (or more correctly *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*) and *vaṇṇa rūpā* come into contact, *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises. ***Cakkhu viññāṇa* is "seeing."**

- ***Cakkhu viññāṇa* arises due to *kamma vipāka*. In the same way, *sota, ghāṇa, jivhā*, and *kāya viññāṇa* are ALL "*vipāka viññāṇa.*"**
- Some *mano viññāṇa* are *vipāka viññāṇa*. For example, when we recall a past event that is a *mano viññāṇa* that cannot generate strong *kamma*.
- **There is no strong *kamma* done by *vipāka viññāṇa*. By "strong *kamma,*" I mean *kamma* that can lead to future rebirths.** Only *mano saṅkhārā* are involved in *kamma viññāṇa* (via "*avijjā*

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paccayā saṅkhārā" and "*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa.*" I will discuss that in the sub-section, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not "Self" or "No-Self."

- What is essential at this point is to remember that only *mano viññāṇa* can be either *vipāka viññāṇa* or *kamma viññāṇa* (we discuss below the second category). The other five types of *viññāṇa* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā*, and *kāya viññāṇa*) are only *vipāka viññāṇa.*

7. "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" describes the arising of such *vipāka viññāṇa*: "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ, ghānañca paṭicca gandhe ca uppajjati ghānaviññāṇaṃ, jivhāñca paṭicca rase ca uppajjati jivhāviññāṇaṃ, kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ, manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ.*"

- For example, *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises when a *rūpa* makes contact (*paṭicca*) with *cakkhu pasāda rūpā*. As we discussed in #12 of the previous post "Buddhist Worldview – Introduction," *cakkhu* here DOES NOT mean "eyes"; it means "*cakkhu pasāda rūpa.*"
- When the eyes capture an image of a tree, that image is processed by the brain and then passed along to the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* that is in the mental body or *manomaya kāya*. In the case of a human or an animal, *manomaya kāya* is the same as *gandhabba*.
- *Vipāka viññāṇa* do not generate strong *kamma*. For example, *cakkhu viññāṇa* means just "seeing," *sota viññāṇa* means only "hearing," etc. Just because one sees or hears, one does not do any strong *kamma*.

Vipāka Viññāṇa Could be "Consciousness"?

8. Therefore, *vipāka viññāṇa* DO NOT arise directly with *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. They occur when our sense faculties come to contact with external *rūpā*, as described in #7 above. Those *rupā* can be six types: *vaṇṇa rūpā, sadda, gandha, rasa, phoṭṭhabba*, and *dhammā*.

- **Note:** However, immediately following the arising of a *vipāka viññāna* a *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process takes place in the very next *citta*. This is a deeper aspect that would of interest to those who are deep into *Abhidhamma*: "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."
- The contact of an internal *āyatana* with an external *āyatana* leads to the "awareness" of that external *rūpā*.
- Therefore, *vipāka viññāṇa* could be the closest to the English word, "consciousness." Even then, there are some *mano saṅkhārā* that arise with a *vipāka viññāṇa*. Therefore, it is better not to refer to even *vipāka viññāṇa* as just consciousness.
- **That is why the Buddha described *viññāṇa* as a magician.** But this "magic show nature" is easier to see with *kamma viññāṇa* that we discuss below. The mind on its own creates *kamma viññāṇa* via *saṅkhārā* ("*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa*").

9. When we become conscious of an external *āyatana* (or an external *rūpā*), we may get interested in it. (We need to remember that external *rūpā* include visible objects, sounds, smells, tastes, bodily touches, or memories),

- That is when we start generating NEW *KAMMA*. That will happen **IF** we get attached to that sensory experience via greed or anger, for example.
- Those CONSCIOUS thoughts (called *saṅkhārā*) lead to a new type of *mano viññāṇa*. Those *viññāṇa* arise via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" followed by "*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa.*" Such *viññāṇa* are *kamma viññāṇa*.
- Such *kamma viññāṇa* MAY arise as the next step following the generation of any of the six types of *vipāka viññāṇa*. **That happens ONLY IF we get attached to the initial *vipāka viññāṇa*.**

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Kamma Viññāṇa – How We Create New *Kamma*

10. **We do *kamma* when we start generating conscious thoughts (*vacī* and *kāya saṅkhārā*) with INTENTION.** The Buddha said, "*Cetanāhaṃ, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi*" or, "*bhikkhus*, I say that *kamma* is one's intention." (WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta – AN 6.63.) When we think, speak, and act with specific INTENTION (good or bad) that leads to the generation of *kamma* (good or bad).

- However, **those initial *mano saṅkhārā* (associated with *vipāka viññāṇa*) arise AUTOMATICALLY**. Since the intention is involved indirectly, those *mano saṅkhārā* cannot bring about rebirth.
- To generate strong *kamma*, we must CONSCIOUSLY and DELIBERATELY create *saṅkhārā*.
- Such "strong *saṅkhārā*" are *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhārā*. As we have discussed before, *vacī saṅkhāra* involves "talking to oneself" and also speech. *Kāya saṅkhāra* leads to bodily actions.
- In other words, **we do *vacī kamma* and *kāya kamma* with those *vacī saṅkhārā* and *kāya saṅkhārā***. Of course, *vacī kammā* are lying, gossiping, etc., and *kāya kammā* are stealing, killing, etc.
- Stated yet another way, we generate speech and actions that can lead to future rebirths only via *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhārā*.

11. For those who are familiar with *Abhidhamma* (others can skip this and move on to #12): A sensory event discussed in #7 starts a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* with 17 *cittā*. The *vipāka viññāṇa* occurs at the beginning of the *citta vīthi*. For example, in a "seeing event," it is a *cakkhu viññāṇa*.

- Then, the mind accepts that sensory input with *sampaticchana* and *santirana citta*. It is in the next citta of *votthapana* that our minds MAKE decisions on how to respond to that sense input BASED ON our *gati* (character qualities).
- Then based on that determination, seven *javana cittā* run consecutively. It is with *javana cittā* that we respond (think, speak, and act).
- That is a very brief summary. More details at "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

Kamma Viññāṇa Arise Due to "*Saṅkhāra Paccayā Viññāṇa*"

12. Suppose one sees an appealing object and gets attached to it. One may then start thinking, speaking, and even taking action on trying to enjoy that sight again and again. That leads to the generation of *kamma* via *mano viññāṇa* (generated via *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhārā*.)

- The same happens if one gets annoyed or angry about something we see. Then one would be generating angry thoughts, speech, action. Those are also *mano viññāṇa*. **Such *mano viññāṇa* are "*kamma viññāṇa*."**
- Of course, both those cases arise due to *avijjā*. **We get attached (or get stuck) to a given sensory input because we like it or dislike it (both are done with *taṇhā*; see below).** Both happen due to *avijjā*, not knowing the "true nature." One comprehends the true nature when one attains "***yathābhūta ñāṇa*.**" We will discuss this in future posts.

13. **We can sort out the difference by seeing that all *kamma viññāṇa* have *saṅkhārā* as precursors.** They arise when we think, speak, act based on greed, anger, and ignorance. I will explain just the case of attachment (*taṇhā*) via greed.

- For example, when we first see something attractive, we AUTOMATICALLY get the perception of "liking it." Those INITIAL and AUTOMATIC thoughts are *mano saṅkhārā*. These arise due to our *gati*.

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- If we start pursuing such thoughts CONSCIOUSLY AND WILLFULLY, then we are generating *vitakka* and *vicāra* (which means consciously thinking about it). Those are *vacī saṅkhārā*. We may also speak out with such *vitakka/vicāra,* and vacī *saṅkhārā* are also responsible for speech.
- If our mind gets firmly attached, we may take actions using the body. Those bodily actions are due to *kāya saṅkhārā* generated in mind.

14. Now, we can see the difference between *vipāka viññāṇa* and *kamma viññāṇa*. *Vipāka viññāṇa* do not have *saṅkhārā* involved.

- On the other hand, *kamma viññāṇa* ALWAYS arise due to *saṅkhārā* generated via *avijjā*. Those are the *viññāṇa* that can lead to future *vipāka* (and even rebirth) via *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- In other words, *kamma viññāṇa* are the *viññāṇa* arising via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" followed by "*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa.*"
- That process continues with "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa,*" etc. and ends up in "*bhava paccayā jāti*, "*jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa*," and "the whole mass of suffering."
- That is why those created with *saṅkhārā* are *kamma viññāṇa.*

Summary

15. To summarize what we discussed in this post:

- ***Cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā*, and *kāya viññāṇa* are ONLY *vipāka viññāṇa*. They cannot lead to new rebirths.**
- ***Kamma viññāṇa* are those *viññāṇa* that COULD lead to future rebirths.**
- ***Mano viññāṇa* can be "*vipāka viññāṇa*" or "*kamma viññāṇa*."**

16. We will discuss more details in the next post. I am proceeding slowly to emphasize these fundamental ideas. It is crucial to be able to understand what is MEANT by a given critical key Pāli word. Then we can use that Pāli word, without having to explain its meaning again.

- I hope by now you can appreciate why it is not correct to translate *viññāṇa* as just "consciousness'.
- In the same way, *taṇhā* is NOT just greed. *Taṇhā* includes getting attached via anger too; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance." Also, see #12 above.
- There are several keywords like that, including *anicca* and *anatta.*
- It is critical to understand the meanings of such key Pāli words since there are no equivalent English words.

All posts on this general topic at "Origin of Life." Please direct any questions on the above post to the discussion forum at "Questions on Posts in the "Origin of Life" Subsection." If not registered at the forum, send questions to my email address, lal@puredhamma.net.

5.2.8.4.3 How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?

September 8, 2019

Introduction

1. Sense faculties are a key concept in Buddha Dhamma. In mundane usage, we are used to identifying sense faculties as eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body.

- However, in Buddha Dhamma, there are two different Pāli words depending on the usage of those sense faculties.

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- The sense faculties of a normal human are "**internal *āyatana***." With those, an average person experiences the outside world AND **forms attachments to them**.
- Then those external *rūpā* become "**external *āyatana*"** (for example, "my house", "my friend", etc); see, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa." **Therefore, external *āyatana* are the external *rūpā* that one gets attached to.**

2. An *Arahant* has removed all greed, anger, and ignorance from the mind. The sense faculties of an *Arahant* are ***indriya***. With his sensory faculties, an *Arahant* experiences "**external *rūpā***" such as "a house", "a person", etc. without any attachment. That house may be an elegant house where he lived some time back. But now it is just a house. That person could have been a "close friend" at that time, but now just another human being. Of course, the *Arahant* will recognize the house to be the one he lived in as a child and that the person was his friend.

- **In brief, a sense faculty is an *indriya* if there is no "attachment." It becomes an internal *āyatana* if one is attracted to it or repulsed by it. In the same way, an external *rūpa* becomes an external *āyatana* if one becomes attached to it.**
- The Pāli word for attachment is "*taṇhā*." It is critical to realize "attachment" can take place via greed, anger, revulsion, or ignorance. Once "attached", one just keeps thinking about it (that means generating *saṅkhāra*; see below). Also, see "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

How Do *Indriya* Become Internal *Āyatana*?

3. First, let us further clarify the difference between an internal *āyatana* and an *indriya*.

- We have six sense faculties, not just the five mentioned above. They are eyes (*cakkhu*), ears (*sōta*), nose (*ghāṇa*), tongue (*jivhā*), body (*kāya*), and the mind (*mano*).
- Our initial sense inputs (what we see, hear, etc) are due to *kamma vipāka.* **At the moment we experience them, we are using our sense faculties as *indriya.*** For example, when we see an attractive person while on the road, that is just "seeing the event" with the *cakkhu indriya*.
- However, based on those initial sense experience, we may INTENTIONALLY use those *indriya* to enjoy that sensory experience again and again. Then those *indriya* become *āyatana.* In the above example, if we get attached to that attractive person and keep looking at that person, then we are using our eyes as *cakkhāyatana* (*cakkhu āyatana* rhymes as *cakkhāyatana*.)
- **Therefore, an initial sensory event is captured by an *indriya.*** But just after receiving that sensory input, we tend to use that sense faculty as an internal *āyatana*. That happens if we get attached or form "*taṇhā*"; see #2 above.
- There is no equivalent English word for *āyatana*, so we will keep using *indriya* and *āyatana* from now on.

4. Let us take the example of two people eating a delicious cake. One is an average human (X) and the other a *Arahant*. Here the sense faculty is taste (*jivhā*).

- Bothwill generate the same kind of *jivhā viññāṇa* when they first taste it. That is just the taste of the cake. If the sensory elements in the tongue and the brain are working normally, both will be likely to find that cake "tasty." That "good taste" is a *kamma vipāka*. (By the way, there is an infinite number of *kamma bīja* waiting to bear fruit, including such a "small *vipāka*" as tasting a piece of cake.)
- The difference becomes apparent just after tasting the cake. The *Arahant* would forget all about that taste, even though he/she would have felt the "good taste." It was just a sensory experience and thus the *Arahant* was using that sense faculty as an *indriya*.
- On the other hand, X may "fall in love" with that tasty cake. She may ask for another serving. **Now she is using that sense faculty as an *āyatana*.** She will be accumulating NEW *kamma* with such actions.

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How One Indriya Can Lead to Many *Āyatana* (*Saḷāyatana*)

5. In many cases, when we experience a sensory event due to one *indriya*, we may start using some or all of the six *indriya* as *āyatana*. Then the set of *indriya* becomes *saḷāyatana*.

- In the above example of a tasty cake (which is a *kamma vipāka* for both), they both experience "a tasty cake." While the *Arahant* will not have any more thoughts about that taste, the average human (X) may be just getting started. She may ask for another piece even if she is not hungry.
- Let us analyze the situation carefully. The *Arahant* may accept for a second piece if he is hungry. That request was not made because of a greedy thought. Thus, the tongue (or more precisely the *jivhā pasāda*) has NOT become a *āyatana*.
- If X asks for another piece even if she is not hungry, that is definitely due to craving for that taste. Then her tongue has become a *āyatana*. If she is hungry, her request could be based on BOTH hunger and craving. So, now her tongue (more precisely *jivhā pasāda*) is still a *āyatana*, but the difference is not as clear cut.

6. Whether or not X's *jivhā pasāda rūpā* (internal *indriya* for tasting) has truly become a *āyatana* or not may become more clear if she takes further action.

- She may smell it and say, "it smells good too." She may keep saying how good the taste is, and ask for the recipe or inquire about where to buy one.
- Now many of her sense faculties have become *āyatana*. *Ghana pasāda rūpā* (for smelling) has now become *ghānāyatana* (*ghāṇa* + *āyatana*).
- She is thinking about how to go about tasting that cake again. Therefore, the mind (*mana*) has become *manāyatana* (*mana* + *āyatana*).
- If she starts writing down the recipe, her body (*kāya*) is helping out too, acting as a *kāyāyatana* (*kāya* + *āyatana*).
- Therefore, when more than one *āyatana* become engaged, the set of *āyatana* (called *saḷāyatana*), may come into play. But it all started with just one sensory input, in this case eating a piece of cake.

Indriya Become *Āyatana* With *Saṅkhāra*

7. The easiest way to figure out whether an *indriya* has become an *āyatana* or not is to check whether one has started generating CONSCIOUS thoughts about that sensory input or experience.

- Interest in a sensory input leads to attachment to it via greed, revulsion, or ignorance.
- For example, the smell of good perfume can lead to thinking about buying it. Seeing an enemy, one may generate angry thoughts. In some situations, one may get confused about what to do and make the wrong decisions.
- **Such CONSCIOUS thoughts are *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.**
- *Vacī saṅkhāra* are "talks to oneself" and possibly speaking too. First, greedy/angry/ignorant thoughts are generated and those may lead to speaking out (lying, gossiping, etc).
- *Kāya saṅkhāra* involve bodily actions, for example, hitting, stealing, killings, etc. Here one would be using *āyatana* since one would need to look and hear in addition to moving body parts.

8. Most of the time we use our sense faculties as *indriya*: we see, hear, etc many things in a day but ignore most of them. But when we experience something we have a craving for, then we start using our sense faculties as *āyatana*.

- The *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle operates only when we use our sense faculties as *āyatana*.

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- Those *saṅkhāra* do not arise in an *Arahant*. That is because such *saṅkhāra* arise due to *avijjā*, i.e., they arise via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."
- An *Arahant* ALWAYS uses his/her sense faculties as *indriya.* He/she will see, hear, etc just like an average human, but will not get "attached to" anything. Therefore, the *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle does not operate for an *Arahant*.

Abhisaṅkhāra Are Stronger Versions of *Saṅkhāra*

9. Some of those "extra activities" that we do with *āyatana* could be *abhisaṅkhāra*. Just eating a cake is not *abhisaṅkhāra;* see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha."

- The distinction between *saṅkhāra* and *abhisaṅkhāra* is clear-cut when those conscious thoughts (and therefore speech and actions) become immoral.
- Generating thoughts of anger on a person is *abhisaṅkhāra*. Then telling a lie about that person is also *abhisaṅkhāra*. Both are *vacī kamma* done with *vacī* (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra*.
- Stealing something or hitting someone is a *kāya kamma* done with *kāya* (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra*.
- Therefore, obviously immoral thoughts, speech, and actions are based on *abhisaṅkhāra*. They are *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* (*apuñña* + *abhi* + *saṅkhāra*) or immoral strong *saṅkhāra*.

10. We can get some insights by analyzing the case of a young person (Z) becoming an alcoholic due to association with bad friends. As a child, Z may see a bottle of alcohol and would not generate any second thoughts about it. It would just be a "seeing event' and Z would be only using his eyes (or more precisely *cakkhu pasāda rūpā*) as *cakkhu indriya*.

- But Z had some bad friends and they persuaded him to start drinking. He has now become an alcoholic. If he sees a bottle of alcohol now, he would immediately think about having a drink. Of course, he would have a drink If he is at a party. If he is at home, and the bottle belongs to his father, he may steal a drink from it. If he is traveling by himself and sees a bar, he may go in and have a drink.
- It could get even worse. He may be drinking at a party and may get into an argument with someone. Suppose that leads to a fight and he kills that person. He may get the death sentence or at least go to jail for a long time. But a much worse outcome awaits him at his death. He would be born in an *apāya*.
- I hope you can see that *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* are behind all those. In fact, they are strong saṅkhāra. They are thus *abhisaṅkhāra*. If he kills someone, that is due to an *apuññābhisaṅkhāra*. That would qualify him to be born in an *apāya*.

11. There are also *puññābhisaṅkhāra* (*puñña* + *abhi* + *saṅkhāra*) or moral strong *saṅkhāra*.

- For example, feeding a hungry person or giving to charity are *kāya kamma* done with strong *kāya saṅkhāra*. They are both *puññābhisaṅkhāra.*
- Such strong *puñña kamma* done with *puññābhisaṅkhāra* lead to good rebirths (in human and higher realms).

How Do External *Rūpā* Become External *Āyatana*?

12. The moment an *indriya* becomes an internal *āyatana,* the corresponding external *rūpā* becomes an external *āyatana.*

- Let us consider the following example. You are walking down a street and see a person coming toward you at a distance. Without recognizing who it is, your eyes are working only as *indriya*. But as the person gets closer, you recognize him as one of your friends. At that moment, your *cakkhu indriya* has become a *cakkhāyatana*. At the same time, that external *rūpā* of a "person" has now become a "friend."

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- To take that one step further, suppose after some time you get into an argument with that friend and it escalates to the point that he has become an enemy. Now if you see him on the road, you will recognize him as an enemy. At that moment of seeing him, your *cakkhu indriya* will again become an internal *āyatana*, and his body that you see will become an external *āyatana*.
- However, those two external *āyatana* are very different. In one case you saw a friend and in the other an enemy, even though that external *rūpā* (body of that other person) was the same.

13. We can find many examples in our daily lives to see how an *indriya* becomes a *āyatana*. In another example, suppose you park the car on the side of the road and go to a restaurant to eat. When you come back, you see that someone has bumped his car into it and there is a scratch on it. You, of course, get upset.

- Suppose after a while you sell that car. Then a few days later, you see that it has been totally destroyed in an accident. But now you are not upset about the same car getting destroyed. When you see that badly-damaged car, your *cakkhu indriya* does not become an internal *āyatana*. And that external *rūpa* (the car) does not become an external *āyatana*.
- The only difference was that you had given up the attachment to that car the moment you sold it. It is no longer "your car." It became just another car, the moment you gave up the "ownership" of the car.

How to Stop *Indriya* Becoming *Āyatana*?

14. That last example illustrates how one ends suffering at the *Arahanthood*. When on longer attaches to ANYTHING in this world, one's mind will not be perturbed by anything. That includes knowing that one day one's own body will die.

- However, **that state of mind of *Arahanthood* cannot even be comprehended by an average human.** It is a long process from being an average human to an *Arahant*.
- We must follow the path step-by-step. Those attachments to "worldly things" CANNOT be forcefully removed from one's mind. The first step is to comprehend the unfruitfulness and danger of doing IMMORAL things in order to get sensory enjoyment. See, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."
- However, it is good to get an overview of the "big picture" or the fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma at the beginning. That is necessary to discard the wrong views about this world including *kamma* and *kamma vipāka*, and the validity of the rebirth process. With wrong views about such fundamental concepts, one cannot even start on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- That is why this series on "Origin of Life" is so important. One must evaluate all existing views (which we summarized in the early posts in this series). The Buddhist view is more complex and it will take several more posts to complete.

5.2.8.4.4 Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa

September 15, 2019; revised November 13, 2019

Summary of "Worldview of The Buddha" So Far

1. We are discussing the "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" that describes in detail the sensory experience in the Buddhist worldview. As we will see, this *sutta* explains how each person's world arises due to his/her actions.

- Each living being's existence as a human, *deva*, animal, etc. has arisen due to past actions. Those previous actions (*kamma*) resulted due to sensory experiences at that time.

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- If one does immoral actions (*pāpa kamma*) to gain/maintain sensory pleasures, *kamma vipāka* of those *kamma* lead to rebirths in "bad realms" called *dugati.* The word *dugati* comes from "*du*" + "*gati*" or "bad *gati*." [***du-*** : ***dur-*** prefix [Sk. duḥ, duṣ] Evil, bad, difficult. 恶的, 不好的, （困）難的.]
- On the other hand, meritorious deeds (*puñña kamma*) lead to rebirths in "good realms" or *sugati* realms. The word *sugati* comes from "*su*" + "*gati*" or "good *gati*." [***su-*** prefix : kind, good, easy. 善的, 好的, 容易的]
- However, due to ignorance, living beings tend to do many more immoral deeds than moral ones. Therefore, more than 99% of the rebirths are in *dugati* realms. That is why the rebirth process is "filled with suffering." See, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

With *Taṇhā*, *Indriya* Become *Āyatana*

2. Our sensory experiences constitute "our world." We experience six types of sensory inputs (*rūpa rūpa, sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phoṭṭhabba rūpa, dhammā rūpa*) with six kinds of indriya we have (*cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā, kāya, mano*). When the corresponding pairs make "contact" (phassa), one of the six matching types of *viññāṇa* arise (*cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā, kāya*, and *mano viññāṇa*.) Those are *vipāka viññāṇa*. See, "Buddhist Worldview – Introduction."

- Average humans go beyond experiencing *vipāka viññāṇa*. They deliberately make more sensory contacts to "enjoy them more." Then the six *indriya* become six internal *āyatana,* and the six types of external *rūpa* become external *āyatana*. See, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa."
- An *indriya* makes "just contact" or "*phassa.*" **When sensory contacts are done "with attachment or *taṇhā*," those *indriya* become internal *āyatana*.** That is the crucial concept explained in the previous post, "How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?."
- You may want to re-read the above posts if something is not clear. Of course, I would be happy to answer any questions.

The Transition from Just a Sensory Contact to *Kamma* Formation

3. Even for an average human, the INITIAL CONTACT between an internal *āyatana* and an external *āyatana* does not lead to the generation of strong *kamma*. For example, only when we see a beautiful thing or a person (called *rūpa rūpa* or just *rūpa*), that we become aware of that *rūpa*. (There are *mano saṅkhāra* that arise automatically. *Mano saṅkhāra* cannot lead to strong *kamma* responsible for rebirth. We will discuss that later.)

- However, for anyone who has not reached the *Arahant* stage, sense faculties are labeled as "internal ***āyatana***," and external *rūpa* are labeled "external ***āyatana***." That is evident in the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148).
- Only an *Arahant* uses his/her sense faculties as ***indriya*** all the time.

4. In the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148), that initial contact — for example between *cakkhāyatana* (*cakkhu*) and *rūpāyatana* (*rūpa*) — is stated as "***Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ***." Similar statements are there for other five pairs, the last one being "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati mano viññāṇaṃ*."

- We will focus on the progression of what happens due to the contact between *cakkhu* and *rūpa* (eyes and an external object in mundane terms.) Other types of contacts will lead to similar results.
- As stated in the *sutta*, the "attachment" step starts with the next paragraph. Regarding the contact between *cakkhu* and *rūpa*, it says, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ, **tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso***." (Note that each successive paragraph of the *sutta* is the next step that the mind takes.)

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What is "*tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*"?

5. The phrase "*tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso"* is commonly mistranslated as "the meeting of the three is contact." What are those three? Are they *cakkhu*, *rūpa*, and *cakkhuviññāṇa*? That is not correct, because the "contact" (*phasso*) leads to "*phassa paccayā vedanā*" as we will discuss below. This "*phassa paccayā vedanā*" arises AFTER *cakkhu viññāṇa.*

- **That short verse is a KEY verse in the whole *sutta*.** It expresses how an *indriya* becomes *āyatana* due to one's *gati*. Those are the *gati* for attachment (*taṇhā*) via craving or dislike.
- "*Tiṇṇaṃ"* is three *and "saṅgati*" ("*san*" + "*gati*") are "*gati* contaminated with *san*." Normal humans have *gati* based on three fundamental root causes: *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (anger/hate), and *moha* (no comprehension of the Four Noble Truths). That is why "*san*" is a keyword in Buddha Dhamma; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)." [***saṅgati*** :[f.] association with. ***gati*** :[f.] going; career; course; passing on to another existence; destiny; behaviour.]
- Just like the word "*san,"* another critical Pāli word that has lost its significance over the years is "*gati."* I have explained this word in detail in many posts. See, for example, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)" and "9. Key to Anapanasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

Phassa in "*Tiṇṇaṃ Saṅgati Phasso*" Is *Samphassa*

6. Therefore, following that initial sensory contact, one MAY form a like/dislike for the seen, heard, smelled, tasted, touched, or memory that came to mind (*dhammā*). But it happens within a fraction of a second of the initial *cakkhu viññāṇa.*

- For example, a young lady looking at a dress may form a liking for it. Another person seeing his enemy will develop a dislike. A teenager may get attached to a particular song, etc.
- Such mental contacts — with likes/dislikes or "*san*" — happen instantaneously, due to our "*gati.*" We do not have any control over it.
- However, there is a lag time between that initial reaction and our subsequent conscious actions. Therefore, we still have time to control our speech or bodily actions. Even if bad thoughts come to our minds, we can stop any speech or bodily actions. That is what is we do in "*kāyānupassanā*" in *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditations. See, "9. Key to Anapanasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)" and "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."
- Those contacts (*phassa*) done with "*san*" are *samphassa*. **Here, "*san*" + "*phassa*" combine to rhyme as "*sanphassa*." But "*samphassa*" rhymes better.** In the same way, "*saŋsāra*" ("*san*" + "*sāra*" or "good") is commonly pronounced — and written — as "*saṃsāra*."

No *Samphassa* for an *Arahant*

7. An *Arahant* has no "*gati*" left. All defiled "*gati*" arise due to *lobha, dosa, moha*. Therefore, an *Arahant* does not attach (*taṇhā*) to any sensory event. In other words, "*tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso"* does not take place in an *Arahant's* mind. Also, note that attachment (*taṇhā*) can be due to attraction (liking) or aversion (dislike). See, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- That is why an *Arahant* will never elevate his *indriya* to "internal *āyatana."* Therefore, any external *rūpa* sensed by a given *indriya* will be "just a *rūpa*." No matter how attractive a person is or how tasty a given food, etc. there will be no attachment to it. A bribe of any value will not be able to entice an *Arahant*.
- In the same way, even if someone cuts his/her arm off, there will be no anger generated in an *Arahant*'s mind.

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- Such a mindset is incomprehensible to an average human. **That is WHY one should not even contemplate that far on the Path.** When we are on a long journey on foot, we focus on the next mile, not the final stretch hundreds of miles down the road. However, it is good to have a general idea about the whole terrain.

8. The state of mind of an *Arahant* could seem "hard-to-achieve" even to an *Anāgāmi*, even though it may no longer seem incomprehensible.

- For a *Sotāpanna*, the mindset of an *Anāgāmi* seems "out-of-reach." As we know, the *Anāgāmi* stage is reached by getting rid of cravings for sensory pleasures. It is not easy to remove our deeply-embedded desires for sensory pleasures. For an average human, this would be impossible. But a *Sotāpanna* has seen the "*anicca* nature."
- However, a *Sotāpanna* will not be tempted to do immoral actions to enjoy sensory pleasures. A *Sotāpanna* could be living a normal life of a "householder," one will NEVER engage in any "*apāyagāmi* actions." Those are immoral deeds that makes one eligible to be born in the *apāyā*. For example, a *Sotāpanna* will not engage in extra-marital affairs.

"*Phassa Paccayā Vedanā*" Is Actually "*Samphassa jā Vedanā*"

9. Now we get to the next verse in the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148): "***Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā***."

- (I hope you see the way the *sutta* makes gradual progression. "*Phassa paccayā vedanā"* is the third step in the progress of the sensory experience. But all these steps — including more steps in the rest of *sutta* — happen within a split second. Only a Buddha can "see" these details in this fast process that occurs in mind.)
- From the above discussion, it is clear that "*phassa paccayā vedanā*" should be "*samphassa paccayā vedanā*." ***In some suttā, it is written as "samphassa jā vedanā."*** Here "***jā***" means "born due to." **In other words, it is a *vedanā* that arises due to "*samphassa*."**
- Therefore, this is the SECOND TYPE of *vedanā* that can arise due to a sensory event. That CAN BE stopped from arising. That type of *vedanā* does not occur in an *Arahant*.

The difference in Sensory Experience Between an Average Human and an *Arahant*

10. **"*Tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*" and "*phassa paccayā vedanā*"** are two critical steps in the progression of the sensory experience.

- Those two steps state how anyone without full comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature) COULD generate additional types of *vedanā*.
- Now we need to recall something important from the earlier posts, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa" and "How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?." In those two posts, we discussed the initial sensory contact, for example, "***cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ***." That gave rise to a *vedanā* common to both an average human and an *Arahant*.
- As we discussed in the previous post, both an average human and an *Arahant* would feel the "sweetness" of a piece of cake. You may want to go back and read those two posts to refresh your memory.
- Now it is those two steps of **"*tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*" and "*phassa paccayā vedanā*"** that COULD generate ADDITIONAL *vedanā* of attachment (to the cake in that example) in an average human. Such *vedanā* DO NOT arise in an *Arahant* since there are no attachments left.

Summary

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11. I am taking the two extreme cases of an average human and an *Arahant* to explain the critical concepts in the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148). In many key *suttā*, key ideas are just briefly stated, i.e., they are in either "*uddesa*" or "*niddesa*" versions. See "Sutta – Introduction."

- I hope you can see that key *suttā* like the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148) need detailed explanations. That is the "*paṭiniddesa*" version of a *sutta*.
- That is why it is of minimal benefit to translate such a *sutta* word-by-word. There is no need to study many *suttā*. Understanding a few *suttā* in detail can lead to a good understanding of the core teachings of the Buddha.
- Therefore, it is essential to understand these fundamental ideas. If something is not clear, I would be happy to explain further.

12. We will discuss the types of *vedanā* that can arise due to **"*phassa paccayā vedanā*"** or more accurately, **"*samphassa jā vedanā*."** See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

An Aside (Extra Information)

13. The steps we have discussed so far, "***Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā***" are just a part of the more general statement, "*saḷāyatana paccayā phasso; phassapaccayā vedanā,..*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: Vibhaṅga Sutta (SN 12.2), the terms "*phassa*" and "*vedanā*" are clarified as "***samphassa***" and "***samphassa jā vedanā***." That applies only in the case of average human acting with *avijjā* (i.e., in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* and for the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148).
- "*Phassa"* in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is explained in the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* (SN 12.2): "*Katamo ca, bhikkhave, **phasso**? Chayime, bhikkhave, phassakāyā—cakkhu**samphasso**, sotasamphasso, ghānasamphasso, jivhāsamphasso, kāyasamphasso, manosamphasso. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, phasso*."
- "*Vedana"* in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is explained in the *Vibhaṅga Sutta* (SN 12.2): "*Katamā ca, bhikkhave, **vedanā**? Chayime, bhikkhave, vedanākāyā— cakkhu**samphassajā vedanā**, sotasamphassajā vedanā, ghānasamphassajā vedanā, jivhāsamphassajā vedanā, kāyasamphassajā vedanā, manosamphassajā vedanā. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, vedanā*."
- If you do not see the connection, don't worry about it. We will discuss all types of *vedanā* in the next post. I just mentioned it for the benefit of those who may be able to see the connection. Everything in the *Tipiṭaka* is self-consistent.

5.2.8.4.5 Is There a 'Self'?

Citta – Basis of Our Experience and Actions

Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event

Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)

Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy

Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"

An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation

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5.2.8.4.5.1 Citta – Basis of Our Experience and Actions

September 22, 2019; revised November 14, 2019

Introduction

1. We have been discussing the first few verses of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" in the series on, "Is There a "Self"?." It is a good idea to take a break and look at what we have learned from a different point-of-view.

- The Buddha called himself a "*vibhajjavādi*." That means he explained things in great detail by diving and subdividing a given entity or concept to examine it at more fundamental levels.
- That is very much like what the scientists are doing today. They first explained the matter in terms of molecules, and then with atoms. Later, they found that an atom consists of a nucleus and electrons in orbitals around it. Then they probed the nucleus and discovered that more fundamental particles (with names like gluons, and quarks) make up the nucleus.
- By probing deeper, physicists also came up with Quantum Mechanics. Matter and energy are "quantized" on a small scale. That just means they come in "packets" or "quantā" (the singular is "quantum.")
- More than 2500 years ago, the Buddha taught that matter and energy are quantized. The smallest "quantum" in Buddha Dhamma is a *suddhāṭṭhaka*. But that is not relevant to the present discussion.

Sensory Experience is Quantized – It comes in "Packets"

2. I am not going to have a discussion on Quantum mechanics here. But I want to look at the "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" from a little bit different point-of-view. That will break the tradition of providing boring translations of *suttā*, and I hope will also provide better insights into the material in the *sutta*. This discussion would be beneficial before we move to the next section of the *sutta*.

- As you will see below, scientists are just beginning to take the mental phenomena seriously. They have made a bit of progress. But they are not even close to having a detailed analysis of mental phenomena that the Buddha did over 2500 years ago.
- Mental energy is also quantized, even though we may feel like thoughts are continuous. The smallest unit in Buddha Dhamma is a "*citta*." A *citta* lasts less than a billionth of a second. **We cannot experience a single *citta*.** Even though it is conventionally translated as "a thought", that is not correct.
- What we usually think of as a "thought" consists of billions of *cittā* (The plural of *citta* is *cittā,* but sometimes I tend to write that as *cittā* just because that is easier for most people.) By the way, *citta* is pronounced "chiththa."

What is a Thought?

3. Let us first see the progress that science has made over the past 50 years or so. Science is still at a very early stage regarding the mind. But they have made some progress recently and we will show them to be fully consistent with Buddha Dhamma. In fact, those findings help explain deeper concepts in Buddha Dhamma.

- Only fifty years ago, scientists thought that computers can "become conscious" just by increasing the processing speeds. Now there are computers that are much faster, but they, of course, do not have consciousness. We will discuss later why computers will never become conscious.
- The following is a presentation entitled, "What is a Thought?" by Henning Beck, a scientist studying brain phenomena.

  WebLink: youtube: What is a Thought? How the Brain Creates New Ideas | Henning Beck | TEDxHHL

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A Computer Does Not Have Perception (*Saññā*)

4. At 4:00 minutes, we see a "face" made up of fruits and vegetables. Even though it is not a real human face, it takes us just a split second to realize that it represents a face.

- But as Mr. Beck points out, a computer will never be able to recognize the representation of the human face depicted there.
- At 9:20 minutes he starts a discussion on the identification of a chair. Again, a computer runs into a problem identifying "less obvious" structures that can serve as chairs.
- In both these instances, what the computer is missing is *saññā* (loosely translated to English as "perception"). Even animals can recognize objects relevant to their survival. A dog, for example, can instantly recognize its owners and any other pets living in the house. It can recognize foods that it likes, etc. See "Saññā – What It Really Means."

Vedanā, *Saññā*, Joy, Sadness, etc. Cannot Arise in a Brain

5. Around 6:00 minutes, Mr. Beck starts talking about human thought. All he (and other scientists) know right now is that our thoughts rise very fast. But they do not have any explanation of how thoughts with feelings (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), joy, etc. can arise out of a brain made of inert atoms and molecules.

- A brain is not that different from a computer, in the sense that atoms and molecules are the building blocks of both. Both can process information. But a brain processes information in a very different way compared to a computer. It involves billions of neurons working as a team. Scientists are not even close to figuring out how the brain processes information.
- In the future, scientists may be able able to figure out how those neurons are able to process information much faster than a computer with a thousand-times higher processing speeds.
- However, they will still NOT be able to able to figure out how a human or animal can recognize their surroundings AND generates emotions (happy, sad, etc.)
- Around 11:00 minutes he discusses the difference between learning and understanding. That is an excellent point.

Vedanā, *Saññā*, Joy, Sadness, etc. Arise in the "Mental Body"

In a previous post, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa," I mentioned that plants and trees have a basic form of *vedanā* and *saññā* (see #3,#4 there.) However, plants and trees CANNOT generate emotions like joy and sadness. A tree does not have a mind or a "mental body" created by kammic energy.

6. In the same way, a brain cannot generate a thought. How can feelings and emotions come out of an entity made of inert atoms and molecules? The "mental body" of a living being is created by *kammic* energy.

- There has to be a LIVING BEING to generate a *citta*, the basic unit of consciousness. For a human being, the essence of that LIVING ENTITY is not the physical body, but the mental body.
- **That "mental body" is alternatively called a *manomaya kāya* or *gandhabba*.** It consists of a *hadaya vatthu* (seat of mind) and five *pasāda rūpa* located around it (for seeing, listening, smelling, tasting, and touching.) The mental body is not like the "physical body." It is more like an "energy body" that gives life to the inert and dense physical body.
- A *manomaya kāya* may be visualized as an "energy field" within the physical body with the *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa* overlapping the region of the physical heart.

7. Our brains do not have the capability to identify objects. It cannot generate emotions like joy and sadness. As we discussed in #4 above, even animals can identify things and generate feelings and emotions.

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- It is the **mental body (*manomaya kāya* or *gandhabba*)** that generates emotions like joy and sadness as well as *vedanā*, *saññā*.
- More precisely, those mental phenomena arise in the ***hadaya vatthu* (seat of mind)** of the gandhabba.

8. The details are not critical, but that basic mechanism is important to understand. A brain does not see, hear, smell, taste, or touch. It is the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) that experiences all those.

- That is why a human body is just a shell that supports the mental body (*manomaya kāya* or the *gandhabba*). At the death of the physical body, that *manomaya kāya* leaves the body instantly. When we touch a dead body, it is obvious to us that there is no "life" there.
- **A living body is like a "live wire" with an electric current flowing through.** One will get an "electrical shock" by touching it. But if there is no electric current, it is just a metal wire.
- **In the same way, it is the *manomaya kāya* that gives "life' to an inert physical body.**

The *Manomaya Kāya* Changes from Existence to Existence

9. What happens to the ***manomaya kāya*** at the end of existence? To make this clear, let us take the case of a *Brahma* dying and getting a human existence. That transition from a *Brahma* to a human happens at the moment of death of that Brahma. It is called the **"*cuti-paṭisandhi*" moment** ("*cuti*" means dying and "*paṭisandhi*" means getting a new existence.)

- That *Brahma* had a seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) and two *pasāda rūpa* (for seeing and hearing). On the other hand, in the new existence, the human would have five *pasāda rūpa* (for seeing, listening, smelling, tasting, and touching). Furthermore, the *hadaya vatthu* of the human would be different from that of a *Brahma*.
- Therefore, the *manomaya kāya* of in the new human existence is very different from that of the *Brahma.*
- Suppose that at the end of that human existence, that human gets an animal existence. Then at that "*cuti-paṭisandhi*" moment, that new animal existence would have its own set of *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa*.

10. Those three existences are very different, even though it is the same "life-stream." So, what is there to be taken as a "soul" or a "self"?

- That is why the Buddha said there is no "soul " or a "self" or a "*ātma*" going from one birth to another. In the above example, the same "life-stream" that started as a *Brahma* became a human, and then an animal. **What is the ESSENCE that defines a "soul" or a "self" or a "*ātma*"?**
- The details on that are in the post "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self' in Initial Sensory Experience." First, let us look into the mechanism of *citta* generation.

A *Citta* Has *Vedanā*, *Saññā*, and Many Other "Built-In" Mental Factors

11. A *citta* is the fundamental unit of cognition, which we do not feel by itself. It comes in bunches of 12 or more *cittā*. Those "bunches" or series of *cittā* are *citta vīthi*. What we "feel" or "experience" is a vast number of such *citta vīthi*.

- Any *citta vīthi* that arises due to sensory input from one of the five physical senses has 17 *cittā*. It is a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi*.
- On the other hand, a *citta vīthi* arising directly in the mind (due to *dhammā*) may have varying numbers of *cittā*, with a minimum of 12 *cittā*. That is a *manodvāra citta vīthi.*

12. What we usually call a "thought" is the cumulative effect of billions of such *citta vīthi* that arise PER SECOND.

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- Each of those *cittā* has at least seven mental factors (*cetasikā*). Those universal *cetasikā* include *vedanā* and *saññā*. *Vedanā cetasika* makes one FEEL a sensory input. The *saññā cetasika* is the one which recognizes that sensory input.
- **Only a living being can generate that fundamental unit of cognition (*citta*) within a billionth of a second, with built-in seven or more *cetasikā*.**
- That is why a computer or a robot will NEVER become conscious. **Only *Kammic* energy can create a *manomaya kāya* with the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*).**

Important Role of the Brain

13. Even though the brain itself cannot generate *citta*, it plays a critical role in getting the information about the sense object to the *hadaya vatthu*. More details at "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body." Let us briefly discuss the series of events following the capture of an image by our eyes.

- The retinas at the back of the eyes send the captured image to the visual cortex in the brain through the optical nerve. That part of the brain then analyzes the signal to a form that can be understood by the mind. That information is sent to the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* in the *manomaya kāya*. Then the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* makes a contact with *hadaya vatthu*, which vibrates 17 times due to that "impact."
- Those 17 vibrations of the *hadaya vatthu* correspond to the generation of a *citta vīthi* with 17 *cittā*. That is the origin of a *cakkhudvāra citta vīthi*. It is not necessary to learn those details. But those interested can find details at "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- Sensory inputs coming through the other four physical senses (ears, nose, tongue, and the body) work the same way.

14. Just remember that the sensory input comes to a *pasāda rūpa* in the mental body AFTER the sensory signal is processed by the brain. For example, when we see a tree, the image of the tree received by the eyes is processed by the brain first.

- Then the brain transmits that processed signal to the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*, which in turn transfers it to the *hadaya vatthu.*
- It is the *hadaya vatthu* that "feels" or "experiences" that image and "sees" the tree.
- But even a sensory experience that we "feel" arises due to a series of "sensory packets." For example, when we see a tree, that image does not come in continuously. It comes in "packets" or "snapshots."
- In fact, that is similar to how a video camera or a movie film works. We will discuss that in the post "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."

5.2.8.4.5.2 Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event

September 29, 2019; revised November 15, 2019

We are discussing the "Worldview of the Buddha." It may be a good idea to print out the posts in there for referral while reading subsequent posts. It is CRITICAL to understand the material discussed so far to follow future posts.

All Our Activities Start With a Sensory Trigger

1. We know that we are alive because we are aware of the external world. We can see an object, hear a sound, smell an odor, taste food, and feel the touch of something or someone. Furthermore, we can recall past events (part of *dhammā*).

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- All our sensory experiences start with a "trigger event" that comes through one of our six sense faculties. If we see, hear, smell, taste, touch something that grabs our attention, then we start thinking, speaking, and taking action on that particular sight, sound, odor, taste, and touch.
- Also, a thought about a past event or a planned event (*dhammā*) may come to our mind, and we could get started that way too.

2. We usually go through our daily chores based on what we do routinely. We get up in the morning and get ready for work (school) on a working day. Those " to do tasks" come to one's mind automatically as *dhammā*.

- Such a "planned or routine day of work" could be disrupted by an unexpected event. One may get a phone call from the boss asking to go to a meeting at a different location. A child may may down with fever and a visit to a hospital may be required. Again, a sensory trigger is there.
- We may also set up an alarm to get up at a particular time. When the alarm goes off in the morning, we get up and recall that we have to get ready for a specific task.
- It is a good idea to think about what one goes through during a day. We can see that all activities start with "sensory triggers."

A Sensory Trigger is an "*Ārammaṇa*"

3. Each activity starts with a "trigger," which is a sensory event. **That is a "*ārammaṇa*" in Pāli.** We consciously and deliberately start looking at an object when we become interested in that object. Then it becomes a "new *ārammaṇa*." That may prompt us to take further action.

- For example, a short interaction with a person may trigger an interest in that person. Then that may lead to further contacts.
- We get exposed to many sensory inputs as we go through the day. But only specific sensory inputs catch our attention and make us think about them. A strong sensory input that gets our attention is a *ārammaṇa*.
- If X is listening to the television in the background while eating, X's focus is on the meal. However, if X hears on the TV that terrorist attack just took place in a major city, X's attention would focus on that news story. X may stop eating and go and watch the television to get more information. That is a new *ārammaṇa*.

4. There is always an "*ārammaṇa*" to initiate an action, and **there are only six types of *ārammaṇa*** per "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)."*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ, ghānañca paṭicca gandhe ca uppajjati ghānaviññāṇaṃ, jivhāñca paṭicca rase ca uppajjati jivhāviññāṇaṃ, kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ, manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*."

- For example, the second on the list says that "ear-consciousness (*sota* ***viññāṇa***) happens when ears (more precisely *sota pasāda*) come to contact with a sound (*sadda*)." In the above example, X heard about a terrorist attack.
- That sensory event could then start a whole series of new actions. In the example of #3 above, X stopped eating and went to the television to watch it.
- You should think about this basic idea of how a sensory event (seeing, hearing, etc. leads to a whole set of actions during a given day. This idea was first introduced in the post, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa."

Two Different Meanings of *Paṭicca*

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5. We translated the verse, "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ"* as "*..cakkhu viññāṇa* arises when a *rūpa* makes contact (*paṭicca*) with *cakkhu pasāda rūpā.*" See, #7 of "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna." That was further elaborated in the next post, "Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa."

- Some English translations state that as, "dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises." They translate *paṭicca* as "dependent on" presumably because *Paticca Samuppāda* is translated as "Dependent Origination."
- But *paṭicca* is a Pāli word that has somewhat different meanings depending on the context. Let us clarify that first.

6. It is fine to translate *Paticca Samuppāda* as "Dependent Origination." That is because the steps in *Paticca Samuppāda* are CONDITIONAL statements. For example, "with *avijjā* (ignorance) as **condition**, *sankhāra* arise." One could also state that as "arising of *sankhāra* is dependent on the presence of *avijjā."* However, conditionality comes from the word "*paccayā*" not from "*paṭicca."* See, "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda?."

- Therefore, "*cakkhuñca **paṭicca** rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ"* should not be translated as, "**dependent on the** eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises." **It is more than just dependence**. It is "coming together" or "coming to contact" of *cakkhu* and *rūpa* that gives rise to *cakkhu viññāṇa*. **"*Paṭicca*" happens with only those events that grab our attention.**
- **There is also a deeper meaning of *paṭicca* in *Paṭicca Samuppāda***, where it is the combination of two words "*paṭi*" + "*icca*." When one attaches willingly to moral (or immoral) deeds, one ends up with corresponding "births" ("*sama*" + "*uppada*.") See, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"." That is why I do not translate *Paticca Samuppāda* as "Dependent Origination." There is more than "just dependence" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- However, in verse "*cakkhuñca **paṭicca** rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ," paṭicca* means "coming together" or "contact." Here there is no "intention." It is *cakkhu* and *rūpa* making contact. That is very clear in SN 12.53 and SN 12.54, in verse, "*telañca paṭicca vaṭṭiñca paṭicca telappadīpo jhāyeyya*." OR, "an oil lamp (*telappadīpo*) burns while the wick (*vaṭṭiñca*) is together with oil (*telañca*)." If one does not add oil to the lamp, the wick will burn out quickly. There is no involvement of the mind there. Thus, the "*paṭi*" + "*icca*" etymology does not apply here.

Where Does *Paṭicca* Happen?

7. It is essential to remember that "*cakkhu*" (or *cakkhāyatana*) is not physical eyes (the Pāli word for the physical eye is "*nayana*"). "*Cakkhu*" is the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* that lies close to the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind), and *hadaya vatthu* **overlaps the physical heart**. That is far away from the brain.

- This *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* is the "internal *āyatana."* **It is commonly referred to as "*cakkhu*."**
- **The brain processes an image received by the eyes and then sends it to the "*cakkhu*."** We discussed in the post, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa,"
- Furthermore, the "*rūpa*" is the image of the external object (external *āyatana*). To be precise, it is a "*vanna rūpa*" (or "*rūpa rūpa*") in this case.
- When that *rūpa* makes contact with the *cakkhu*, the *cakkhu* in turn "hits" the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) and transfers that *rūpa* to the mind, that **is the event, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ."***
- That contact gives rise to the *cakkhuviññāṇa in mind*. Therefore, that sensory experience arises in mind close to the physical heart. It does not occur in the brain (or at the eyes)! You may want to refresh memory by reading #12 of the post, "Buddhist Worldview – Introduction."

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8. In the example discussed in #3 involves an *ārammaṇa* coming through as a sound (*sadda rūpa*). Here the "sound *rūpa*" received by the *sota pasāda rūpa* (shortened to just "*sota*") is the "*sadda*" in "*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ."*

- Any external sensory input is a form of energy. That is why they are all *rūpa*. There is some confusion because most times a "*rūpa rūpa*" or a "*vanna rūpa*" is just written as a "*rūpa."*
- A sound is a *sadda rūpa*. You can figure out the other three: *rasa rūpa, gandha rūpa*, and *phoṭṭhabba rūpa*.
- A thought coming directly to the mind is a "*dhammā*" or a "*dhamma rūpa."* Note that there is no separate "*pasāda rūpa*" for *dhammā,* which makes contact directly with the *hadaya vatthu*.

Vipāka Vedanā Arise With That Initial *Vipāka Viññāṇa*

9. Let us consider "hearing a sound." That is "*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ."* This *sotaviññāṇa* is a *vipāka viññāṇa*, as we discussed in "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa."

- As we have discussed, *vedanā* and *saññā* arise with each *citta*. Therefore, there are a *vedanā* and *saññā* associated with that *sota viññāṇa* (which is a *citta*.) In other words, we know that we heard the sound (*vedanā*), and we recognize what the sound is (*saññā*). **The *vedanā* that arises with that *vipāka viññāṇa* is a *vipāka vedanā*.**
- At this stage, the mind receives the sensory event. All *vedanā* associated with that initial sensory event is a neutral (*upekkhā*) *vedanā*. However, there are some *somanassa* or *domanassa vedanā* that arise due to *kāma guṇa* (even in an *Arahant*.). The next post, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)" will discuss this issue. However, no *dukkha/sukha vedanā* arise in this step of, "*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ."* That holds true for other sensory faculties as well, except for the physical touch (*kāya*.)
- Therefore, the only exception is "*kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ."* The sensory contact through the physical body can generate a *dukkha vedanā* if it is due to an injury. It can lead to a *sukha vedanā* if it is due to a body massage.
- We will discuss *sukha, dukkha, somanassa*, *domanassa,* and *upekkhā vedanā* below.

The Second Type of *Vedanā* is "*Samphassa jā Vedanā*"

10. In the post, "Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa," we looked further into the "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148): "***Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā.***" Those we discussed the second type of vedanā due to "***phassa paccayā vedanā."*** There we discussed how the second type of *vedanā* arises due to "*samphassa."* It is a good idea to review that post.

- That second type of *vedanā* is due to "contact with defilement in mind" or "*san*" or "*anusaya*." And that depends on each person, i.e., how strong a *taṇhā* is generated via greed, anger, or ignorance. **Therefore, this "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" is mind-made.**
- An *Arahant* would experience the first type of *vedanā*, the *vipāka vedanā*. The second type of *vedanā* would NOT arise in an *Arahant* because he/she does not have a defiled mind.
- Now we can categorize *vedanā* using a different scheme. That will show that *dukkha/sukha vedanā* arises ONLY due to the physical body. Other types of sensory contacts lead to unpleasant/pleasant *vedanā* (*domanassa/somanassa*) in the MIND.

Two Types of *Vedanā* (*Kāyika* and *Cetasika*)

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11. As we saw above, ALL *vedanā* belong to those two types discussed above: *vipāka vedanā* and *samphassa-jā-vedanā*. However, there are other ways to categorize *vedanā*. The Buddha has taught us how to examine a given entity or a concept in many different ways. Once one understands them, it is easy to see which analysis is appropriate for a given situation.

- The Buddha categorized *vedanā* up to 108 types. However, we do not need to discuss all of them. We will consider only those that are relevant to common situations.
- First, ALL *vedanā* belong to two categories of *kāyika vedanā* (those felt on the body) and *cetasika vedanā* (those arising in mind.) Of course, all of the *vipāka vedanā* and *samphassa-jā-vedanā* are in these two new categories. It is just a different way to look at them.
- Those *vedanā* felt in the physical body (*kāya*) are ***kāyika vedanā***. All other *vedanā* are ***cetasika vedanā***; they arise in mind.

Three Types of *Kāyika Vedanā*

12. Then the ***kāyika vedanā*** can be three types: ***dukkha vedanā, sukha vedanā, adukkhamasukha vedanā***.

- We can see that ***dukkha vedanā*** due to injuries, body aches, etc. are *kāyika vedanā*. Those *vedanā* are felt AT A LOCATION in the body. We feel a finger cut at the finger. Similarly, a back massage gives a ***sukha vedanā*** on the back.
- We remember that *vedanā* means "becoming aware of." So, those *vedanā* due to bodily contacts that do not generate *dukkha* or *sukha* (i.e., neutral) are "*adukkhama asukha*" (neither painful nor pleasant), and that rhymes as, "*adukkhamasukha*."

Three Types of *Cetasika Vedanā*

13. Those *cetasika vedanā* similarly belong to three major types: *domanassa vedanā, somanassa vedanā*, and *upekkhā vedanā*.

- The word "*domanassa*" comes from "*do* + *manasa*" or "a depressed mind." Similarly, "*somanassa*" comes from "*so* + *manasa*" or "a pleasant mind." Of course, *upekkhā vedanā* is neither *domanassa* nor *somanassa*. It is neutral, and we feel that sensory input.
- Note that while the *adukkhamasukha vedanā* is associated with body touches, *upekkhā vedanā* is associated with all other sensory inputs.

Relationship to *Vipāka Vedanā* and "*Samphassa-jā-Vedanā*"

14. Now, these *cetasika vedanā* can be either *vipāka vedanā* or "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*."

- As we have discussed, *samphassa-jā-vedanā* depends on the mindset of the person (more precisely on one's *anusaya* or *gati*.) Three people looking at the same person X may generate different types of *samphassa-jā-vedanā*. A friend of X will generate a *samphassa-jā-vedanā* that is of *somanassa* type. An enemy of X will generate a *samphassa-jā-vedanā* that is of *domanassa* type. A third person who does not know X may generate only feel a *samphassa-jā-vedanā* that is of *upekkhā* type.
- Since there are six types of *samphassa-jā-vedanā*, we can see that there could be 18 types of *vedanā* associated with them. Each one could be *domanassa, somanassa*, or *upekkhā*.
- In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Aṭṭhasata Sutta (SN 36.22)," the Buddha has discussed 108 types of *vedanā*. But for many situations, the above types of *vedanā* are sufficient for our discussions.

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5.2.8.4.5.3 Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)

October 6, 2019

Kāma guṇa are pleasurable things in this world. It is because of *kāma guṇa* that we tend to attach (*taṇhā*) to worldly things via either greed or anger (based on ignorance.) Based on *kāma guṇa* we AUTOMATICALLY generate *sāmisa vedanā. Sāmisa vedanā,* in turn, COULD lead to *taṇhā* (attachment to worldly things.)

Summary of the Previous Post

1. In the previous post, we first categorized *vedanā* into two types: *vipāka vedanā* and *samphassa-jā-vedanā.*

- Then, later in the post, we categorized *vedanā* differently. Those *vedanā* felt in the physical body (*kāya*) are ***kāyika vedanā***. All other *vedanā* types arise in mind, and they are ***cetasika vedanā***. Of course, *vipāka vedanā* can be *kāyika vedanā* or *cetasika vedanā.* However, *samphassa-jā-vedanā* are all *cetasika vedanā.*
- Then ***kāyika vedanā*** can be three types: ***dukkha vedanā, sukha vedanā, adukkhamasukha*** (***adukkhama asukha*** or neither *dukkha* nor *sukha*) ***vedanā***.
- One may need to review that post: "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

A Few Observations Based on the Previous Post

2. Now I need to add a few more comments. First, those ***kāyika vedanā*** are all *vipāka vedanā.* Those are the ones that contribute to physical suffering (injuries, sicknesses, etc.) and bodily comforts (like in a body massage.) Therefore, *dukkha vedanā, sukha vedanā,* and *adukkhamasukha vedanā* are all *vipāka vedanā,* and they arise only with "bodily contacts" (*kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ.*)

- All other types of *vipāka vedanā* come through eyes ears, nose, tongue, and the mind. Unlike *vipāka vedanā* that come through the physical body, they are NOT *kāyika vedanā.*
- Those are, **at that moment**, all *upekkhā vedanā*. We see, hear, smell, taste, or *dhammā* comes to the mind. They are, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ, ghānañca paṭicca gandhe ca uppajjati ghānaviññāṇaṃ, jivhāñca paṭicca rase ca uppajjati jivhāviññāṇaṃ,* and *manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ."* Note that "*kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ"* does NOT appear here.
- Then, *samphassa-jā-vedanā* arise following those initial *vipāka vedanā.* For example, following hearing a sound (*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ*), two more steps take place before *samphassa-jā-vedanā* arise. They are in the "Chachakka Sutta (MN 148): "*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ**, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā.***" As we discussed In the previous post, ***phassa paccayā vedanā*** is *samphassa-jā-vedanā.* Those are *vedanā* that arise due to greed, anger, and ignorance.
- Now, in this post, we will discuss that last step in detail. Why do humans get attached to some sensory inputs via greed and to others via aversion (dislike)?

What Are *Kāma Guṇa*?

3. The Buddha said that this world is filled with eye-pleasing sights, ear-pleasing sounds, etc. for all five physical senses. Each existence in the *kāma loka* has its own set of "attractive and enticing sensory objects." **The Buddha called them *kāmaguṇa* or "sensual qualities."** As we know, *kāma* means sensual.

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"*Guṇa*" means "qualities" or "characteristics." Even though ***kāmaguṇa*** is one word in the *Tipiṭaka*, I like to write it as two words, "***kāma guṇa***" since that helps remember the meaning.

- For example, humans like certain types of food. Each animal species has its own "favorite foods." Lions and tigers like to eat meat. Cows don't eat meat, and they eat grass. Pigs like to eat all sorts of rotten food.
- As humans, we enjoy certain sights, sounds, tastes, smells, and bodily contacts. As long as one has a human body, it is not possible to avoid generating a *sukha vedanā* due to such sensory contacts. Even *Arahants* feel those.

Kāma Guṇa Are Enticing Objects, Sounds, Tastes, Odors, and Bodily Contacts

4. Such *sukha vedanā* arise immediately AFTER the initial *vipāka vedanā*. As we discussed in the previous post, all *vipāka vedanā* due to sensory contacts other than bodily contacts are *upekkhā vedanā*. They are neutral.

- However, immediately following that initial contact, *kāma guṇa* comes into play. Many *suttā* discuss *kāma guṇa,* and they all have the following clarification of what it is. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbānasukha Sutta (AN 9.34)," states, "***Pañcime, bhikkhave, kāmaguṇā***. *Katame pañca? Cakkhuviññeyyā rūpā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasaṃhitā rajanīyā, sotaviññeyyā saddā, ghānaviññeyyā gandhā, jivhāviññeyyā rasā, kāyaviññeyyā phoṭṭhabbā, iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasaṃhitā rajanīyā. Ime kho, bhikkhave, pañca kāmaguṇā.*"
- **Translated:** "There are these five types of sensual qualities (*kāmaguṇa*). Which five? There are forms (*rūpā*) experienced with eyes that are agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, and leading to desire. There are sounds (*sadda*) that are agreeable, pleasing, charming, endearing, enticing, and leading to desire (and similarly for the other three senses.)

Vedanā Due to *Kāma Guṇa* Are Not "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*"

5. However, this *somanassa vedanā* that arises due to *kāma guṇa* are NOT the "*samphassa-jā-vedanā.*" *Somanassa vedanā* due to *kāma guṇa* arises in an *Arahant,* as well as in an average human.

- Let us clarify with some examples. Sugar or honey has a "*kāma guṇa*" of sweetness. That holds for everyone from an average person to an *Arahant*. A beautiful woman will be seen as such by anyone from an ordinary person to an *Arahant*.
- However, "***tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā***" in #2 above does not occur in an *Arahant*. Even though an *Arahant* will experience *somanassa vedanā* due to *kāma guṇa,* **an *Arahant* would NOT get attached to that "pleasant/sensual feeling."**
- Therefore, even though an *Arahant* would feel the tastiness of honey, he/she would not generate any craving for more. An *Arahant* has comprehended that desire for ANY worldly pleasures (sights, sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches) will only lead to future suffering. But it is essential to realize that one CANNOT and SHOULD NOT suppress such desires with sheer will power. **That understanding comes after the *Sotāpanna* stage.**

Vedanā Due to *Kāma Guṇa* Are *Sāmisa Vedanā*

6. There is a unique name for those "automatically-arising" *vedanā* due to *kāma guṇa.* They are ***sāmisa vedanā***.

- The word *sāmisa* has origins in the keyword "*āmisa*," which means "associated with the sensual world" or "*kāma loka*." Thus, *sāmisa sukha vedanā* mean a "pleasant feeling" that arises due to the nature of the *kāma loka*. [***āmisa*** :[nt.] food; flesh; bait; gain. (adj.) material.]

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- An *Arahant*, as well as an average human, will experience similar "*sāmisa vedanā.*" Any sensory event of *kāma loka* is a *sāmisa vedanā*. We will briefly discuss the types of *sāmisa vedanā* below.
- We remember that the original *viññāṇa* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya*) resulted due to a *vipāka. Vipāka vedanā* associated with those are *upekkhā vedanā*. (The only exception was *kāya viññāṇa*, which could give rise to *dukkha, sukha*, or *adukkhamasukha vedanā*.)
- Immediately following those *vipāka vedanā*, *kāma guṇa* comes into play, and *sāmisa vedanā* arises automatically.
- It is only after the generation of *sāmisa vedanā* that "***tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā"*** comes into play.

Kāma Rāga Is Getting Attached to *Sāmisa Vedanā*

7. The human world is full of enticing sights, sounds, tastes, odors, and bodily comforts. Those are not *kāma*. They are *kāma guṇa.* Getting attached to them and cultivating *kāma saṅkappa* (or *vacī saṅkhāra* or *vitakka/vicāra*) is *kāma* (and *kāma rāga*).

- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63)" states, "***Saṅkappa rāgo purisassa kāmo,*** *Nete kāmā yāni citrāni loke*..."

Translated: "A person's *kāma* is getting attached and thinking about (*saṅkappa rāga*) those pleasing things in this world (*citrāni loke*). Those beautiful things in the world are not *kāma.*"

- I highly recommend the post "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha." It has more information that will help understand the concepts better.

Difference Between *Samphassa-jā-Vedanā* and *Sāmisa Vedanā*

8. Now we can see the difference between ***samphassa-jā-vedanā*** and ***sāmisa vedanā.***

- First, ***sāmisa vedanā*** are common to ALL HUMANS, including *Arahants*. They are the sweetness of sugar or pleasing odors like perfumes.
- On the other hand, ***samphassa-jā-vedanā*** are highly PERSONAL. They do not arise in *Arahants*. **For others, how strongly they arise depends on one's gati AND the specific *ārammaṇa.***
- We also need to understand that ***samphassa-jā-vedanā*** arise BECAUSE OF ***sāmisa vedanā.*** One gets attached to sensory inputs because they are enticing. As long as one does not see the "hidden suffering" in those enticing sights, sounds, etc., one is bound to generate craving for them.
- Getting attached to *ārammaṇa* is "*taṇhā*." One can get attached via greed, anger, or ignorance. Let us discuss that briefly since it is crucial.

Taṇhā – Getting Attached via Greed, Anger, or Ignorance

9. Just like there are "pleasing and enticing things" in the *kāma loka*, there are also "unpleasant things." For example, rotten food tastes terrible, and we do not like loud or high-pitched noises. Humans generate ***sāmisa dukkha vedanā*** when exposed to such sensory inputs or *ārammaṇa*.

- Nonetheless, we get "attached" to them also. We complain about gad tasting foods or harsh noises and may take actions to avoid them.
- That is why "*taṇhā*" means "getting attached to *ārammaṇa* via either greed or anger." We also get attached to *ārammaṇa* due to ignorance, not knowing the true nature of them. See, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- We get attached via greed and ignorance DUE TO ***sāmisa sukha vedanā*** and ***sāmisa upekkhā vedanā.*** It is essential to realize that while everyone feels *sāmisa vedanā,* not everyone attaches via *sāmisa vedanā* the same way.

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Samphassa-jā-Vedanā Depend on One's *Gati* And The Specific *Ārammaṇa*

10. We have already discussed how *samphassa-jā-vedanā* arise due to one's character/habits (*gati*) and specific *ārammaṇa*. See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

- An *Arahant* does not have any *gati* left (other than those without *kammic* consequences), and thus would not generate *taṇhā* and, therefore, would not generate *samphassa-jā-vedanā.*
- All others attach to *ārammaṇa* in different ways and at different levels. Whether one attaches to *ārammaṇa* depends on that particular *ārammaṇa* AND one's *gati*. For example, teenagers are likely to *gati* to attach to loud music, whereas an older adult may dislike such music. In each category of food, odors, sex, etc. some people attach more than others.
- It is essential to avoid "bad *ārammaṇa*." If one associates with those who drink excessively or are engaged in drug use, it is hard to avoid getting involved with such activities.
- In the same way, it is easier to cultivate good habits (*gati*) by associating with those who already have good *gati*. Then one will mostly be exposed to "good *ārammaṇa*."

Summary

11. So far, we have discussed the progression of events when a sensory input comes in per "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)." For example, when an external object is the *ārammaṇa*, the series of events start with, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ."* At that initial stage, it is just a *vipāka viññāṇa*. See, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa." Then in the subsequent posts, we have been discussing the progression, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā.*" Now we can summarize those steps as follows.

- First, a *ārammaṇa* (in this case, a visual object) catches one's attention with a *vipāka viññāṇa*. In this case, it is a *cakkhuviññāṇa.*
- Immediately, the *kāma guṇa* comes into play, and one experiences a ***sāmisa sukha vedanā*** if it is a mind-pleasing object. That happens whether one is an average human or an *Arahant*.
- Then the next part of the above verse, "*tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā"* happens in mind (within a fraction of a second.) One's "*san gatī*" come into play. If one has a tendency to be attracted to that particular type of object, then one would attach to that object. If it was an object that one truly dislikes, one would generate ***sāmisa dukkha vedanā*** and would still attach with dislike or anger.
- Now, another average human MAY NOT get attached either way. That is because that particular *ārammaṇa* may not be his/her "type," i.e., he/she may not have an interest in it. On the other hand, an *Arahant* WILL NOT get attached (via like, dislike, or ignorance) to ANY *ārammaṇa*.

Next Post

12. It took us a few posts to cover that, but I think it is essential to get these basic ideas clarified. It may not take that long to go through the rest of the *sutta*.

- Another essential point from the discussion so far is that sensory events are discrete. They do not come in continuously. The mind handles ONE *ārammaṇa* at a time. However, since the mind is very fast, it APPEARS that we are seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and feeling body touches all at the same time.
- In the next post, we will discuss this critical point.

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5.2.8.4.5.4 Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy

October 13, 2019; revised November 15, 2019

Vision – How Do We See an Object?

1. Vision or "seeing" appears to us as continuous. We see people moving around, vehicles moving, animals running around, etc. However, in reality, "seeing" happens due to a series of "snapshots" that our physical eyes take. Please bear with me as I set the stage with the following Pāli terms. It is not necessary to know these Pāli terms in detail, but try to get the basic idea.

- A key idea behind Buddha Dhamma is that we experience only one *citta* (loosely translated as a thought) at a time and that *citta* is focused on ONE *ārammaṇa*. In other words, while the mind is registering a visual event, it cannot hear, smell, taste, or feel a touch.
- Even when we focus on "seeing," it does not happen continuously. The mind can process only one *cakkhudvāra citta vīthi* (with 17 *cittā*) at a time. The mind processes that *cakkhudvāra citta vīthi* with three more *manodvāra citta vīthi*. At the end of those *citta vīthi*, the mind has captured a 'snapshot" of the object and recognized it. That is one "snapshot" of a moving object.
- Our "seeing of a moving external object" within a few seconds involves many such "snapshots." Our perception of a moving object is the result of all those "snapshots." We do not see the individual "snapshots."

Movie Analogy – Series of Snapshots

2. We can simplify and understand the above process using an analogy. What I stated above is — in principle — what happens when we watch a movie.

- **When making a movie, a video camera captures many static pictures (snapshots) of a scene.** Then those snapshots are projected to a screen at a certain rate. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a certain "projection rate", it looks like real motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:

  WebLink: youtube: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion - TED-Ed

- A movie projector projects static pictures to the screen at a rate of about 30 frames a second, and we see the movie as a continuous progression of events. If the projection rate is low, we can see it frame by frame or as individual "snapshots." When projected at 30 frames a second, we do not perceive those static pictures. Then we perceive a continuous progression without any gaps.
- More details in the post, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises."
- **That is why the Buddha said that the mind (or *viññāṇa*) is a magician.** We perceive a streamlined world, even though the reality is that our sensory faculties detect only a series of "snapshots," **It is the mind that conceals the reality and gives us a perception of a continuous progression of events.**
- It is critical to understand this point. It helps getting rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, as we will discuss in the next post.

Mind and the Brain – Two Different Entities

3. In an early post on this series, I pointed out that ***cakkhāyatana* is *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*, not the physical eyes.** See, #12 of "Buddhist Worldview – Introduction."

- That *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* (or simply *cakkhu*) is part of the *gandhabba*, our "mental body." The *gandhabba* has the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) surrounded by the five *pasāda rūpa* corresponding to vision, hearing, taste, smell, and touch.

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- When our physical eyes capture an image of an external object, that image goes to the visual cortex in the brain. The signal is processed there and then transmitted to the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*, which then makes contact with the *hadaya vatthu*. That contact (*phassa*) leads to the arising of *cakkhu viññāṇa* at the *hadaya vatthu*. More details at, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- By the way, that is the step, "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ"* discussed in #7 in the post, "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa."

4. Therefore, the brain is like a computer that helps convert the image sent by the physical eyes to a form that can be sensed by the *hadaya vatthu*, the seat of the mind. Therefore, vision involves a somewhat complex process.

- Similar processes take place for the other four physical sensory events. For example, when the physical ears capture a sound, that signal goes to the auditory cortex in the brain for processing. That signal then goes to the *sota pasāda rūpa*, which in turn makes contact with *hadaya vatthu to* transfer. That gives rise to *sota viññāṇa* via, "*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ."*

Reviewing the Whole Series Could Be Helpful

5. It may need some effort to understand this sequence of events. But that is really necessary in order to comprehend the overall process before we get to the next post.

- It is a good idea to print all the posts in the subsection, "Worldview of the Buddha" up to now and go over them carefully. There are about eight posts up to now.
- It is not necessary to understand the DETAILS of #6 and #7 below. But it is good to get the general ideas involved. I am providing this information to show that new findings in science are not only compatible with Buddha Dhamma but also help explain the key concepts in Buddha Dhamma.

The Brain Processes Visual Signals at About 30 Frames per Second

6. A recent study has reported that the minimum time needed for recognition of a static picture is about 13 milliseconds (Ref. 1). That means we should be able to see such snapshots projected at 77 frames per second at the highest rate. However, that is probably "pushing it" and not comfortable for the brain to handle. That is probably why movies use a projection rate of about 30 frames per second as mentioned in #2 above.

- It is interesting to note that the time for neural information to reach the brain takes about 15 to 30 milliseconds (References 49, 50 in Ref. 2). Therefore, a projection rate of 30 to 50 frames is compatible with that measurement too.
- A millisecond is a thousandth of a second.

Same Analysis Holds For Other Four Physical Senses

7. A similar set of rules are valid for hearing as well. Another recent study (Ref. 2) found that sounds could be recognized at rates up to 30 sounds per second. That corresponds to a "sound packet" of a duration of about 33 milliseconds that can be detected and recognized.

- However, people speak at a much slower rate of 150 words per minute. That is about 2 words per second, much less than 30 possible words per second that would be possible according to the above study. So, there is no problem with hearing what other people speak, even if someone talks faster than the average rate.
- There are no studies available at this time from science for the other three sensory events (taste, smell, and body touches). But the same process holds for those as well.

Aside – Cognition (*Saññā*) Requires More Than Detection

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The following points (#8, #9) are "asides." It is information that is not necessary but could help those with familiarity with *Abhidhamma*.

8. We must keep in mind that "experiencing a sensory input" is much more complex than just receiving that sensory input. For example, the mind needs to not only see an object or hear a sound, but it needs to recognize what it is and also need to generate a *vedanā*.

- As an example, when the sound "apple" is heard, the mind needs to know what an "apple" is. Someone who does not speak English would not know what is meant by the word "apple." But for those who speak English AND have had experience of eating apples would have MEMORIES of those. Therefore, the mind needs to compare the received sensory with past memories to recognize what it is!
- The mind does that very fast with the help of the *manasikāra cetasika*. As you may know, *manasikāra* is one of the seven universal *cetasika* that arises with each *citta*. Thus, the mind is able to recognize a sensory input instantaneously, as soon as it receives a "data packet."
- More details at, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises."

Aside – Process In Abhidhamma Language

9. Actual "seeing" or vision takes place at *hadaya vatthu*. Same for the other four types of sensory events. For example, let us consider a "packet of data" sent from the physical eye to the brain. The brain processes that information and transmits to the *cakkhu pasāda*. As you may remember, the five *pasāda rūpā* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya*) surround the *hadaya vatthu*. Now the *cakkhu pasāda* makes contact with the *hadaya vatthu* by hitting it. That causes the *hadaya vatthu* to vibrate 17 times, much like a gong hit by an iron rod vibrating for a certain fixed number of times.

- The 17 vibrations of the *hadaya vatthu* correspond to the 17 *cittā* in a *citta vīthi*. Such a *citta vīthi* is a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* because one of the five physical senses or *pañcadvāra* ("*panca*" or five + "*dvāra*" or "door") initiates it.
- Imagine a blade clamped at one edge and hit on the un-clamped side. The blade will vibrate. It vibrates for a certain FIXED number of times. For a given material, that number is fixed. The same thing happens when a *pasāda rūpa* makes contact with the *hadaya vatthu*. The *hadaya vatthu* vibrates 17 times, with each vibration leading to the arising of a *citta*. **That is the origin of a *citta vīthi* with 17 *cittā*.** Those 17 *vibrations* are a form of energy called *a* ***hadaya rūpa***.

10. The misconception that any *rūpa* has a lifetime of 17 thought moments arose because of not understanding the difference between a ***rūpa*** (which is the image of an external object) and a ***hadaya rūpa*** (which is just the 17 vibrations of the *hadaya vatthu*).

- In other words, this information packet is received and processed by the *hadaya vatthu* within those 17 *cittā*. The information is complete by the fourth *citta* (fourth vibration of the *hadaya vatthu*) and then the rest of the *citta* in that *citta vīthi* deal with this information. Three more *citta vīthi* run by the *hadaya vatthu* itself completes the process. Those additional *citta vīthi,* initiated by the mind, are *manodvāra citta vīthi.* Here, *manodvāra* means the "mind-door."
- Details of #9 and #10 at, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."

The mind is Fast But the Brain is Slow

11. Thus we can see that there is a vast **difference** in time between the two processes involved. The physical body acquiring data takes the time of the order of 10 milliseconds. The mind processing that information within a billionth of a second (using one *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* and three *manodvāra citta vīthi.*)

- Even if the five senses keep sending data continuously, the mind is "just sitting there" most of the time. Let us examine this in a bit detail: Suppose the brain keeps sending data from the eye non-stop. Since each "packet" takes, say ten milliseconds, then in a second, there will be 100 "data packets" of vision coming

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in. If the brain is going at full speed, it can send at most 500 (=100×5) "data packets" from all five physical senses in a second. **Then the mind will be spending less than a millionth of a second in processing all that data. During a movie that lasts two hours, the mind will be active probably less than a second in total.** Of course, this is a very simple analysis and the actual values could be higher, especially when taking into account the interaction of *dhammā* with the mind directly, i.e., "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ.*"

12. During those "gaps," the *hadaya vatthu* also interacts (both ways) with the *mana indriya* in the brain. **In particular, it gives instructions to the brain (via *mana indriya*)on how to control the physical body in response to the sensory inputs.**

- **Thus, the mind is just sitting there most of the time.** That "idle state" of the mind is the "*bhavaṅga*" state.
- **A key point here is that the mind spends only a VERY SHORT TIME experiencing the SENSORY INPUTS. There is no "self" watching a movie.** However, the mind gives the illusion that there is a "self" watching the movie. Details are in the next post, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."
- The above is a very brief discussion. Of course, there are more details, but one can hopefully get the basic idea. Please ask questions if something is not clear. It is critical to understand this post.

Summary

13. The critical point embedded in the WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148) is **that there is no "self" experiencing the external world**. We have been discussing the initial steps in sensory events addressed by that *sutta*.

- The key message in the *sutta* is that the mind DOES NOT experience the external world CONTINUOUSLY. Instead, the mind is active only for very brief periods of time when receiving inputs from the five *pasāda rūpa*. As we above it is the brain that is "on" much longer than the mind. **Once the brain processes information packets, the mind absorbs that information within a "blink of an eye."**
- On the other hand, the brain has a heavy workload while watching a movie. It has to process audio and video inputs at a rapid rate for the duration of the movie. One could get a headache if one watches two movies at a stretch. But even during that time, the mind is mostly in the *bhavaṅga* state. There is no "self" watching the movie. It is just a series of events taking place. **The mind is "putting all those "events" together and giving the appearance of a continuous progression of events.** Thus one has the perception that "I am watching a movie."
- Details are in the next post, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."
- **Later on, we will also discuss why it is also incorrect to say that there is "no-self."**

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1. M. C. Potter et al., "WebLink: dspace.mit.edu: Detecting Meaning in RSVP at 13 ms per Picture", Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience, vol. 13, pp. 90-101 (2014).
2. V. Isnard et al., "WebLink: researchgate.net: The time course of auditory recognition measured with rapid sequences of short natural sounds," Scientific Reports, vol. 9, pp. 1-10 (2019).

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5.2.8.4.5.5 Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience

October 19, 2019; revised #12 on September 28, 2020

Cha chakka – Six Sets of Sixes

1. We have finished discussing the six steps in the *Chachakka Sutta.* Let us briefly summarize the "six sets of sixes" (*Cha chakka*.)

- The *sutta* first lists the "six sets" or "six collections." "*Cha ajjhattikāni āyatanāni veditabbāni, cha bāhirāni āyatanāni veditabbāni, cha viññāṇakāyā veditabbā, cha phassakāyā veditabbā, cha vedanākāyā veditabbā, cha taṇhākāyā veditabbā*."

That means: "One needs to understand the following "six sets of sixes": Six **internal *āyatana***, six external *āyatana*, six classes of **(*vipāka*) *viññāṇa***, six classes of ***phassa***, six classes of ***vedanā***, six classes of ***taṇhā***. Let us briefly state what they are. I have explained them in detail in preceding posts.

- Six internal *āyatana* are: "*Cakkhāyatanaṃ, sotāyatanaṃ, ghānāyatanaṃ, jivhāyatanaṃ, kāyāyatanaṃ, manāyatanaṃ.*"
- Six external *āyatana* are: "*Rūpāyatanaṃ, saddāyatanaṃ, gandhāyatanaṃ, rasāyatanaṃ, phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ, dhammāyatanaṃ*."
- Six classes of (*vipāka*) *viññāṇa* are: "*cakkhuviññāṇa, sotaviññāṇa, ghānaviññāṇa, jivhāviññāṇa, kāyaviññāṇa, manoviññāṇa*."
- The six classes of *phassa*: "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*" and similarly for the other five **(i.e., they are six types of "*san phassa*")**,
- Six classes of *vedanā*: "*phassa paccayā vedanā*" arising due to each of the preceding six types of "*san phassa*."
- Six classes of *taṇhā*: "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*" due to the preceding six types of *vedanā*.
- It could be a good idea to print out the Pāli version of the *sutta* so that you can track which section of the *sutta* a verse under discussion is.

Chachakka Sutta Describes Initial Sensory Experiences Based on a New Ārammaṇa

2. About the first fourth of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" discusses the following steps: "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā*." (**repeated for all six sense faculties**.)

The *sutta* describes the automatic and instantaneous response to a new *ārammaṇa*. With several posts, we discussed in detail all those steps. Very briefly, those steps are (just focusing on the *cakkhu viññāṇa*):

- With the coming together (contact) between *cakkhu* (or *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*) and a *rūpa* (which is a "snapshot" of that external *rūpa*), *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises. ***Cakkhu* is NOT the physical eyes; "seeing" happens only when a *rūpa* makes contact with *cakkhu pasāda*.** Please review previous posts as needed.
- If that *rūpa* has a *kāma guṇa*, one may get interested in it (if one has the corresponding "*san gati*"). The next step takes place ONLY IF one has such matching *gati* for that *rūpa* or that *ārammaṇa*.
- If one has matching "*san gati*," then a corresponding "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" arises AUTOMATICALLY. See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."
- The next step, "***vedanā paccayā taṇhā*,"** happens if that "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*" is strong enough to take further action. We discussed that last step in, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)."

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A *Ārammaṇa* triggers sensory Experiences

3. Therefore, the *sutta* describes the series of events that take place when a new *ārammaṇa* comes to the mind via one of the six internal sense bases (internal *āyatana*).

- **It is essential to see that ALL these activities happen AUTOMATICALLY and INSTANTANEOUSLY. They do not require CONSCIOUS thinking. There is no INTENTION involved.**
- That is a critical point to understand. You might say, "I can use any of the sensory faculties (internal *āyatana*) anytime I want to." That is true. But think about any event, and you can ALWAYS trace it back to a *ārammaṇa* that comes to mind on its own.
- For example, when you are walking down a crowded street, you may see, hear many things. But one sight or sound could stop you and start doing something else. You may see an eye-catching item in a store window, stop to look at it, and then go inside to buy it. That was triggered via, "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*." **The *sutta* describes what happens ONLY at the MOMENT that you saw the item.** Once you get "attached to it," you start generating *vacī saṅkhāra* (consciously thinking about the item) and *kāya saṅkhāra* (go inside the store). That is the "*kamma* generation" stage. We will discuss that in later posts.
- Even in the middle of a discussion, one may get a new idea, and then everyone may start talking about that new idea he/she presented. The conversation changes to a new topic with the new *ārammaṇa*. That happened with a *dhammā* (an idea) which came to the mind via "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ.*"

Chachakka Sutta Describes Only *Kamma Vipāka*

4. All the steps in #2 above happen within a fraction of a second. There is no conscious thinking involved. **They are all *kamma vipāka*.**

- Of course, that process describes only those events immediately following the INITIAL sensory contact. One can deliberately experience that sensory contact again and again after the initial experience. For example, one may keep looking at an interesting sight or keep listening to a pleasing sound. **That is when one accumulates a new *kamma* (if done with greed, anger, or ignorance).** We will discuss those steps in future posts involving *Paticca Samuppāda*.
- **Results of past *kamma* automatically lead to *kamma vipāka*. Based on them, we create new *kamma*. That is how the rebirth process continues.**

Sensory Inputs – One "Packet" At a Time

5. As I discussed in detail in the previous post, all our sensory inputs are first processed by the brain in "packets." The brain can process those six types of data in parallel (at the same time). Each "packet" is about one-hundredth of a second (10 milliseconds) in duration. Then those processed signals arrive at the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) located on the mental body (*manomaya kāya* or *gandhabba*). The mind, in turn, analyzes only ONE packet of information at a time. See the previous post, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."

- For example, while the mind is processing a "sight" or *rūpa rūpa*, it CANNOT process a "sound" or a "*sadda rūpa*." The mind switches to another sensory input after analyzing that "snapshot" of sight. **Of course, our eyes and ears do not "die" moment-to-moment. It is just that "*cakkhu*," for example, is ALIVE (or ACTIVE) only while the mind is processing input from the physical eyes.**
- Therefore, ONLY ONE internal *āyatana* is "ALIVE" at a given moment. Our "*cakkhu*" comes alive while the mind is receiving a "snapshot" of an external rūpa. The "*sota*" is alive (or active) only during a

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brief moment of receiving a "bit of sound" like just a word. **They come to the mind in "packets," not as a continuous stream. But it SEEMS that we experience them all at the same time since the mind processes all inputs at a fast rate.**

- The following example may help to get the basic idea. We have seen those signposts where a message runs one letter at a time, but at a fast rate. Only one letter is in display at a given moment. But within a fraction of a second, that letter turns off, and the next letter turns on, and so on. Since it happens fast, we can read the message.
- The mind is extremely fast. It is able not only to put together such a stream of incoming signals but also to separate the six sensory inputs. In the previous post (see #8 there), I briefly mentioned that the mind does this with the help of the *manasikāra cetasika*.
- More details at "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises."

If *Cakkhu* Is "*Attā*," It Must Be Alive (or Operational) All The Time

Now let us discuss the next verse in the *sutta*. It helps understand what is meant by the critical Pāli words *attā* and *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.

6. We have the perception that there is a "self" that sees, hears, tastes, smells, touches, and recalls *dhammā* all at the same time.

- However, we do not experience all six sensory inputs at the same time. Even with just one sensory input, the mind receives only a brief "snapshot" of it at a time. See, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."
- In other words, our six internal *āyatana* of *cakkhu*, *sota*, *ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano* arise ONLY if a corresponding *ārammaṇa* appears. As I have emphasized, our physical eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body are not our internal *āyatana*. See, "Buddhist Worldview – Introduction."
- Therefore, "one's self" is not there in ANY of those 36 entities. **All those come to existence momentarily and pass away. That happens from time-to-time only when a *ārammaṇa* is registered.**
- **That is a critical conclusion that is related to "*anattā*." It will also become clear that *anattā* is different from *anatta* (without the long "*ā*.")** Let us discuss ***anattā*** in detail now.

A "Self" Is Not Involved in The Preceding Processes

7. After going through the steps in #2 above, the next part of the *sutta* starts with the verse, "'*Cakkhu attā'ti yo vadeyya taṃ na upapajjati.* ***Cakkhussa uppādopi vayopi paññāyati.*** *Yassa kho pana uppādopi vayopi paññāyati, 'attā me uppajjati ca veti cā'ti iccassa evamāgataṃ hoti.* ***Tasmā taṃ na upapajjati: 'cakkhu attā'ti yo vadeyya.*** *Iti cakkhu anattā*."

Loosely translated: "If anyone says, 'The *cakkhu* is self,' (or "seeing" is mine or "it is I who sees") that is not tenable. **An arising and disappearing of *cakkhu* (not the physical eye) is evident.** If *cakkhu* is 'self,' that would imply: 'my self arises and disappears' OR 'I come into being momentarily and disappear.' **That is why it cannot be argued that 'The eye is self.'** Thus *cakkhu* is 'not-self' or '*anattā*." ("*na attā*" for "not *attā*" rhymes as "*anattā,"* just as "*na āgāmi*" rhymes as "*Anāgāmi."*)

- That verse is then repeated for the other five entities related to *cakkhu*, i.e., *rūpa*, *cakkhu viññāṇa*, *cakkhu samphassa*, *cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā, taṇhā* (due to *cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā*.) The last verse in that series is, "*Iti cakkhu anattā, rūpā anattā, cakkhuviññāṇaṃ anattā, cakkhusamphasso anattā, vedanā anattā, taṇhā anattā*."
- Then that is repeated for the six entities associated with *sota*, *ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano* (6 x 6). The last verse is, "*Iti mano anattā, dhammā anattā, manoviññāṇaṃ anattā, manosamphasso anattā, vedanā anattā, taṇhā anattā*." At this point, we are about halfway through the text in the *sutta*.

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- Therefore, there is no "self" to be found in any of those.
- Now let us discuss two other *suttā* briefly to make those points clear.

Bāhiya Sutta – "*Diṭṭhe Diṭṭhamattaṃ Bhavissati*"

8. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bāhiya Sutta (Udāna 1.10)," the Buddha tells Bāhiya, "*Tasmātiha te, bāhiya, evaṃ* ***sikkhitabbaṃ***: '*diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissatī'ti.*

Translated: "Bāhiya, **you should train yourself the following way.** At any moment, what you see (*diṭṭhe*) is just a snapshot (*diṭṭhamattaṃ* is literally, "trace of a sight.") What you hear (*sute*) is a brief sound (*sutamattaṃ.*) What you experience with taste, smell, and touch (*mute*) is a trace of that (*mutamattaṃ.*) Your *viññāṇa* (*viññāte*) is a trace of *viññāṇa* (*viññātamattaṃ.*)

Then the Buddha further explains, "***Yato kho te, bāhiya, diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati****, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati,* ***tato tvaṃ, bāhiya, na tena****; yato tvaṃ, bāhiya, na tena tato tvaṃ, bāhiya, na tattha; yato tvaṃ, bāhiya, na tattha, tato tvaṃ,* ***bāhiya, nevidha na huraṃ na ubhayamantarena****. Esevanto dukkhassā" ti.*

Translated: "**Since what you see (*diṭṭhe*) is just a snapshot** (and similarly for others), Bāhiya, **there is no "you" (involved) there**; because of that Bāhiya, should not get attached (*na tattha*); if you do that, **Bāhiya, "you" are not in this existence (*nevidha*) or another existence (*na huraṃ*) or in between those two (*na ubhayam antarena.*")** That (understanding) is the end of suffering (*Esevanto dukkhassā" ti.*)

My comments:

- **That means it is incorrect to say there is a "self" experiencing those traces of sensory events. Those are just results (*vipāka*) of past *kamma*, i.e., causes bring corresponding results.** We will explain this further with the *Mālukyaputta Sutta* below.
- **However, the above description may give the impression that everything is deterministic. That is not so, and that will become clear when we address what happens following the initial "vipāka stage."**
- Many people incorrectly translate "*mattam*" to English as "only." For example, most current translators translate "*diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ*" as "seeing is only seeing."
- *Diṭṭhamatta* means "a snapshot" (literally a "trace of seeing."). For example, *appamatta* means "insignificant." "*appa*" means "little" and "*matta*" means "a trace." *Matta* is "*mātra*" in Sanskrit and "මාත්‍ර" in Sinhala. As we discussed in the previous post, it is the mind (or the viññāṇa) that gives us the illusion of a continuous sensory experience implying an "experiencer." That is why the Buddha said that *viññāṇa* is a magician. See #2 of, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."

Mālukyaputta Sutta – Same Verse In More Details

9. Those above verses in #8 are also in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mālukyaputta Sutta (SN 35.95)," where the Buddha tells *bhikkhu* Mālukyaputta, "*Ettha ca te, mālukyaputta, diṭṭhasutamutaviññātabbesu dhammesu* ***diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati.*** *Yato kho te, mālukyaputta, diṭṭhasutamutaviññātabbesu dhammesu diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissati; tato tvaṃ, mālukyaputta, na tena.* ***Yato tvaṃ, mālukyaputta, na tena; tato tvaṃ, mālukyaputta, na tattha. Yato tvaṃ, mālukyaputta, na tattha; tato tvaṃ, mālukyaputta, nevidha, na huraṃ, na ubhayamantarena. Esevanto dukkhassā***"ti.

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- That is very similar to *Bāhiya Sutta* above. However, now *bhikkhu* Mālukyaputta recounts what he understood. That is very informative.

Mālukyaputta Sutta – What Happens If One Gets Attached

10. *Bhikkhu* Mālukyaputta then says that he understood what the Buddha meant by the above verse. He explains his understanding:

'*Rūpaṃ disvā sati muṭṭhā,*
Piyaṃ nimittaṃ manasi karoto;
Sārattacitto vedeti,
Tañca ajjhosa tiṭṭhati.

Tassa vaḍḍhanti vedanā,
anekā rūpasambhavā;
Abhijjhā ca vihesā ca,
cittamassūpahaññati;
Evaṃ ācinato dukkhaṃ,
ārā nibbāna vuccati.'

Translation:

"When one sees a form (*rūpa*) without mindfulness (i.e., without knowing that it is just a trace of "seeing"),
one gets attached to that (*nimitta* or *ārammaṇa*),
One experiences it with an infatuated mind (with greed)
And **remains** bound to it.

"Many feelings flourish within,
Originating from the mind thinking about many related *rūpa* (*anekā rūpasambhavā*);
Greed and anger as well
By which one's mind becomes disturbed;
For one who accumulates suffering thus
Nibbāna is far away.

Mālukyaputta Sutta – What Happens If One Does Not Get Attached

11. *Bhikkhu* Mālukyaputta then says the following about how one needs to train oneself to attain *Nibbāna*:

'*Na so rajjati rūpesu,*
rūpaṃ disvā paṭissato;
Virattacitto vedeti,
tañca nājjhosa tiṭṭhati.

Yathāssa passato rūpaṃ,
sevato cāpi vedanāṃ;
Khīyati nopacīyati,
evaṃ so caratī sato;
Evaṃ apacinato dukkhaṃ,
santike nibbāna vuccati.'

Translation:

"When one sees a form with mindfulness (with proper understanding)
One is not inflamed by lust for forms;
One experiences it with a dispassionate mind
And does not hold on to it tightly.

"For one acting mindfully in such a way

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Without attaching to the form,
Even while one experiencing those feelings;
Suffering is exhausted, not built up
For one not piling up suffering thus,
Nibbāna is near.

Next Post

12. From what *bhikkhu* Mālukyaputta stated above, we can begin to see that it is not correct to say that it is "no-self," either. After the "*vipāka* stage" that comes with a new *ārammaṇa* is over, it is possible to "take control" of the sensory experience. **That is possible ONLY IF one comprehends that *anattā* nature involved in the *vipāka* stage. Without that understanding, one would have *sakkāya diṭṭhi* as the *sutta* points out next.**

- **Aside for those who are anxious to see why it is not correct to say that it is "no-self," either:** At the end of the *vipāka* stage (at the step, "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*"), a new phase of the sensory experience starts. That is the "*kamma* accumulation" stage. That new phase could last a long time if the mind is firmly attached to that *ārammaṇa*. One may think about more ways of enjoying that *ārammaṇa*, may speak about it, and may do things to pursue that *ārammaṇa*. **All those are *saṅkhāra*, and they lead to *kamma viññāṇa* via, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."**
- However, *Chachakka sutta* starts at the *vipāka* stage (with a sensory experience) and shows how one starts accumulating kamma ONLY IF one has *saṅgati* (if one has the corresponding "*san gati*"). See #2 above. That decision to "get attached" is made at the *votthapana* stage of a *citta vithi*. See, #15 of "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."
- Details of that "*kamma* accumulation" process will depend on whether one would still have *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. That means one does not realize that there is no "self" or "*attā*" involved in that initial sensory experience due to *kamma vipāka*.
- That is the next verse in the *Chachakka Sutta*, which we will discuss in the next post.

5.2.8.4.5.6 Sakkāya Diṭṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"

October 26, 2019; revised November 1, 2019

Summary of *Chachakka Sutta* Up to This Point

1. The *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148) describes in detail what happens when a new *ārammaṇa* (thought object) comes to the mind. The mind may "attach" (*taṇhā*) to that *ārammaṇa* via greed, anger, or ignorance. Let us briefly summarize those steps. All relevant posts are at, "Origin of Life."

- First, depending on the specific internal *āyatana* involved, one of six *vipāka viññāṇa* arises. Those are *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya*, or *mano viññāṇa*. Such a *viññāṇa* does not create *kammic* energy. It is just "seeing," "hearing," "smelling," "tasting," "touching," or "recalling a memory or an idea."
- Then the mind "makes contact" with "*san gati*." If one has *gati* to attach to that *ārammaṇa* via greed, anger, or ignorance, then the mind GENERATES corresponding *somanassa, domanassa*, or *upekkha vedanā*. They are *samphassa-jā-vedanā* or mind-made *vedanā*.
- The mind "attaches" to that *ārammaṇa* if such a "mind-made" *vedanā* arises. Here one can attach (*taṇhā*) via greed, hate, or ignorance.
- The keyword *ārammaṇa* was introduced in the post, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

The Unique Situation For an *Arahant*

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2. Only the first step happens in an *Arahant*. There is no attachment to any *ārammaṇa*. Only the experience of *kāma guna* (such as the sweetness of sugar or the bitterness of lemon) is there. See, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)."

- However, an *Arahant* would also feel *kāyika* (bodily) *vedanā* due to injuries, sicknesses, etc. Those are *dukkha, sukha*, or *adukkhamasukha vedanā*. Note that *somanassa/domanassa vedanā* based on those *kāyika* (bodily) *vedanā* are not experienced by an *Arahant*.
- Anyone other than an *Arahant* MIGHT attach to a particular *ārammaṇa*. Whether or not that attachment happens, depend on the "*san gati*." It is not that everyone attaches to every *ārammaṇa*.

Deeper Aspects of the *Chachakka Sutta*

3. We also discussed the "deeper aspects" involved in those steps.

- Only one of the six types of *viññāṇa* arises in mind at any moment due to a specific *ārammaṇa*. When we see, do not hear, smell, taste, touch, or think AT THAT BRIEF MOMENT. That is because only one *citta vīthi* focused on one sensory input can be present at any moment. Put it in another way, **only one *pasāda rūpa* can make contact with the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) at a given time**. The mind analyzes that sensory contact with four *citta vīthi* JUST FOCUSED ON that particular sensory input.
- For example, when the mind is analyzing a "packet of sound," it just focuses on that sound. The mind DOES NOT and CANNOT see, taste, smell, etc. during that brief time. Thus sensory inputs are analyzed in "packets." Each "packet" is only one of six possible types (sight, sound, taste, smell, touch, or recall of *dhammā*.)
- We analyzed that in terms of recent findings from modern science. The mind takes "snapshots" of each sensory input separated by about a hundredth of a second (10 milliseconds.) Since that happens very fast, we "feel like" we are "seeing continuously." That is an illusion created by the mind, just like we perceive a set of snapshots as a continuous movie. See, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."
- Not only that, but we feel that we are seeing, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking all at the same time. But the reality is that the mind receives only one "snapshot" at a time. The mind has the astounding capability to combine "data packets" from the "six doors" without mixing them up!

What is *Ghāna Saññā*?

4. The fast mind gives the illusion that there is a "person" or a "self" or an "*attā*" experiencing those sensory events. That incorrect perception is "*ghāna saññā*" or a "perception of solidity."

- I had not used that term "*ghāna saññā*" previously. It is a word that describes the illusion that the mind creates by taking a series of "snapshots" and linking them together to provide a "continuous sensory experience."
- As we discussed, that is what happens when we watch a movie too. The illusion of continuous motion results with the projection of a series of "static pictures." See, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."

5. **Therefore, any sensory event is just a brief "snapshot." It lasts a brief moment and goes to the past. That is the critical point to understand.** Bāhiya understood that point instantly and attained the *Arahanthood*. But he had cultivated the path almost to the end, and just needed a "little push" to get there. That is what we discussed in the previous post, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."

- The mind has the astounding capability to recall preceding "snapshots," and to put it all together to present a "continuous sensory experience." That is why the Buddha called *viññāṇa* a magician.

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6. We also have a "*ghāna saññā*" about our physical body. We perceive that our bodies are solid, but as I have explained in a previous post, our bodies are "mostly empty." That is because those atoms and molecules which make up our bodies are mostly empty. see, #7 – #10 of the post, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?."

- I keep summarizing the discussion up to now since there is a lot of material embedded in those verses. Now, let us discuss the next verse in the *sutta*.

Next Verse in the *Chachakka Sutta – Sakkāya Samudaya*

We have discussed up to the verse which ends with, "*Iti mano anattā, dhammā anattā, manoviññāṇaṃ anattā, manosamphasso anattā, vedanā anattā, taṇhā anattā.*" Now we are getting to the critical conclusion reached from those earlier verses.

7. The next verse in the *sutta* starts with, "*Ayaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave,* ***sakkāyasamudayagāminī paṭipadā—cakkhuṃ 'etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'ti samanupassati; rūpe 'etaṃ mama,*** *esohamasmi, eso me attā'ti samanupassati*; …"

- *Sakkāya* here refers to *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. *Samudaya* ("*san*" + "*udaya*") means "arising (due to) *san*." *Gāmini* means "path." *Patipada* means an "action plan" or simply one's behavior. Thus, ***sakkāyasamudayagāminī paṭipadā*** means, "**the behavior that leads to the arising of *sakkāya diṭṭhi***."
- **Then it says, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* arises because one believes that "*cakkhu* is mine, *cakkhu* is what I am, *cakkhu* is my "self."**
- The *sutta* then repeats that for all other five entities associated with "seeing." They are *rūpa*, *cakkhu viññāṇa*, *cakkhu samphassa, cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā,* and *taṇhā* (that results from *cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā.*)
- Then it is repeated for the other five internal *āyatana*: *sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, mano.*

Re-cap on the Initial Sensory Experience Due to *Kamma Vipāka*

8. All our discussions on the first half of the *sutta* led to the CRITICAL conclusion in the above verse. In simple terms, "there is no EXPERIENCER" experiencing those initial sensory inputs. As we remember, those INITIAL sensory inputs come in as *kamma vipāka*.

- Let me emphasize this point. Any sensory experience starts without direct initiation by the "experiencer." For example, one FIRST sees an object via "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ."* But that does not happen by chance. It is ALWAYS a *kamma vipāka*.
- **A *kamma vipāka* experienced through the physical body (*kāya*) can be comforting (*sukha*), painful (*dukkha*), or neutral (*adukkhamasukha*).** For example, one gets to lie on a comfortable bed due to a good *kamma* done in the past. A bad *kamma* done in the past leads to an injury. Both happen via "*kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ."*

9. **All other INITIAL sensory EXPERIENCES START with *adukkhamasukha vedanā.*** We see, hear, smell, taste, or a thought comes to the mind. The last one is, "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*." All those generate *adukkhamasukha vedanā* (neutral feeling).

- **However, based on all six initial sensory contacts, we may instantly generate *somanassa* or *domanassa vedanā* due to *kāma guṇa*.** For example, it is natural for a human (including *Arahants*) to experience an appealing taste when tasting sugar or upon seeing an attractive person.
- Based on those are "mind-made" feelings or "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*." They are different from *dukkha/sukha vedanā* associated with sensory contacts with the body (*kāya*.)

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- Now, based on such ***somanassa* or *domanassa vedanā* due to *kāma guṇa,*** an average human MAY generate ***samphassa-jā-vedanā***. That will happen IF the mind "get stuck" ((*taṇhā*) on that sensory input. Of course, an *Arahant* WILL NOT generate those ***samphassa-jā-vedanā*.**
- That was discussed in, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)."

Taṇhā Leads to *Upādāna* via *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

10. That is a critical step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda,* not discussed in the *Chachakka Sutta.* That *sutta* explains only the *KAMMA VIPĀKA* stage. That step of "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" starts the "new *kamma* GENERATION" process.

- I hope now you can see that ALL of our *kamma* generation activities start when a new *ārammaṇa* comes to the mind. That starts with, "*salāyatana paccayā phasso*" step in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle. It is the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step that starts a new *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra.*"
- That is a CRITICAL point. I will take the time to explain this "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step. That way, one can get insights into how *Paṭicca Samuppāda* operates. Then one can begin to get an idea of the importance of understanding key concepts of Buddha Dhamma.

A New *Paṭicca Samuppāda* Process Starts Only if One Starts Acting with *Avijjā*

11. Next, the *Chachakka Sutta* states the REASONS why a given person may START to going through the *kamma* generation stage starting with *avijjā*. See, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."

- **One would pursue a given *ārammaṇa* (the sight, sound, etc.) ONLY IF one perceives that it is worthwhile or beneficial to him or her.** That perception comes from the wrong view that those sensory experiences are one's own. As we discussed, that wrong view is *sakkāya diṭṭhi.*
- One with *sakkāya diṭṭhi* does not realize that those experiences are just results of causes from the past. That they are *kamma vipāka*. Then one tries to get control of the situation by either trying to maintain a "good experience" or by trying to avoid a "bad experience." **Therefore, it is POSSIBLE for ANYONE with *sakkāya diṭṭhi* to go through the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step.**
- However, a *Sotāpanna* (who has removed *sakkāya diṭṭhi*) may still do immoral deeds. Obviously, a *Sotāpanna* would NOT do *apāyagāmī* deeds. But he/she may still do less-strong immoral deeds. That is because a *Sotāpanna* still has wrong perceptions (*viparita saññā*.) **It is only at the *Arahant* stage that one would have removed both wrong views AND wrong perceptions.** I will explain this in a future post after concluding the discussion on the *Chachakka Sutta*.

12. **However, not everyone with *sakkāya diṭṭhi* will go through the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step.** Different people "attach" to different types of *ārammaṇa.*

- For example, if a beautiful woman starts working at a workplace, everyone will see her as beautiful. But only a few will get "attached" and start thinking about asking her for a date. There could be one person who may "fall in love head over heels" at first sight of her.
- That is why we cannot say there is "no-self" either. Until one attains the *Arahanthood*, there will be a "dynamic self" who gets attached to some things in this world. I say a "dynamic self" because there is no "fixed self" in the sense of a soul or a "*ātma.*" See, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream."

Attachment (*Taṇhā*) Can Happen Due to Greed, Anger, or Ignorance

13. In the above example, we discussed getting attached to the sight of a beautiful woman. But as we have discussed before, one can "attach" to a *ārammaṇa* via anger or ignorance too.

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- Seeing an enemy, one will instantly generate anger in mind via the steps in the *Chachakka Sutta*. Here, the *samphassa-jā-vedanā* generated is a *domanassa vedanā*. It is a stressful *vedanā*. But still one "attaches" to that *ārammaṇa*, and will start making bad *vacī saṅkhāra* (i.e., conscious thoughts of anger) in mind.
- On the other hand, the *samphassa-jā-vedanā* generated in the example discussed in #12 above (upon seeing a beautiful woman) is a *somanassa vedanā*. That person "attaches" via greed.
- In some situations, there could be confusion on how to respond to a *ārammaṇa* and still get "stuck." That is due to *avijjā*.

Taṇhā Leads to *Upādāna* Depending on One's Level of *Avijjā*

14. Having one or more of the following views lead to *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.

- The physical body (*kāya*) is mine, it is what I am, and it is my "self." Furthermore, all associated bodily functions are mine, they are what I am, and they are my "self." Those are: seeing or *cakkhu*, hearing or *sota*, tasting or *jivhā*, smelling or *ghāna*, touching or *kāya*, thinking or *mana.* See #6 above.
- Then one also tends to associate some external *rūpa* the same way. Those are *rūpa rūpa* (or *vaṇṇa rūpa* or simply *rūpa*), *sadda rūpa, gandha rūpa, rasa rūpa, phoṭṭhabba rūpa*, and *dhamma rūpa* or *dhammā*. For example, "this is my house; my song; this is my cake; my favorite scent; my comfy bed; these are my thoughts."
- One may also perceive that all of one's mental aspects (*cakkhu viññāṇa*, *cakkhu samphassa, cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā,* and *taṇhā*) are all one's "self." Of course, the same with other mental aspects associated with other sense faculties. There are 36 (6 X 6) such entities that the *sutta* lists. See, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."

Pañcupādānakkhandhā as *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*

15. Those 36 entities are also known as "*pañcupādānakkhandhā*." **Here, *Pañcupādānakkhandhā* comes from *"pañca"* + *"upādāna"* + *"khandha"* or the five aggregates, to which one gets attached.** See, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."

- If you carefully look at those 36 entities, they include *rūpakkhandha, vedanākkhandha, saññākkhandha, saṅkhārakkhandha*, and the *viññāṇakkhandha*. However, one does not take all of those to be "mine." For example, out of all the houses in this world, one may claim to own one or a few homes. Out of all humans, one may have a set of people that one considers to be "mine." For example, my parents, wife, children, friends, etc.
- Therefore, it is only a small fraction of the *pañcakkhandha* that one has "attachments to." Those attachments can vary from very strong (my body is the strongest) to decreasing levels for friends, and neighbors, etc.
- Thus, *pañcupādānakkhandhā* is a small fraction of the *pañcakkhandha*.
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Sakkāyapañhā Sutta (SN 38.15)" **DEFINES *sakkāya* as *pañcupādānakkhandhā***: "*Sakkāyo, sakkāyo'ti, āvuso sāriputta, vuccati. Katamo nu kho, āvuso,* ***sakkāyo****"ti? "****Pañcime, āvuso, upādānakkhandhā sakkāyo*** *vutto bhagavatā, seyyathidaṃ—rūpupādānakkhandho, vedanupādānakkhandho, saññupādānakkhandho, saṅkhārupādānakkhandho, viññāṇupādānakkhandho. Ime kho, āvuso, pañcupādānakkhandhā sakkāyo vutto bhagavatā"ti.*

Other Ways of Describing *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*

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16. It is possible to describe *sakkāya diṭṭhi* in somewhat different ways. However, all of those are inter-consistent. The following posts discuss some of those. Please let me know if you find any inconsistencies (lal@puredhamma.net) or we can discuss it at the discussion forum.

- Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?
- Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhana
- Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views

Wrong Views of *Nicca* and *Sukha* Lead to the Wrong View of *Attā*

17. **One gets attached to things that one perceives to be *nicca* and *sukha*.** *Nicca* (pronounced "nichcha") means we believe we can keep them in the way we want or like. *Sukha* means we think we will be happy by getting "ownership" of them.

- Then one takes "ownership" of them. One considers those to be "one's own" or "*attā*." That attachment can vary from very strong to less strong. One's own body and mental qualities (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa* regarding one's own body) gives the strongest sense of *attā*.
- Then comes one's spouse, children, etc., one's house, cars, etc., one's relatives and friends, etc.
- Therefore, the hardest to remove is the sense of *attā* with regards to one's own body.
- IT CANNOT be removed by will-power. It comes only from understanding the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature of this world. What we discussed up to now play a significant role in that understanding. There is no "experiencer." A sensory input comes in as a result (*kama vipāka*) of a previous cause (*kamma*.)

5.2.8.4.5.7 An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation

November 2, 2019; revised November 6, 2019

Introduction

1. In this post, we will discuss why someone with *sakkāya diṭṭhi* believes in a "self" (knowingly or unknowingly) and **accumulates *kamma* with that wrong view**.

- In previous posts in this series, we discussed why there is no "Experiencer." Thus, there is no need for the existence of a "self" to describe an INITIAL sensory experience.
- However, anyone with *sakkāya diṭṭhi* has the wrong view of a "self" experiencing sensory inputs. Based on that mistaken view, steps are taken to maintain a "good experience" or to stop a "bad experience." Therefore, we could say that there is a "Doer" as long as there is *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. **That is why it is not correct to say that there is "no-self" either.**
- By the way, that does not mean we do not need to take action to prevent bad outcomes. The key idea is to realize the unfruitfulness of doing immoral actions in response to sensory inputs.
- The *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148) describes in detail what happens when a new *ārammaṇa* (thought object) comes to the mind. **The mind may "attach" (*taṇhā*) automatically** to that *ārammaṇa* via greed, anger, or ignorance. Let us briefly summarize those steps. It is critical to follow these steps. All relevant posts are at "Worldview of the Buddha." The main subsection is "Origin of Life."

Posts on the Background Material

2. In earlier posts, we discussed that INITIAL sensory experiences DO NOT require a "self." However, they do not happen arbitrarily or randomly either. Those sensory experiences have causes (or reasons); they are *kamma vipāka*.

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- Some *kamma vipāka* bring in suffering, such as injuries, sickness, etc., while other *vipāka* results in pleasurable experiences, such as good food, comfortable living, etc. Those are ALL experienced via the physical body (*kāya*.) They are NOT illusions. There is real suffering (and some pleasures too.)
- All other INITIAL sensory experiences do not DIRECTLY lead to pain or pleasure. Seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and recalling memories, etc. are "neutral" sensory experiences at that moment.

3. However, based on those sensory inputs, *somanassa* or *domanassa vedanā* arise automatically in mind. Those are "mind-generated" *vedanā* based on "*kāma guṇa*." All humans (including *Arahants* experience the sweetness of sugar or bitterness of some medicines.) These are the same as "*samphassa-jā-vedanā*." See, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)."

- Then, based on those *samphassa-jā-vedanā,* a given person may attach (*taṇhā*) to that particular sensory event (*ārammaṇa*.) Only an *Arahant* is guaranteed not to attach.
- That is the summary of about a fourth of the Pāli text in the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148). That completes the six sets of six.

No "Self" Involved in the Initial Sensory Experiences

4. As we have discussed, the next verse in the *sutta* is, "'*Cakkhu attā'ti yo vadeyya taṃ na upapajjati.* ***Cakkhussa uppādopi vayopi paññāyati.*** *Yassa kho pana uppādopi vayopi paññāyati, 'attā me uppajjati ca veti cā'ti iccassa evamāgataṃ hoti.* ***Tasmā taṃ na upapajjati: 'cakkhu attā'ti yo vadeyya****. Iti cakkhu anattā*."

Loosely translated: "If anyone says, 'The *cakkhu* is self,' (or "seeing" is mine or "it is I who sees") that is not tenable. **An arising and ceasing of *cakkhu* (not the physical eye) is evident.** If *cakkhu* is 'self,' that would imply the following: 'my self arises and ceases' OR 'I come into being momentarily and cease to exist.' **That is why one cannot argue that 'The eye is self.'** Thus *cakkhu* is 'not-self' or '*anattā*." ("*na attā*" for "not *attā*" rhymes as "*anattā,"* just as "*na āgāmī*" rhymes as "*Anāgāmi."*)

- Then the next fourth of the Pāli text in the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148) states that the above conclusion holds for all 36 entities ("six sets of sixes") involved in the initial sensory experience. Six **internal *āyatana***, six **external *āyatana***, six classes of **(*vipāka*)** *viññāṇa*, six classes of ***phassa***, six classes of ***vedanā***, six classes of ***taṇhā***.
- See, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience" for details on that.
- Then we discussed the next verse in the sutta starting with, "*Ayaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave,* ***sakkāyasamudayagāminī paṭipadā..***"

Attā Translated as "Self" Is Not Correct

5. The Pāli word "*attā*" does not really mean "self" even though I used that translation above. That translation is quite common these days. **We will go with that until we finish discussing *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. because it does help to get the *sakkāya diṭṭhi* idea of across below.** If I try to discuss the real meaning of *attā* right now, that could lead to confusion.

That is in fact why the Buddha refused to answer Vaccagotta's question about whether or not there is an "*attā*." See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Sutta (SN 44.10)."

- Vacchagotta comes to the Buddha asked "*kiṃ nu kho, bho gotama, atthattā" ti?*" OR "Master Gotama, is it correct to say that there is an "*attā*"?."
- **Note that "*atthattā*" is "*atthi attā*" where "*atthi*" means "exists." Vacchagotta meant in this case "*attā*" to be "self."** Thus, Vacchagotta meant: "Is it correct to say that a "*self*" exists?"
- The Buddha remained silent, and Vacchagotta asked the question again in the negative form. The second time, he asked: "*Kiṃ pana, bho gotama,* ***natthattā****" ti?*" or, "Master Gotama, is it **not** correct to say

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that there is a "self"?." Seeing that the Buddha is refusing to answer his question, Vacchagotta got up and left.

- **Note that "*natthattā*" is made up of three words: "*naatthi attā,*" which negates "*atthattā*."** Just as these days, many people were confused about the Pāli word "*attā*" and the Sanskrit word "*ātma*." The latter meaning is closer to a "soul"
- I will discuss this *sutta* when I will come back to discuss "*attā*" in detail, after discussing *Paṭicca Samuppāda.* By the way, Vacchagotta understood the concept later on and became an *Arahant* too.

The Origin of the Wrong View of *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Sakkāya Samudaya*

6. The *sutta* then states that the wrong view of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* arises BECAUSE one does not realize the above facts. Without knowing those facts, one tends to BELIEVE that there is a "self" experiencing those very first sensory events.

- Then, if it is was a "good experience," one would try to maintain that pleasant experience and also plan to experience it again in the future. In the case of a "bad experience," one would do the opposite to try to avoid such "bad experiences."
- The more one engages in either kind of such activity, the wrong VIEW of a "self" (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) grows.

7. That explanation is in a short verse starting with, "*Ayaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, **sakkāyasamudayagāminī paṭipadā**—**cakkhuṃ 'etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'ti samanupassati; rūpe 'etaṃ mama, esohamasmi, eso me attā'ti samanupassati***; …"

- We discussed this verse in detail in the last post, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma."
- So far I have summarized the discussion up to now. Now, we can discuss the next verse of the *sutta*.

Next Verse in the *Chachakka Sutta – Sakkāya Nirodhaya*

The verse in #7 above explains how *sakkāya diṭṭhi* ARISES. The new verse below explains HOW *sakkāya diṭṭhi* WILL STOP FROM ARISING.

8. The next verse in the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148) starts with, "*Ayaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, **sakkāyanirodhagāminī paṭipadā**—**cakkhuṃ 'netaṃ mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti samanupassati. Rūpe 'netaṃ mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti samanupassati***…"

The word ***Nirodha*** comes from "*nir*"+"*udaya,*" where "*nir*" means to stop and "*udaya*" means "arise." Thus *nirodha* means to prevent something from arising.

- *Gāmini* means "path." *Paṭipadā* means an "action plan" or one's behavior. Thus, ***sakkāyanirodhagāminī paṭipadā*** means, "**the behavior that leads to STOPPING the arising of *sakkāya diṭṭhi***."
- **Then it says, that will happen when one "SEES" that "*cakkhu* is NOT mine, *cakkhu* is NOT what I am, *cakkhu* is NOT my "self."** Here, "*netaṃ*" means "*na*" + "*etaṃ*" or "it is not."
- That is because, in reality, there is no "self" or a "soul" or a "*ātma*" that is associated with a living being. The sensory experiences arise due to past causes. Yet, we cannot explain the response of an average human to those sensory experiences without the assumption of a "self." The response of an average human to such sensory inputs can only be explained by taking into account his/her mindset of believing in a "self."
- (Once we discuss ***Paṭicca Samuppāda,*** it will become clear why future suffering arises BECAUSE of that wrong view of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. **That is how *sakkāya diṭṭhi* can be removed. Only then we can also understand the real meaning of *atta*/*attā* (and *anatta*/*anattā*.)** I do not want to get into that issue right now, because that will confuse many people.)

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9. The *sutta* then repeats that for all other five entities associated with "seeing." They are *rūpa*, *cakkhu viññāṇa*, *cakkhu samphassa, cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā,* and *taṇhā* (that results from *cakkhu samphassa-jā-vedanā.*)

- Then it is repeated for the other five internal *āyatana*: *sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya, mano.* Please go through those verses.
- **However, it may NOT be easy to "see" that there is no "self" involved in sensory experiences.** We have had the wrong view of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* for virtually forever! That is why we are in this never-ending rebirth process.
- **To remove that strong *diṭṭhi*, we need to see the "true nature," i.e., need to cultivate "*yathābhūta ñāṇa*."**
- We will focus on that in detail in upcoming posts. However, this *sutta* briefly states the basic process.

Sakkāya Nirodhaya Starts With *Vedanā*

10. The key to arriving at that UNDERSTANDING is stated in the next verse of the *sutta*, starting with, "*Cakkhuñca, bhikkhave, paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassapaccayā uppajjati* ***vedayitaṃ*** *sukhaṃ vā dukkhaṃ vā adukkhamasukhaṃ vā.*"

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, dependent on the eye and forms, eye-consciousness arises; then the mind makes contact with "*san gati*"; that contact with "*san gati*" leads to the arising of "mind-made" feelings **felt as** pleasant or painful or neither-painful-nor-pleasant."

- Regardless of the sense faculty, those "mind-made" *vedanā* or "***samphassa-jā-vedanā***" CAN ARISE based on *kāma guṇa* AND one's *gati.*
- We discussed this part of the verse already in the posts, "Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa," "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event," and "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)."

Getting Attached to *Vedanā* Leads to the Growth of *Anusaya*

11. Then the subsequent verses introduce a critical word, ***anusaya***. Based on ***sukha vedanā*, *dukkha vedanā*, and *adukkhamasukha vedanā*, three corresponding types of *anusaya* result: *rāgānusaya*, *paṭighānusaya*, and *avijjānusaya*.**

- Let us start with the verse that explains the origins of ***rāgānusaya:* "*So sukhāya vedanāya phuṭṭho samāno abhinandati abhivadati ajjhosāya tiṭṭhati. Tassa rāgānusayo anuseti*."**
- **Translated:** "When one experiences a ***sukha vedanā***, if one delights in it, welcomes it, and thinks and speaks highly of it, gets absorbed in it, then the underlying tendency for *rāga* (***rāgānusaya***) gets stronger (i.e., *rāgānusaya* will grow)."
- Here, *rāgānusaya* comes from "*rāga*" + "*anusaya*." Now we need to get an idea about the meaning of *anusaya* first.

What is *Anusaya*?

12. ***Anusaya*** is usually translated as "**latent tendencies**." That does give the basic idea. Such "latent tendencies are in our *gati*. *Anusaya* and "*gati*" are closely related. See, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)" and "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- Everyone has a set of *gati* (habits/character qualities). Each person has his/her own set of things/activities that one likes and dislikes. Some of these are not moral or immoral.

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- But we also have moral (ethical) *gati* and corrupt (bad) *gati*. Here moral/immoral have a wide range, and we will discuss that later. But those deeds have *kammic* consequences. Those are the *gati* that are relevant.

13. **By the way, notice that now we are talking about a "person" or a "self" who has *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (and *gati* and *anusaya*)!** That is why it is not correct to say that there is "no-self" either.

- When we keep doing what we are used to doing, that habit will only GROW. That also means ***anusaya*** will grow and that growth due to the activity is "***anuseti.***"
- *Arahants* do not have moral/immoral *gati*, but they do have *kammically* neutral *gati* (habits). Such practices include doing things in specific ways.

Rāga Anusaya Grows by Getting Attached to Mind-Made *Sukha Vedanā* or *Somanassa Vedanā*

14. What the *sutta* states in the verse of #10 are the following. When a "pleasing *ārammaṇa*" comes to the mind, it may delight in that *ārammaṇa*. If so, it will welcome that *ārammaṇa* and will "get absorbed in it." That means the person would think highly about it, speak highly about it, and act on it to sustain that *ārammaṇa*.

- For example, if X sees an object that X likes, X will keep looking at it and start thinking about how good it is. X may tell another how good it is. Even later on, X may plan to experience that sight again. Those activities involve *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- That is how the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."
- Here, *avijjā* is the ignorance of believing that there is a "self" experiencing that sensory input.

Those *Viññāṇa* Are *Kamma Viññāṇa*

15. We remember that there could be six types of *viññāṇa* in the INITIAL sensory event that takes place due to *kamma vipāka*. Those are *cakkhu*, *sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya,* or *mano viññāṇa.* They are ALL *vipāka viññāṇa*, which makes one aware of the sensory input.

- **However, *viññāṇa* in "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" generates *kamma viññāṇa*.** Such *kamma viññāṇa* can ONLY be *mano viññāṇa*. They have embedded energy because that person has decided to take further steps to enjoy that sensory experience again and again.
- In the *Abhidhamma* language, those *saṅkhāra* have *javana* power. They create *kammic* energy for that *kamma viññāṇa.*
- In other words, that "person" has to spend time and effort to enjoy that sensory experience again. He has now created a "*kamma bija*" or expects a specific outcome.

16. For example, if a person X saw and "attached" to an expensive item in a store, X would talk about it with the spouse and make plans to come up with the money to pay for it. Until X buys that item, that "*viññāṇa*" will be there. The critical point here is that X already HAD a *rāga anusaya* for it, and by engaging in those follow-up activities, X "added" more energy to that. That addition is "*anuseti.*"

- Different people have different types of *anusaya*. That is why not everyone attaches to a given *ārammaṇa*. Furthermore, each person's levels of *anusaya* CAN change with time. That *anusaya* can be REMOVED too, and that is the way to *Nibbāna*.
- As you can imagine, the other two types of *anusaya* will "build up" the same way. With a "bad" *ārammaṇa*, *dosa* or anger arises and, *paṭighānusaya* (*paṭigha anusaya*) strengthens.
- Finally, it is the ***avijjānusaya*** (*avijjā anusaya*) that builds up when acting with *avijjā*. We will discuss more on that in the next post.

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Difference Between *Diṭṭhi Vipallāsa* and *Saññā Vipallāsa*

I do not want to leave this post without clarifying the following point.

17. In the discussion forum at puredhamma.net, a legitimate question was asked: "Since a *Sotāpanna* has removed *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, why is that a *Sotāpanna* would still value sensory pleasures, and may even commit some immoral deeds?"

- As we know, a *Sotāpanna* is not incapable of doing ONLY "*apāyagāmi*" deeds that could lead to rebirths in the *apāyā* (plural of *apāya*.)
- There is a difference between "SEEING" (*diṭṭhi*) the real nature of this world and having corresponding PERCEPTIONS (*saññā*) about that real nature. It is important to understand what is meant by *saññā;* see, "Saññā – What It Really Means."
- The Pāli word "*vipallāsa*" means "confusions" or "distortions." Wrong views lead to *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* and wrong perceptions lead to *saññā vipallāsa*. More details at "Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra."
- With that terminology, a *Sotāpanna* has removed *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* but still has *saññā vipallāsa*.

18. In other words, the wrong views about a "self" (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) go away at the *Sotāpanna* stage. But the perception of a "self" (*asmi māna*) goes away in stages and disappear only at the *Arahant* stage.

- Only an *Arahant* has no *saññā vipallāsa* and *asmi māna.*
- **That is also why we CANNOT say that "there is no-self."** Until the attainment of *Arahanthood*, there is a perception of a "self."
- **The critical point is that It is wrong to approach the analysis of sensory experiences based on a "self" or "no-self." Instead, we can explain everything in terms of causes and effects or *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.**
- Then it will also become clear that the Pāli word "*attā*" does not really mean a "self" or a "soul" or a "*ātma.*"

5.2.8.4.6 Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'

Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering

Paṭicca Samuppāda – A 'Self' Exists Due to Avijjā

Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra

Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)

Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda

Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa

Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering

Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections

Paṭicca Samuppāda – From Mind to Matter

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction

Kāma Assāda – A Root Cause of Suffering

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Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births – Saṃsappanīya Sutta

5.2.8.4.6.1 Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering

November 9, 2019

Taṇhā Is Attachment, Not Craving

1. *Taṇhā* is a badly misunderstood Pāli word. The common translation is "craving," and that is wrong. The craving usually is associated with a pleasurable *ārammaṇa*.

- *Taṇhā* means attachment to ANY *ārammaṇa*. It could be something that one likes OR dislikes OR even neutral (it may be just curiosity.)
- We may attach to a beautiful object or a person to varying degrees. It could just mean pausing to take a "second look" at something. It could be a much stronger attachment like "falling in love at first sight" with a person.
- But we also stop and take a second look at a person who just got run over by a car and died. That is not a pleasant sight, but we still got "attached" to that sight. We may think about it for a little while and then forget about it. But seeing one's worse enemy on the street will lead to a stronger "attachment." One may generate repulsive thoughts and may even say something harsh to that person.
- The point is that *taṇhā* leads to further "mind action" or "conscious thoughts" about a *ārammaṇa*. We discussed that in, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)."

Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering

2. *Taṇhā* is also the origin of future suffering. The Buddha defined the "origin of suffering" or "*dukkha samudaya*" as follows in his first discourse, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)": "*Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave,* ***dukkhasamudayaṃ ariyasaccaṃ****—yāyaṃ* ***taṇhā*** *ponobbhavikā nandirāgasahagatā tatratatrābhinandinī, seyyathidaṃ—****kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava taṇhā****.*"

- **Translated**: "*Bhikkhus*, what is the **Noble Truth of the origin of suffering**—It is attachments (***taṇhā***) based on seeking delight (*nandirāga*) in various things here and there, which leads to rebirth —that is, attachments to sensual pleasures (***kāma taṇhā***), to the existence (***bhava taṇhā***), and the view of a single life (***vibhava taṇhā.***)
- The three types of *taṇhā* discussed at "Kāma Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā."

3. Interestingly, in the "Cūḷavedalla Sutta (MN 44), the same verse describes the origin of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*: "'***sakkāyasamudayo*** *sakkāyasamudayo'ti, ayye, vuccati. Katamo nu kho, ayye, sakkāyasamudayo vutto bhagavatā" ti? "Yāyaṃ, āvuso visākha,* ***taṇhā*** *ponobbhavikā nandīrāgasahagatā tatratatrābhinandinī, seyyathidaṃ—****kāma taṇhā bhava taṇhā vibhava taṇhā****; ayaṃ kho, āvuso visākha, sakkāyasamudayo vutto bhagavatā" ti.*

- That is not surprising since all immoral actions originate with the wrong view that worldly pleasures need to be pursued at any cost.
- If one does strong immoral deeds (*pāpa kamma*), one will be eligible for suffering in the *apāyā*. Even the desire to enjoy sensory pleasures will bind one to the *kāma loka*. The desire for *jhānic* pleasures leads to getting trapped in *rūpa* and *arūpa loka*. But there is no long-term happiness anywhere in any realm.
- That is because regardless of where the next birth is, one is not free from the *apāyā* in the long run. The possibility of rebirth in the *apāyā* will be there until one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage by removing *sakkāya diṭṭhi*. All possible suffering ends when one fully comprehends *dukkha samudaya* at the *Arahant* stage. We will discuss that in detail in the future.

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The Meaning of *Taṇhā* (*Pada Nirutti*)

4. Many Pāli words have their meanings in the word itself. Uncovering the meaning of a word that way is "*pada nirutti*." For example, "*sakkāya*" comes from "*sath*" + "*kāya*" or taking an aggregate of things or a collection (*kāya*) to be beneficial (*sath*.) That is why *sakkāya diṭṭhi* originates when one considers that the five aggregates to be one's own and thus beneficial. [***nirutti*** : (f.) [Sk. nirukti, nis+vac] one of the Vedāṅgas (see chaḷaṅga), explanation of words, grammatical analysis, etymological interpretation; pronunciation, dialect, way of speaking, expression.]

- *Taṇhā* means getting "fused" or firmly attached. The word *taṇhā* comes from two words. "*Thána*" (pronounced like "thatch") means "place" (තැන in Sinhala) and "*hā*" meaning getting fused/welded or attached (බැඳීම in Sinhala). Note that "*tan*" in *taṇhā* pronounced like in "thunder" and "*hā*" is pronounced like in "harm."
- That is consistent with the meaning derived from the *Chachakka Sutta.* See "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)."

Three Types of *Taṇhā*

5. The verses in #2 and #3 refer to three types of *taṇhā.* They are *kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava taṇhā.*

- Each category represents the origin of a particular way attachment can happen. As we can imagine, *kāma taṇhā* originates due to our inherent *kāma guṇa*. There are sights, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and *dhammā* that we like to experience. If access to such things is blocked, we again get attached, but this time with anger.
- *Bhava taṇhā* arises in those who believe in rebirth. They would like to be born as a human, *deva*, or a *Brahma* based on their *gati.*
- Those who do not believe in rebirth have *vibhava taṇhā.*
- Let us discuss them briefly.

Kāma Taṇhā

6. In *kāma loka*, all five physical sense faculties are present. Getting attached to anything via the five sense faculties is ***kāma taṇhā***.

- Furthermore, attachment arising from the desire to enjoy taste, smell, and body touch can happen only in *kāma loka.* Those three require a "solid body" as we can imagine.
- In the *rūpa lokas*, living beings do not have "solid bodies." Yet, they can see and hear without having physical eyes or ears.
- Therefore, in *rūpa lokas, taṇhā* arise only due to sights and sounds. Thus an *Anāgāmi*, who will be born in a *rūpa loka* has some *rūpa taṇhā* and *sadda taṇhā* because he/she may like to see a Buddha statue or listen to a discourse.
- In *arūpa lokas*, there is only the mind. Therefore, an attachment can be only to *dhammā*.

Bhava Taṇhā

7. ***Bhava taṇhā*** arises from attachment to "any existence." Thus *bhava taṇhā* is present in *kāma loka*, *rūpa loka*, and *arūpa loka*, i.e., all 31 realms.

- Even in the *kāma loka,* there may be people who do not enjoy the "*kāma*" or sense pleasures; but they still want to live a quiet, peaceful life. They mostly have *bhava taṇhā*. They may like to be in a secluded

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place, cultivating *jhāna*; that is their desired "*bhava.*" If they develop *jhānā*, they will be born in *rūpa loka* or *arūpa loka* due to their new "*gati.*"

- There are other subtle forms of "*bhava*" too. Some like to become famous, earn a title, to get a high-profile job or a responsibility, etc. These attachments are not associated with sensual pleasures. They are also due to *bhava taṇhā*.

Vibhava Taṇhā

8. ***Vibhava taṇhā*** arises from the wrong view of materialism (*uccheda diṭṭhi* in the time of the Buddha; *uccheda* pronounced "*uchcheda*"). One believes that life ends at death. Here the mind is assumed to a byproduct of the body (brain). And thus, when the body dies, that is the end of the story.

- Therefore one believes that one needs to enjoy all possible pleasures of this life before dying. Such a person would typically have *kāma taṇhā* as well as *vibhava taṇhā*.
- It is easy to have *vibhava taṇhā* in modern society. That is especially true if one has not heard about the Buddha's message about a more complex world with 31 realms and a rebirth process. Our human sensory faculties cannot access such "hidden" aspects of this world. One believes only what one can see.

Taṇhā Does Not Directly Lead to Rebirth

As we have seen in previous posts, for an average human, SOME *ārammaṇa* WILL automatically generate *taṇhā* within a split second. Only in an *Arahant*, *taṇhā* would NOT arise for ANY *ārammaṇa*. That is a crucial message of the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148.)

9. However, *Taṇhā* does not directly lead to rebirth (new existence). *Paṭicca Samuppāda* does not say, "*Taṇhā paccayā bhavo*." Instead, it is, "*Taṇhā paccayā upādāna,*" followed by "*upādāna paccayā bhavo*."

- To make a new existence (*bhava*), the mind needs to "pull that *ārammaṇa* close" and start generating conscious thoughts about it. That happens because one either likes it or dislikes it. That is the "*Taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step.
- That "*Taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step is a bit involved. When the mind attaches to a *ārammaṇa*, it starts "examining" that *ārammaṇa*. That "examination" involves *vitakka/vicāra* or *vacī saṅkhāra*.
- **That is when one STARTS acting with *avijjā* and generate *saṅkhāra* (and thereby *kamma viññāṇa* via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa.*")** That is the start of a new *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle.
- More details in follow-up posts at, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'." A simpler explanation of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in the section, "Paṭicca Samuppāda."

All relevant posts are at, "Origin of Life."

5.2.8.4.6.2 Paṭicca Samuppāda – A 'Self' Exists Due to Avijjā

November 16, 2019; November 17, 2019

Introduction

1. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" discusses six parameters associated with each of six entities. The six parameters are internal *āyatana*, external *āyatana*, *viññāṇa, phassa, vedanā, taṇhā*. They are associated with each of the six types of internal *āyatana* we have: *cakkhu*, *sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya*, and *mano*. Thus, there are thirty-six entities discussed.

- The focus of attention is *ārammaṇa*. For example, a woman walking in a shopping mall stops and looks at a dress in a shop window. A dress in the window has caught her attention. That dress is *ārammaṇa*.

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- We MAY get attached (*taṇhā*) to a *ārammaṇa* coming through any of the six senses. That **"getting attached or getting stuck" (*taṇhā*)** to that *ārammaṇa* happens, **for example with *cakkhu***, via the following process. "***Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ,*** *tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā* ***taṇhā***."
- We discussed that process in detail in the earlier posts of the sub-section "Worldview of the Buddha."

Taṇhā (Getting Stuck to a *Ārammaṇa*) Happens Instantaneously

2. An "eye-catching object" is a ***rūpa ārammaṇa* or *rūpārammaṇa*** (a new word). With a *rūpārammaṇa,* a *cakkhu viññāṇa* (sensation of seeing) arises via "***cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ***." (In the same way, *saddārammaṇa, ghānārammaṇa, jivhārammaṇa, kāyārammaṇa, dhammārammaṇa* give rise to *sotaviññāṇa, ghanaviññāṇa, jivhāviññāṇa, kāyaviññāṇa,* and *manoviññāṇa.*)

- **Within a split-second of that**, **the mind COULD be stuck (*taṇhā*)** in that *ārammaṇa.*
- If that *ārammaṇa* is mind-pleasing, the mind MAY attach ("getting stuck" could be a better way to say it) via greed. If it is repulsive, "getting stuck" MAY occur via anger. Even if it is a neutral *ārammaṇa*, "getting stuck" can happen with ignorance.
- I know I keep repeating same things. But repetition is KEY to retention.
- Even though we focused on the *Chachakka Sutta,* the above sequence of events is in many *suttā*. Some of the prominent *suttā* are MN 18, SN 12.43 through SN 12.45, and several *suttā* in SN 35. **It is critical to understand that this process happens automatically within a split-second**.

Taṇhā Arises Due to *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi* (*Diṭṭhi Vipallāsa*) AND *Asmi Māna* (*Saññā Vipallāsa*)

3. The sequence of events in #1, #2 does not require a "self." That sequence happens in an instant without any CONSCIOUS thinking.

- IF an attachment or "getting stuck" (*taṇhā*) results, that is because one has "*gati*" to attach to such a *ārammaṇa*. That is there because one has wrong views of a "self" (*sakkāya diṭṭhi* or *diṭṭhi vipallāsa*) AND also the wrong perception (*saññā vipallāsa*) of a "self."
- The wrong view of a "self" goes away at the *Sotāpanna* stage, and the incorrect perception of a "self" (*saññā vipallāsa*) goes away entirely only at the *Arahant* stage.
- With the removal of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, the tendency to do "*apāyagāmi* deeds" will stop. However, until the *Arahant* stage, one will still have *saññā vipallāsa,* and thus *asmi māna,* and will be capable of doing less severe immoral deeds (*akusala kamma*).
- That was discussed together with the terms *diṭṭhi vipallāsa* and *saññā vipallāsa* in the post, "An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation." It may be a good idea to re-read that post and also the post, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy." There is no self" in ultimate reality, but one will have a sense or perception of a "self" until attaining the *Arahant* stage.

Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering

4. The previous post ("Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering,") I pointed out **TWO** critical facts:

- **FIRST**, *taṇhā* (attachment or "getting stuck" to various *ārammaṇa*) is the ORIGIN of suffering. That is the First Noble Truth on suffering. That *taṇhā* could be due to a pleasing OR unpleasant *ārammaṇa*.
- However, *taṇhā* by itself, CANNOT AUTOMATICALLY lead to suffering. If that were the case, no one would be able to attain *Nibbāna*. That is because, as we have discussed, *taṇhā* happens within a fraction of a second of capturing the *ārammaṇa*.

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- Therefore, the **SECOND** critical fact is the following. **Unless one pulls that *ārammaṇa* in and starts thinking about it (*vitakka/vicāra*)**, one WILL NOT accumulate *abhisaṅkhāra* (and thus *kamma viññāṇa*.) That would be done with *avijjā* (with the wrong perception of a 'self.") [*vitakka/vicāra* is of *akusala* type while *savitakka/savicāra* is of *kusala* type]
- That second process takes place starting with the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. We will discuss this below.

There is a "Self" Doing *Kamma* With Wrong Views and Wrong Perceptions

5. That is why it is not correct to say that there is "no-self." For anyone who has not yet attained the *Arahant* stage, the perception of a "self" is there. See, "An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation."

- As we discussed, *taṇhā* (getting attached to or "getting stuck" with a *ārammaṇa*) NEVER arises in an *Arahant* based on ANY *ārammaṇa*. That is automatic. It is not that he/she consciously avoids *taṇhā* at that moment. The key is that an *Arahant* has removed ALL "*gati*" leading to any attachment (*taṇhā.*)
- **The key to understanding *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is to comprehend how *gati* can be removed (and thereby *taṇhā* stopped).** We will be discussing this in the next few posts.

Dukkha Nirodha (Stopping of Future Suffering) is Cessation of *Taṇhā*

6. The Buddha defined the "stopping or the cessation of suffering" or "*dukkha nirodhaya*" (Third Noble Truth) as follows in his first discourse, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)": "*Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhanirodhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ—yo tassāyeva **taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho** cāgo paṭinissaggo mutti anālayo*." [***asesa*** :[adj.] entire; all. ***cāgo*** : abandoning, forsaking; resigning, sacrificing, giving away; self-sacrifice, liberality. ***paṭinissaggo*** : forsaking, getting rid of. ***mutti*** :[f.] release; freedom.]

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, what is the Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering—**it is the complete cessation of *taṇhā***, the giving up and relinquishing of it, freedom from it by losing all desires (also called "*āsava*") for things in this world (*anālayo*).

- The word *anālaya* comes from *na* + *ālaya* or "not desiring." As we have discussed, one attaches (*taṇhā*) to a *ārammaṇa* via greed only because one craves for and desires things with *kāma guṇa*. If one is blocked from getting that then one may "attach" with anger. Therefore, craving or desire is at the root of *taṇhā*. *Dosa* (or *patigha*) is the "second manifestation of *lobha* or greed. See, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)." [***ālaya*** :[m.] 1. abode; roosting place; 2. **desire**; **attachment**; 3. pretence.]
- That is why *Nibbāna* is also "*āsavakkhaya"* or "*āsava*" + "*khaya*" or "removal of "*āsava.*"
- I try to introduce these key Pāli words gradually and as needed.

Paṭicca Samuppāda – Both "Self" and "No-Self" Are Incorrect Approaches

7. It is not beneficial to start with the concept of either a "self" or "no-self." But we HAVE TO use terms like "our thoughts," "he spoke," and "she did that," etc. That is because those things ARE DONE by an average human with the perception of a "self." **Besides, we CANNOT communicate with each other without using such terminology.** Even the Buddha said things like, "I will go there" or " I was born in such an existence in the past."

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- But we need to "see" and understand the following. **Causes (old *kamma*) and conditions (*paccayā*) lead to results (*kamma vipāka*).** Then, based on such *vipāka*, **we take actions** that create new *kamma,* which, in turn, will bring more *vipāka*. That is how the rebirth process continues!
- **The wrong view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) and wrong perception (*asmi māna*) of a "self" leads to such activities.** *Paṭicca Samuppāda* explains that process.
- As long as one has those wrong views and perceptions of a "self," one will have certain *gati* (character.) Based on those *gati*, causes (*kamma*) for future results (*vipāka*) accumulated. When those *vipāka* bring results, more *kamma* generated. So, there is no end to this cyclic process. That is why there is no end to that cycle of *kamma* and *vipāka*!
- Those *gati* will diminish as one starts comprehending the true nature of this world. With that comprehension, wrong views and perceptions will lessen and eventually go away. That is the way to *Nibbāna*. It starts with *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (removal of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*), seeing the true nature of this world. Of course, one must first get rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* to get to mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi*. See, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

The sequence of Events In #1 Above Are in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

8. The Pāli verse in #1 above from the *Chachakka Sutta* is "***cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso**, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā*." The steps stated in that verse are the same as "***salāyatana paccayā phasso**, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

- The steps "***cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso***" in the *Chachakka Sutta* merely describe in more detail what happens with the "***salāyatana paccayā phasso***" step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Of course, "*salāyatana*" refers to all six sensory inputs, and *cakkhu* in "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*" refers to one of those six.
- ***Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle usually does not start with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."** There must be a REASON to begin acting with *avijjā*. The reason is "getting attached to sensory input," i.e., *taṇhā*. And that happens because we have certain "*gati*" that have been built-up over past lives due to the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths, i.e., due to *avijjā!*
- Initial "attachment" (*taṇhā*) ALWAYS happens with the steps discussed in the *Chachakka Sutta* and embedded in the above verse. Any of the six sensory inputs can trigger it, and the sixth one is *mano*: "*mānañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā*."
- **Therefore, it is essential to realize that in real life, *Paṭicca Samuppāda* does NOT start with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā.*" It begins with"*salāyatana paccayā phasso*"** and proceeds to "*phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā.*"
- It is only at that stage that a given "person" may start acting with *avijjā* and thus start the complicated step, "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna.*"

Based on Attachment (*Taṇhā*), One Starts Acting With *Avijjā*

9. Let us discuss that critical step, "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna.*"

- *Taṇhā* means attaching or "getting stuck" with a particular *ārammaṇa*. It is not correct to say that *taṇhā* is "craving." When one sees an enemy, one does not generate *taṇhā* via craving. Instead, the mind gets "stuck" in that *ārammaṇa* of an enemy with anger or dislike.
- If it is a "good *ārammaṇa*," the mind will try to enjoy it more. If it is distasteful, then it will try to stop that. Either way, mind MAY generate (*abhi*) *saṅkhāra* with *kammic* consequences.

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- For example, a person with a tendency (*gati*) to engage in stealing may try to steal an "eye-catching item" from a store. Stealing is a bad *kamma,* and thus he/she will accumulate "bad *kamma*" that could bring "bad *vipāka*" in the future.

What Does *Upādāna* Mean?

10. *Upādāna* means "pulling the *ārammaṇa* closer (in one's mind)" ("*upa*" + "*ādāna,"* where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull").

- Once getting attached (*taṇhā*) to a *ārammaṇa*, we do not let it go. The mind "pulls that *ārammaṇa* in." First, we start consciously thinking about it and may talk about it. Both those involve *vacī saṅkhāra* (*vitakka/vicāra*).
- If we get "worked up," we may take bodily actions. We may hug a person we like or hit a person we don't like. *Kāya saṅkhāra* in mind LEAD TO such physical actions. The brain helps carry out actions according to those intentions that arise in mind. See, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- By the way, *mano* (or *citta*) *saṅkhāra* automatically comes to our minds. They involve *vedanā/saññā*. They do not involve conscious thinking (*vitakka/vicāra.*)
- It is with the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna"* step that we start doing "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and start a **new *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle.**
- We will discuss *saṅkhāra* in detail in the next post.

5.2.8.4.6.3 Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – What Is "Intention"?

November 23, 2019

Saṅkhāra Create Causes for Future Suffering

1. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) describes how future suffering arises due to *saṅkhāra* done with *avijjā*. Intention plays a big role and it depends on one level of *avijjā*.

- The PS cycle starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" and ends with "*jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti."* And then it says, *"Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti."* or "that is how this whole mass of suffering arises."
- Therefore, the PS cycle, in general, addresses ALL TYPES of future suffering. That includes bad *kamma vipāka* DURING a given life and also stronger *kamma vipāka* that lead to future REBIRTHS. In particular, rebirths in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*) lead to the worst kinds of suffering.
- All these FACTS appear in a long list of short *suttā* (plural of *sutta*) in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (10), starting with the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sādhu Sutta (AN 10.134)" and ending at AN 236 (over one hundred *suttā*!)
- English translations for those *suttā* are available at the Sutta Central site: "WebLink: suttacentral: Dasakanipāta." Thanks to reader "y not" for providing the reference.
- I have translated several of them to English at, "Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts."

Suffering (and Pleasures) Arise Due to *Kamma Vipāka*

2. According to those *suttā,* suffering (*dukkha*) arises due to the *vipāka* (results) of *akusala kamma* or *apuñña kamma* (simply translated as immoral deeds.)

- In the same way, pleasures (*sukha*) result from *kusala kamma/puñña kamma* (simply translated as moral deeds.)

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- **There is a big difference between *kusala kamma* and *puñña kamma*.** We will discuss that difference in the future after we discuss *anicca* and *anatta*.
- **Until then, we may use *kusala/puñña* and also *akusala/apuñña* without much distinction.** So, at this point, we are just assuming that *kusala/puñña kamma* are "good" and *akusala/apuñña kamma* are "bad."
- Even though we loosely translate *kusala/akusala kamma* as *moral/immoral* **deeds**, *kammā* are done via **bodily actions, speech, or thoughts.**

Dasa Akusala – Seeds for Future Suffering

3. At a fundamental level, the Buddha identified three categories of *akusala kamma.* Those done with **bodily actions** (*kāya kamma*) are killing, stealing, sexual misconduct. There are four types of *kamma* done with **speech** (*vacī kamma.*) They are lying, slandering, harsh speech, and gossiping. Finally, three types done with **thoughts** (*mano* or *citta kamma*) are excess greed, excess anger, and wrong views.

- Those ten types of *akusala kamma* (***dasa akusala***) in Pāli are: *Pāṇātipāto, adinnādānaṃ, kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisuṇā vācā, pharusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, byāpādo, micchā diṭṭhi.*
- Those are the ten types of *akusala kamma* separated into three categories.

All Types of *Kamma* Originate In the Mind

4. When we look at the ten types *akusala kamma*, we can clearly see why *kamma* DOES NOT mean JUST bodily actions. The way of THINKING, as well as SPEAKING, contribute to the accumulation of *kamma* which can bring *vipāka* in the future.

- It is critically important to understand this point. Some people speak very nice words and even appear to be engaged in "good deeds" but have very bad intentions/mindsets. For example, someone may pretend to speak nicely but could be thinking bad thoughts to him/herself about the person they are talking to.
- Going through the motions of good actions/speech DOES NOT count for GENERATING good *kammic* energy.

The Buddha clarified this point very clearly. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63): "***Cetanāhaṃ (cetanā aham)**, bhikkhave, kammaṃ vadāmi. **Cetayitvā** kammaṃ karoti—**kāyena vācāya manasā**.*"

That means: "**Intention, I tell you**, is *kamma*. One does *kamma* **having intention (in mind)**—via **body, speech, and thoughts.**

- Therefore, *kammic* ENERGY for ALL ten types of *kamma* are GENERATED in the mind. **Stated another way: MIND creates *kammic* energy associated with all ten types of *kamma*.**
- I cannot emphasize enough the importance of understanding this CRITICAL point.

Intentions are in *Saṅkhāra*

5. It is *cetanā* in *javana citta* that PREPARES kamma *viññāṇa* or *kamma bija* using various types of *cetasika*. Such kamma *viññāṇa* or *kamma bīja* are PART OF *dhammā*.

- Some *dhammā* are just memories. This will be discussed in the next post. "Mind, Saṅkhāra, Dhammā, Kamma – Critical Connections."

6. What we discussed in #4 above can be stated in Buddha's terminology as follows. **The mind generates three types of *saṅkhāra*: *mano*, *vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*. All three types of *saṅkhāra* arise in the mind.**

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- How do those intentions end up as speech and bodily actions?
- It is the brain that "carries out" bodily movements and speech INTENDED in *kāya saṅkhāra* and *vacī saṅkhāra*. The brain gets the body parts to move, with the help of the muscles and the nervous system. Speech, similarly, generated via the movement of the tongue and the muscles in the mouth area.
- Therefore, *kāya saṅkhāra* LEAD to *kāya kamma* (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct.) *Vacī saṅkhāra* LEAD to *vacī kamma* (lying, slandering, harsh speech, and gossiping.) *Mano* (or *citta*) *saṅkhāra* LEAD to *mano* (or *citta*) *kamma* (excess greed, excess anger, and wrong views.)

Mind/Physical Body to Pilot/Airplane Analogy

7. The seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) is where thoughts arise. The *hadaya vatthu* is part of the *manomaya kāya* or mental body or the *gandhabba*. The *hadaya vatthu* is constant contact with the brain.

- **In other words, the MIND decides what to do, and the brain carries out those commends.** An analogy is how an airplane flies. The pilot makes decisions on where to go and the on-board computer carries out those commends.
- More details on that at, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- Modern scientific evidence on the importance of the *hadaya vatthu* is only at an early stage. The following quote is from "WebLink: heartmath.org: Exploring the Role of the Heart in Human Performance." "The heart is the most powerful source of electromagnetic energy in the human body, producing the largest rhythmic electromagnetic field of any of the body's organs. The heart's electrical field is about 60 times greater in amplitude than the electrical activity generated by the brain."
- However, *hadaya vatthu* is NOT the heart. It is in the mental body (*gandhabba*) but close to the physical heart

Not All *Saṅkhāra* Will Have *Kammic* Consequences

8. Even though *Paṭicca Samuppāda* just states, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā,*" not all *saṅkhāra* will have *kammic* consequences. Stated in a different way: We do not act with *avijjā* all the time.

- For example, ANY bodily movement involves *kāya saṅkhāra*. If one's mind decides to stand up, the brain gets that done by moving leg muscles. That does not have any *kammic* energy to bring future *vipāka*. Therefore, not all bodily actions have *kammic* consequences.
- ***Saṅkhāra* with *kammic* consequences are "strong *saṅkhāra*" or "*abhisaṅkhāra*."** Let us discuss that in detail first.

9. If you swing your arm, that is a *kāya kammā*, because that action involved moving a body part. That action was initiated by *kāya saṅkhāra* generated in the mind. But that does not have *kammic* consequences (except for the movement of the arm.)

- Now, if you swung your arm to get hold of a cup, that is also a *kammically* neutral action (*kammā*) or a just a *saṅkhāra.* You did not do either a moral or immoral act. The intention was to grab a cup, and that did not involve any *sobhana* or *asobhana cetasika*. **That action is a *kiriya*** (*kriyā* in Sanskrit or ක්‍රියා in Sinhala).
- On the other hand, if you swung your arm to hit someone, then it was done with anger. So, the *dosa cetasika* (an *asobhana cetasika*) was in your thoughts. Thus, it was an *apuññābhisankhāra* (*apuñña abhisankhāra*). That *apuññābhisankhāra* in the mind led to an *akusala/apuñña kammā* or an immoral deed.
- If you put your arms together to pay respects to the Buddha, it is a *puññābhisankhāra* (*puñña abhisankhāra.*) The *saddhā cetasika* (a *sobhana cetasika*) is in the mind. We can also call it a *kusala/puñña kammā* or a moral deed.

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- Therefore, **"good or bad" *cetasika*** (mental factors) are the ones that bring **intention** to thoughts. The *cetanā cetasika* is in ALL thoughts. **The *cetanā cetasika* just incorporates the other relevant "good or bad" *cetasika* to a given thought to convey the "intention."**

Assāsa Passāsa (Breathing) Is *Kāya Saṅkhāra*

10. The very basic *kāya saṅkhāra* are involved in breathing. It is also the most IMPORTANT *kāya saṅkhāra* since we cannot live without breathing.

- Any type of *saṅkhāra* involves *cetanā* and thus *saṅkhāra* involves *citta vīthi*. It does not seem like we breathe intentionally. That is because no *javana citta* are present in those *citta vīthi* that are associated with breathing. They are *parittārammana citta vīthi*. That means they are "weak."
- Of course, breathing has no *kammic* consequences. It is just a "bodily action," but a critically important one.

Apuññābhi saṅkhāra, *Puññābhi saṅkhāra*, and *Āneñjābhisaṅkhāra*

11. We introduced two new words above that are relevant in generating *kammic* energy: *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* and *puññābhisaṅkhāra*. Here, *apuññābhi saṅkhāra* lead to *akusala* (or *apuñña* or immoral) *kamma*. Good, moral deeds, speech, or thoughts with *kammic* energy involve *puññābhisaṅkhāra*.

- There is a third type of *abhisaṅkhāra*: *āneñjābhisaṅkhāra* (*āneñja abhisaṅkhāra*). These types of *saṅkhāra* are in the minds of those who cultivate *arūpāvacara jhāna*, the highest four jhāna.
- *Apuññābhisaṅkhāra* lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*. These, of course, lead to *akusala kamma*.
- *Puññābhisaṅkhāra* leads to rebirth in the human, *deva*, and *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms. *Puñña kamma* is done with such *puññābhisaṅkhāra*. Note that cultivating *rūpāvacara jhāna* is a *puñña kamma*.
- *Āneñjābhisaṅkhāra* leads to rebirths in the *arūpāvacara Brahma* realms.

Saṅkhāra in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* Are *Abhisaṅkhāra*

12. Even though the first step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is simply, "*avijjā paccayā* ***saṅkhārā,***" it really refers to ***abhisaṅkhārā***.

WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, explains the term "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" in ***akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* (that leads to suffering)** as follows: "*Tattha katame avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā? Puññābhisaṅkhāro, apuññābhisaṅkhāro, āneñjābhisaṅkhāro, kāyasaṅkhāro, vacīsaṅkhāro, cittasaṅkhāro*."

Translated: "What is *avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*? *Puññābhisaṅkhāra, apuññābhisaṅkhāra, āneñjābhisaṅkhāra, kāyasaṅkhāra, vacīsaṅkhāra, cittasaṅkhāra*." (here, *citta saṅkhāra* is the same as *mano saṅkhāra*).

- Those are all ***abhisaṅkhāra,*** even though the verse is simplified as "*avijjā paccayā* ***saṅkhārā***."
- Two categories of *saṅkhāra* are mentioned there. One category refers to types of *kamma* accrued (*Puññābhisaṅkhāra, apuññābhisaṅkhāra, āneñjābhisaṅkhāra.*)
- The other category points out the three modes: body, speech, or mind (*kāya saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra, citta saṅkhāra* or *mano saṅkhāra*).
- This is clarified in several *suttā* as well. for example, WebLink: suttacentral: Saṅgīti Sutta (DN 33): "*Tayo* ***saṅkhārā—puññābhisaṅkhāro, apuññābhisaṅkhāro, āneñjābhisaṅkhāro***."

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13. Therefore, the word *saṅkhāra* can have different meanings in different contexts. That is why *saṅkhāra* SHOULD NOT be translated as just "mental formations."

- I hope you can see that translating *saṅkhāra* as just "mental formations" does not provide much insight. Once one understands the basic concepts discussed above, it will be easier to see the real meaning of different types of *saṅkhāra.*
- We will discuss *kāya, vacī,* and *mano saṅkhāra* in detail in the next post. Then the critical connection of *vitakka/vicāra* with *vacī saṅkhāra* will become clear.
- Also, see "Complexity of the Mind – Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra" and "Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra."

All posts at "Origin of Life."

5.2.8.4.6.4 Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)

November 30, 2019; December 1, 2019 (new #14 also added)

Introduction

1. *Vacī Saṅkhāra* is looking into a *ārammaṇa* deeper (*vitakka*), and, in detail (*vicāra*). We introduced that in a previous post but will discuss it in a bit more detail here.

- *Vācā* is, of course, speech. *Saṅkappa* has been translated as "thoughts or intention." Here, we will see that *saṅkappa* means "thoughts with intention." We will also discuss how *vacī saṅkhāra* relates to both *vācā* and *saṅkappa*.
- The first four steps in the Noble Eightfold Path are *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, *Sammā Saṅkappa*, *Sammā Vācā*, and *Sammā Kammanta*. One's thoughts depend on one's views, and one's speech and actions depend on how one thinks. This is why *Sammā Diṭṭhi* comes first, and also why "having correct views" about the nature of this world is at the forefront.

2. There are various types of *saṅkhāra*. In the previous post, we discussed categorizing *saṅkhāra* in two different ways.

- Three types depending on whether they lead to bodily actions, speech, or thoughts: *kāyasaṅkhāra, vacīsaṅkhāra, cittasaṅkhāra.*
- There are three more types according to future *vipāka*: *Puññābhisaṅkhāra, apuññābhisaṅkhāra, āneñjābhisaṅkhāra.* These are discussed at #14 below.
- Let us first review the first category briefly and then focus on vacī *saṅkhāra*. I explained *kāya* and *citta* (or *mano*) *saṅkhāra* in recent posts.

Three Types of *Saṅkhāra* Responsible for Actions, Speech, and Thoughts

3. There are succinct statements in the WebLink: suttacentral: Cūḷavedalla Sutta (MN 44) on the types of *saṅkhāra* generated in mind:

"*Tayome, āvuso visākha, saṅkhārā—kāyasaṅkhāro, vacīsaṅkhāro, cittasaṅkhāro"ti.*

– There are three types of *saṅkhāra – kāya saṅkhāra, vacī saṅkhāra, citta saṅkhāra.*

"*Katamo panāyye, kāyasaṅkhāro, katamo vacīsaṅkhāro, katamo cittasaṅkhāro"ti*?

– What are *kāya saṅkhāra,* What are *vacī saṅkhāra*, What are *citta saṅkhāra* (or *mano saṅkhāra*)?

"*Assāsapassāsā kho, āvuso visākha, kāyasaṅkhāro, vitakkavicārā vacīsaṅkhāro, saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaṅkhāro"ti.*

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– *Assāsa passāsā* are *kāya saṅkhāra,* ***vitakka vicāra*** **are** ***vacī saṅkhāra***, *saññā* and *vedanā* constitute *citta saṅkhāra.*

"*Kasmā panāyye, assāsapassāsā kāyasaṅkhāro, kasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsaṅkhāro, kasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaṅkhāro"ti*?

– Why are the three types of *saṅkhāra* categorized in that way?

"*Assāsapassāsā kho, āvuso visākha, kāyikā ete dhammā kāyappaṭibaddhā, tasmā assāsapassāsā kāyasaṅkhāro. Pubbe kho, āvuso visākha, vitakketvā vicāretvā pacchā vācaṃ bhindati, tasmā vitakkavicārā vacīsaṅkhāro. Saññā ca vedanā ca cetasikā ete dhammā cittappaṭibaddhā, tasmā saññā ca vedanā ca cittasaṅkhāro"ti.*

– *Assāsa passāsā* (breathing in and out) is associated with the body (movements). Thus, *assāsa passāsa* is *kāya saṅkhāra.*

– ***Vitakka/vicāra*** arise before speech "breaks out." Therefore, vitakka/vicāra are vacī saṅkhāra.

– *Saññā* and *vedanā* are associated with any *citta.* Thus, *saññā/vedanā* are *citta saṅkhāra.*

No *Kammic* Consequences for *Citta* (*Mano*) *Saṅkhāra*

4. *Citta* (*mano*) *saṅkhāra* does not have strong *kammic* consequences that can result in rebirth. As mentioned above in #3, they encompass *vedanā* and *saññā*, which are in ALL *citta*. Therefore, even *vipāka cittā* have *citta* (*mano*) *saṅkhāra*.

- As we discussed in the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)," any thought goes through nine stages within a billionth of a second. The early stages are *citta* and *mano*. Those two stages already have *vedanā* and *saññā*.
- Bad (*asobhana*) or good (*sobhana*) mental factors (*cetasika*) are incorporated to thought **only in the latter stages of that nine-step process. Furthermore, such *cetasika* involve in those latter stages ONLY IF there is an attachment (*taṇhā*) and one is consciously thinking about a *ārammaṇa*.**
- **The six steps described in the *Chachakka Sutta* happen within a split second.** There is no time to "think" and thus there cannot be any *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra*. See #6 below.

Vacī or *kāya saṅkhāra* Can Lead to *Abhisaṅkhāra*

5. *Vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra* MAY ALSO lead to actions that do not have *kammic* consequences. Such "harmless" *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra* cannot become *abhisaṅkhāra* that can bring future *vipāka* including rebirths.

- Breathing or walking to the kitchen to get a glass of water involves such "harmless" *kāya saṅkhāra*. Thinking about what needs to be done at work tomorrow or talking to the spouse about dinner plans involve such *vacī saṅkhāra.*
- Other *kāya* and *vacī saṅkhāra* lead to actions and speech that have *kammic* consequences. Those lead to *abhisaṅkhāra*. Such *abhisaṅkhāra* "prepare or give rise to" ***saṅkhata.*** Thus, *saṅkhata* are entities that are "prepared" via *saṅkhāra* or "arise" due to *saṅkhāra*. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes that process and we will get to it.

No *Vacī* or *Kāya Saṅkhāra* Involved in Initial Sensory Experience

6. Some thoughts that have gone through the nine stages do not involve conscious thinking. Thus, no *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra* are possible in such thoughts. Those are the *vipāka citta* described in the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148.)

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- As we discussed in the recent posts, the six steps in the *Chachakka Sutta* take place due to *kamma vipāka*. During that *vipāka* stage, first, one of the six types of *viññāṇa* experienced. They all are *vipāka viññāṇa*. They are *cakkhu*, *sota*, *ghāna, jivhā, kāya, and mano viññāṇa.* The last step is "*vedanā paccayā* ***taṇhā***."
- **In all those six steps, one does not get to think.** They happen automatically. It is important to realize that one consciously generates *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra* with *sobhana or asobhana cetasika*. Only *mano saṅkhāra* (without *kammic* consequences) generated in those six steps.

Paṭicca Samuppāda Starts With "*Saḷāyatana Paccayā Phassa*"

7. As we discussed in previous posts, the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle starts not with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," but with "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*." This is why we spent a lot of time discussing the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148.) It may be a good idea to review those posts.

- There has to be a *ārammaṇa* strong enough to generate interest. For example, seeing an attractive/repulsive figure, tasting something tasty/bitter, hearing a soothing/loud noise, etc.

8. Such *vipāka viññāṇa* come about via, "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ"* through *"mānañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ"* per *Chachakka Sutta.* We discussed in a previous post that those steps are equivalent to "***saḷāyatana paccayā phasso****, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā"* steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda.* See, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā."

- In other words, during the *vipāka* stage, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra"* followed by *"saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa"* DOES NOT take place, as we can clearly see.
- After getting to "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā"* with the initial sensory event on a new *ārammaṇa*, the next step in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle starts. The next step is "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna.*" **That is when *kamma viññāṇa* arises because we start acting with *avijjā*.**
- Let us see how *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* arise once one gets attached and gets "stuck" in a *ārammaṇa* (*taṇhā*.) That is the beginning of a complex process involved in the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step.

Vitakka/Vicāra Initiate *Abhisaṅkhāra*

9. When one is "stuck" with a particular *ārammaṇa*, one starts CONSCIOUSLY thinking about it. That involves *vitakka* and *vicāra* mental factors (*cetasika*.) **That means one starts "looking into that *ārammaṇa* deeper (*vitakka*), and, in detail (*vicāra*).**

- We can get an idea with the following example. Suppose we go to a showroom to buy a car. If we get interested in a certain car, we examine it carefully. We ask questions from the salesman and get more information about that car. In the same way, when we get interested in any *ārammaṇa*, we start thinking about different aspects of it.
- In particular, when we like a given *ārammaṇa* (that car could be one), we start imagining how nice it would be to have it parked on the driveway. How the neighbors may be impressed by it. In many cases, we start "daydreaming" about how we will enjoy it. Those are all *vacī saṅkhāra* with *vitakka* and *vicāra*.
- Of course, we may also start talking about how good it is. Speaking out also involves *vitakka/vicāra*.
- If any of those thoughts involve "bad" (*asobhana*) *cetasika* (like greed), then such conscious thoughts become *vacī abhisaṅkhāra*.

10. If we really get interested in a *ārammaṇa*, we may take action too. We may go to other showrooms to look at similar models and compare prices. We may search the internet for other car dealers in the area, etc.

- Such actions involve moving body parts. As we will see below, *kāya saṅkhāra* lead to those actions.

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- If those thoughts involve "bad" (*asobhana*) *cetasika*, then such *kāya saṅkhāra* becomes *kāya abhisaṅkhāra.*
- More information at, "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra." **I recommend reading that post to get further details and *Tipiṭaka* references.**

Saṅkappa Means Thinking and Thus *Vacī Saṅkhāra*

11. *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* (MN 117): "*Katamo ca, bhikkhave, **sammāsaṅkappo** ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo? Yo kho, bhikkhave, **ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā** (fixing of thought on an object) **byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā** (application) **vacīsaṅkhāro**—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, **sammāsaṅkappo** ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo.* "

Translated: "What, *bhikkhus*, is ***sammā saṅkappa*** that is noble, blameless, supramundane, a factor of the noble path? The thinking, re-thinking, thinking with "*san*" (***saṅkappa***), absorption, absorption with defilements, directing of mind, verbal formation (***vacī saṅkhāra***) — in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is devoid of *āsava* (*anāsavo*), who is on the noble path. That is ***sammā saṅkappa*** that is noble and a factor of the path.

- Thus, it is very clear that ***Sammā Saṅkappa*** means generating thoughts focused on making progress on the Path.
- They are "Noble *vacī saṅkhāra*" with the comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* and thus focused on *Nibbāna*.
- **By the way, such *saṅkhāra* arise in the *Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda*" starting with "*kusala-mūla paccayā saṅkhāra.*"** Note the difference from the ***Akusala-Mūla*** *Paṭicca Samuppāda* that starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." We will discuss the ***Kusala-Mūla*** *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in the future in this series. It is discussed in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* section, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."

Not All *Saṅkhārā* Are Due to *Avijjā* (and *Taṇhā*)

12. Now we can see how one starts doing ***saṅkhāra* due to *avijjā*** only IF one is attached via *taṇhā*. That is the beginning of a *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā.*"

- However, not all *saṅkhāra* create *kamma viññāṇa* that can bring good or bad *kamma vipāka.* For example, one may get thirsty (that is due to a *ārammaṇa* too) and may decide to go to the kitchen to get a glass of water. Walking to the kitchen involves *kāya saṅkhāra* (to get the body to move.) But that intention is neither good nor bad. It is *kammically* neutral. It was not due to *avijjā*.
- All bodily activities, including breathing, are done with *kāya saṅkhāra*. But "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" comes into play ONLY IF bad or defiled intentions are in the mind. There is no *avijjā* or *taṇhā* involved in breathing or the activities mentioned above (thus they DO NOT lead to *abhisaṅkhāra*).

Apuñña Abhisaṅkhārā Done with *Avijjā* (and *Taṇhā*)

13. Now let us consider the actions of a thief. A person is in the waiting room to see a doctor and sees that someone has dropped a wallet. The moment he sees the wallet, his mind attaches to it (*taṇhā*). Then he thinks that there could be some money in the wallet and that it is an easy way to get some "free money." Those conscious thoughts are *vacī saṅkhāra.* Then he picks it up and puts it in his pocket. That last step involves *kāya saṅkhāra.*

- Here he did bodily actions with *kāya saṅkhāra*. He did that because he did not realize the future bad consequences of stealing. Thus "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" generated bad thoughts of picking the wallet AND putting it in his pocket.

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- While he was doing that he had "bad *saṅkhāra*" (with bad *cetanā*) in his mind. The *cetanā* (intention) was to steal. Such bad *saṅkhāra* are *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*. Both *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra,* in this example, were *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*.

Puñña Abhisaṅkhārā Also Done with *Avijjā* (and *Taṇhā*)

14. In the previous post, "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra" (under #12) I pointed out briefly that ***puññābhisaṅkhāra* and *āneñjābhisaṅkhāra*** are also done with *avijjā.*

WebLink: suttacntral: Paṭiccasamuppāda Vibhaṅga, explains the term "***avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā***" in ***akusala-mula Paticca Samuppāda* (that leads to suffering)** as follows: "*Tattha katame avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā? Puññābhisaṅkhāro, apuññābhisaṅkhāro, āneñjābhisaṅkhāro, kāyasaṅkhāro, vacīsaṅkhāro, cittasaṅkhāro*."

Translated: "What is ***avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā***? ***Puññābhisaṅkhāra***, *apuññābhisaṅkhāra,* ***āneñjābhisaṅkhāra***, *kāyasaṅkhāra, vacīsaṅkhāra, cittasaṅkhāra*." (here, *citta saṅkhāra* is the same as *manō saṅkhāra*).

- ***Puññābhisaṅkhāra*** are, of course, Moral and good deeds.
- ***Āneñjābhisaṅkhāra*** involve cultivating *arūpāvacara jhāna*.
- When a person who has not comprehended *anicca, dukkha, anatta* engage in those two types of "good *saṅkhāra*," they are still done with *avijjā*! **That is because one has not yet grasped the dangers in remaining in the rebirth process.**
- To get the basic idea, let us briefly consider the following example.

15. Now let us consider the same scenario with another average human. But this person has good, moral *gati*. He is always trying to do moral things and tries to abstain from doing immoral things.

- This person will pick up the wallet and take it to the receptionist. The person who dropped the wallet may come back looking for it. It is possible that the wallet had not only his driver's license but possibly credit cards and money. So, our good samaritan saved a lot of stress and work for the wallet owner.
- That is an example of a *puñña abhisaṅkhāra*. But if it is an *abhisaṅkhāra*, that MUST have been done via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā.*" Is that not a contradiction since he did a "good deed"?
- To get the answer to that question we need to understand the difference between the mundane eightfold path and the Noble Eightfold Path.

Two Eightfold Paths – Mundane Eightfold Path and the Noble Eightfold Path

16. **The Buddha said that there are two eightfold paths (*Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*, MN 117).** One is the mundane path, where one does good deeds without the comprehension of the "real nature of this world (*yathābhūta ñāṇa*)." **One gets to the mundane path by first getting rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.** I have discussed the two paths in the post, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?"

- **Once one gets rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, there is another critical step involved before one can get to the Noble Eightfold Path.** One must learn the "real nature of this world" or the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature from a Noble person who learned that from a Noble person too. That lineage goes back all the way to the Buddha. See, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."
- Only a Buddha can discover the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature by himself. All others need to learn that from a Noble person (*Ariyā*.) That is why most people are only exposed to the mundane eightfold path.

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- We will get to discuss the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature in upcoming posts, once we finish going through the steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Of course, it has been discussed in the sub-section, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." The current series on "Origin of Life" is an attempt to get there in a systematic way.

5.2.8.4.6.5 Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda

December 7, 2019; December 10, 2019; October 14, 2020

We Do Have Control Over Our Destiny

"Taṇhā paccayā upādāna" is a critical step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS). That is where we can take CONTROL of the PS process. Before addressing that it is a good idea to review the actual progression of events leading to the PS process.

1. We started this series by discussing the *Chachakka Sutta*. That *sutta* describes the initial events that trigger the PS process. As we saw, "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa"* step is where a new PS cycle gets started. See, "Buddhist Worldview – Introduction."

- A mind does not arbitrarily start generating *saṅkhāra* (corrupt or immoral thoughts) due to *avijjā*. That is why I say that a PS cycle does not begin with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." See the previous post, "Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)."
- Our focus is on the types of *abhisaṅkhāra* that can bring "bad *kamma vipāka*" in the future. Therefore, we are discussing the "*akusala-mūla* PS."

Paṭicca Samuppāda Initiated by "*Saḷāyatana Paccayā Phassa*"

2. First, there must be a reason for a mind to generate *abhisaṅkhāra* (evil or immoral thoughts.) The Buddha pointed out that there are three primary reasons: *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hate or anger), and *moha* (not knowing about *kamma/vipāka* and rebirth at the base level and not realizing the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature at a deeper level.)

- One MUST be tempted by greed or anger to do such bad *kamma*. That happens ONLY IF there is a STRONG sensory input coming through the six senses. For example, one generates angry thoughts if one sees an enemy. One may think about stealing only if one sees a valuable item and generates greed.
- That is why "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa"* is the step that INITIATES *kamma* generation via the PS cycle. *Saḷāyatana* means the six internal *āyatana* or the six sense faculties (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and mind.)
- The "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa"* is the step is the combination of two steps. For seeing, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ, tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*." Then the mind quickly goes through the "(*sam*)*phassa paccayā vedanā*" and "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*" steps to end up with "*taṇhā*" or "attachment to that *ārammaṇa*" in a split-second! We CANNOT stop those steps. They are automatic. They can take place as long as we have *taṇhā*.
- We discussed that at length in several posts in discussing the *Chachakka Sutta*. See, "Is There a "Self"?"
- **Removing *taṇhā* involves controlling the next step in PS: "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*."** That is what we will focus on now.

Difference Between *Moha* and *Avijjā*

3. Once one gets "attached" to a *ārammaṇa*, one is CAPABLE of doing *akusala kamma* (immoral deeds.) Some people are not even aware that immoral acts (bad *kamma*) can lead to unpleasant *vipāka* in the future. Some of those bad *kamma* can lead to suffering-filled rebirths in *apāyā*. **That is the base level of**

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***moha*, where one is morally blind. Someone with *moha* could do such immoral deeds without any remorse.** See, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Paṭigha, Avijjā."

- ***Moha* is reduced to the *avijjā* level when one gets rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.** Even at the lower level of *avijjā*, one is still CAPABLE of doing such "*apāyagāmi* actions" **if the sensory input is strong enough**. One could live a "moral life" most of the time but could end up taking a large bribe or engage in sexual misconduct if the *ārammaṇa* is strong enough. For example, one may not have taken a bribe for most of the life, but be tempted "if the price is high enough."
- Even after one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one may still do some *akusala kamma*, but one's mind WILL NOT allow doing any "*apāyagāmi* deeds." We will discuss that in the future.
- Right now, we are focusing on understanding how an average human accumulates bad *kamma* starting at the "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa"* step in *Akusala-Mūla* PS. By an average human, I mean a "moral person" who has removed the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* but has not yet comprehended *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta.*)

A "Moral Person" May Be Tempted to Do *Apāyagāmī* Deeds

4. Such a "moral person" has reduced *moha* to the *avijjā* level, but still is capable of doing "*apāyagāmī*" deeds. Even though he/she may act morally most of the time, he/she has "hidden defilements" (*anusaya.*) They can come to the surface (as *āsaya*,) if triggered by a tempting sensory input. That is what we discussed in #3.

- I hope you can get an idea of *āsava* and *anusaya* by re-reading #3 and #4. ***Anusaya* means "sleeping defilements." They can be "awakened" by a robust sensory input (*ārammaṇa*) and brought up to the mind as "*āsava*."** See, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."
- *Anusaya* is like the gun powder in a matchstick. Striking that match on a rough surface will produce light. In the same way, when a defiled mind (with *avijjā*) comes into contact (*phassa,* or more accurately *samphassa*) with a strong *ārammaṇa* (say an attractive person), that could make greed or desire (*āsava*) come to the mind.
- **Having such *anusaya* is the same as having "bad *gati*."** As one reduces *anusaya* (by following the Eightfold Path), one's undesirable *gati* will also decrease.

Taṇhā Is There As Long as One Has Bad *Gati* and *Āsava*

5. The critical point in the *Chachakka Sutta* is the following. One MAY get attached (*taṇhā*) to a given *ārammana* as long as one has "defiled *gati*" or the seven types of *anusaya*: *diṭṭhānusaya* (wrong views), *vicikicchānusaya* (tendency to do the unwise), *kāmarāga anusaya* (temptation for sense pleasures), *paṭigha anusaya* (temptation for hatred), *bhvarāga anusaya* (craving for existence), *māna anusaya* (sense of "me"), and *avijjā anusaya* (ignorance); see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiya Anusaya Sutta (AN 7.12)."

- All of them have greed, anger, and ignorance (of the Four Noble Truths) as their origins. See, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."
- Within a split-second of that *ārammaṇa* coming to the mind, the mind gets attached (*taṇhā.*) Then, if one acts unwisely (*ayoniso manasikāra*), one will go through the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in PS and will accumulate NEW *kamma*.
- However, an *Arahant* will not get attached to ANY *ārammaṇa*, and that is why the *Akusala-Mūla* PS process does not take place for an *Arahant*.
- Therefore, the key to *Nibbāna* is to see how one can get rid of *taṇhā*. I hope you can see that this is equivalent to removing *gati*, *anusaya* (and thereby *āsava* or cravings.)

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Connection to the Eightfold Path

6. The key to getting to *Nibbāna* is to understand what happens in the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step. That is the first step after the last step, "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*" discussed in the *Cha Chakka Sutta.*

- **Any bad *kamma* that one had done in the past is embedded in one's *taṇhā*. As we saw above, as long as one has "defiled *gati*" or *āsava*, one WILL have *taṇhā*. The way to reduce and eventually remove *taṇhā* is to reduce and eliminate one's bad *gati*.**
- Please go through the above material and previous posts to make sure the above conclusions are understood. We cannot remove *taṇhā* by sheer will power. We need to follow the Eightfold Path to reduce and eliminate WRONG views, thoughts, speech, actions, way of living, efforts, and wrong mindfulness that will direct one towards wrong *samādhi* (mindset.) In Pāli, those who are on the "wrong or immoral path" have micchā *diṭṭhi, micchā saṅkappa, micchā vācā, micchā kammanta, micchā ājīva, micchā vāyāma, micchā sati*, and *micchā samādhi.*
- When one understands the PS process (including the critical "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step), one will be able to see the need to get rid of those wrong eight factors. Then one will cultivate "*Sammā*" versions of them: *sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappa, sammā vācā, sammā kammanta, sammā ājīva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati*, and *sammā samādhi.*

Vacī Saṅkhāra Responsible for *Upādāna*

7. When one gets "attached" or "get stuck" in a *ārammaṇa* due to *taṇhā*, the FIRST THING that happens is that DEFILED thoughts arise in one's mind AUTOMATICALLY. Those are *mano* (or *citta*) *saṅkhāra.*

- For example, if one sees a beautiful person, one may generate lustful thoughts automatically. If one sees one's arch-enemy, one may create angry thoughts, etc. Such defiled thought arise due to "hidden defilements" (*anusaya*) or "bad *gati*."
- However, within moments, we become aware of such thoughts. At that stage, many of us continue to generate similar defiled thoughts CONSCIOUSLY. As soon as we become aware of them, they are now *vacī saṅkhāra*. At this stage, we are analyzing that *ārammaṇa* in various ways (*vitakka/vicāra.*) We may also start speaking about it. Both types are *vacī saṅkhāra*. We have discussed that in detail in several posts. See, "Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)," "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna" and "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra."
- **With *vitakka/vicāra* (*vacī saṅkhāra*), our interest in that *ārammaṇa* will get stronger.** Then we may take physical actions involving *kāya saṅkhāra.*
- By the way, ***vacī saṅkhāra* (talking to oneself without speaking) is the same as *saṅkappa*. *Vacī saṅkhāra* also leads to speech (*vācā*)** as we discussed before.
- Of course, *kāya saṅkhāra* leads to bodily actions.

8. We start accumulating new *kamma* when we start generating *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra.*

Per #7, *vacī saṅkhāra* lead to *micchā saṅkappa* and *micchā vācā*. *Kāya saṅkhāra* leads to *micchā kammanta*. Now we can tie those up with the following that I have discussed in previous posts.

- *Mano* (*citta*) *saṅkhāra* arise first (and automatically) and do not involve conscious thinking. They DO NOT have *kammic* consequences.
- However, both *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* that may follow WILL HAVE *kammic* consequences. **In other words, *micchā saṅkappa*, *micchā vācā*, *micchā kammanta* are "bad kamma."**

Avijjā Is the Ignorance of Bad Consequences of *Taṇhā*

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9. What we discussed above in #6 through #8 are all associated with the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in PS. When the mind automatically "attach to a *ārammaṇa*" (*taṇhā*), it starts generating *saṅkhāra* via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." That is how new PS processes get starts.

- If one does not realize the harmful consequences of getting attached via greed, anger, or ignorance, that means one is acting with *avijjā* AT THAT TIME.
- It is critical to note that a "given person" DOES NOT act with *avijjā* all the time. **Whether one will start thinking and acting with *avijjā* depends on the nature of the *ārammaṇa* (whether it matches his/her *gati*) and how strong the *ārammaṇa* is.**
- If one does get "attached" or "get stuck" with a *ārammaṇa*, then one will start "pulling it closer." One wants to think about it, speak about it, and take action.
- ***Upādāna* means "pulling it closer (in one's mind)"** ("*upa*" + "*ādāna,*" where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull").

10. **That is how the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step starts a new PS cycle with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra.*"**

- One will start generating *vacī saṅkhāra* without speaking first. **Those are *micchā saṅkappa.*** For example, upon seeing an enemy, a person X may generate evil thoughts about that person.
- If emotions become stronger, X may speak out. In the above example, X may say something harsh to that person. **Those are *micchā vācā.***
- If that person also responds in kind and the situation escalates, X may hit that person. That is a ***micchā kammanta***.That action initiated by *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- All those *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* arise via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."

Paṭicca Samuppāda May Not Proceed Linearly

11. Now we can see how complicated the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step is. It went back to the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step to initiate a new PS cycle.

- Now, those *vacī saṅkhārā* and *kāya saṅkhārā* lead to *kamma viññāṇa*, via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" (and the rest of the PS cycle ending in "the whole mass of suffering.")
- Such *kamma viññāṇa* are focused on hurting that person in the example of #10. That *viññāṇa*, in turn, leads to more *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* via "*viññāṇa paccayā saṅkhāra.*" Note that this is the reverse of "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa.*"
- Therefore, PS steps do not necessarily go just one way. They can go backward. They can jump to different places in the cycle. As we saw, it jumped from the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step to the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step.
- However, when one understands the basic concepts, one will be able to figure out or "make sense" of such complexities.

Connection to *Ānāpānasati* and *Satipaṭṭhāna*

12. That is also why it is CRITICAL to stop the *vacī saṅkhāra* that arise immediately following the *mano saṅkhāra*. In that initial stage, speech has not "broken out yet." We just become aware that we are generating lustful/hateful thoughts.

- We MUST stop *vacī saṅkhāra* as they start arising. Then they will not lead to "bad speech" (via more *vacī saṅkhāra*) or "bad actions" (via *kāya saṅkhāra*.) This is discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Vitakkasanthāna Sutta (MN 20)."

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- That is the key to doing the correct *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā* and *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*! See, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)."
- We will discuss that and more steps in PS in the upcoming posts.

5.2.8.4.6.6 Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa

December 14, 2019; revised December 15, 2019

Summary of Discussion Up To Now

1. In the subsection on "Worldview of the Buddha," we are discussing how the Buddha explained the sensory experience. More importantly, the Buddha taught how a "living being" generates *kammic* energies for future existences (*bhava*) based on "attachment" (*taṇhā*) to a given sensory experience. As we have discussed, "attachment" can happen due to greed, hate, or an unwise mindset.

- First, we discussed how a sensory event starts when a *ārammaṇa* (sight, sound, smell, taste, touch, *dhammā*) comes to the mind when one of the six senses (internal *āyatana*) comes into contact with an external *āyatana*. Becoming aware of sensory input is one of the six types of *vipāka viññāṇa*: "*cakkhu viññāṇa, sota viññāṇa, ghāna viññāṇa, jivhā viññāṇa, kāya viññāṇa, mano viññāṇa*." [*Indriya* (sense faculty) and *āyatana* (defiled sense faculty) have totally different meanings. For example, eyes are *indriya* when we just happen to see things, but they BECOME *āyatana* when they are used for pleasure, i.e., to deliberately look at sensual things to enjoy them.]
- **Those six types of *viññāṇa*, including *mano viññāṇa*, are *vipāka viññāṇa*.** They DO NOT generate *kammic* energy. They are "experiences."

2. Then, one MAY "attach to" or "get stuck in" that sensory experience INSTANTLY. That means generating *taṇhā*. Then the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step automatically follows. That is a step in the middle of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) cycle.

- One will attach (*taṇhā*) only if one has "defiled *gati*." That means one likes or dislikes that sensory experience (could be connected with ignorance too.) If one attaches, then one will start thinking and speaking (with *vacī saṅkhāra*) and even may take actions (with *kāya saṅkhāra*) with a DEFILED MIND. That means those *saṅkhāra* arise via, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." That is part of "*upādāna*" or "pulling that *ārammaṇa* close."
- Therefore, what we summarized here in #2 is how the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in PS initiates a new PS process that starts at "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." That is how the PS cycle begins in real life, beginning with a *ārammaṇa* (as detailed in the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148).

Summary in Charts

3. Since it is CRITICAL to understand what we discussed above, I have made the charts below to help us with the discussion.

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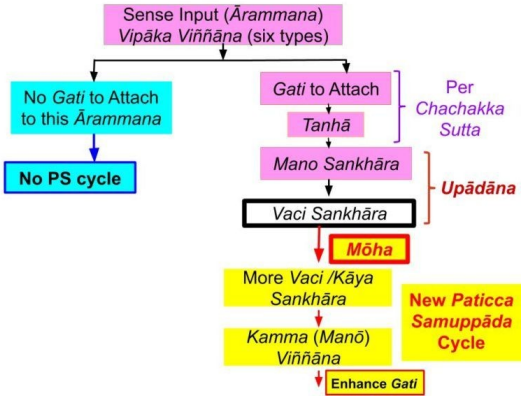
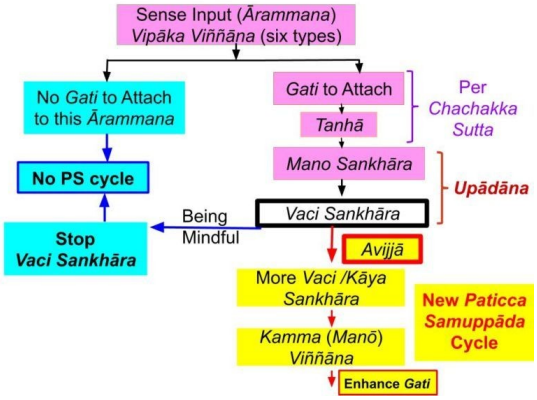
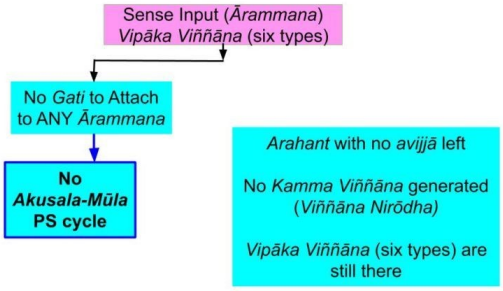


Response to a ārammaṇa with Moha



Response to a ārammaṇa with Avijjā



Response to a ārammaṇa by an Arahant

One can download the charts for easy reading/printing: "WebLink: PDF_file: Response to a *ārammaṇa* with *Moha*," "WebLink: PDF_file: Response to a *ārammaṇa* with *Avijjā*," and "WebLink: PDF_file: Response to a *ārammaṇa* by an *Arahant*."

- *Paṭicca Samuppāda* referred to in ALL the above charts is the "*Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda*." That PS process leads to future suffering.
- **Therefore, *saṅkhāra* that do not arise in an *Arahant* are ONLY "bad or immoral *saṅkhāra*."** An *Arahant* will still generate *mano, vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra* to think, speak, and take actions. He/she will be engaged in "*puñña kriyā*" or "moral deeds." Such "moral deeds" are NOT "*puñña* ***abhisaṅkhāra***" because one does them with full comprehension of the *anicca* nature. We will discuss this critical point later.

Difference Between *Moha* and *Avijjā*

4. Let us start with the chart on the left. That chart is for an extreme case of a "totally morally-blind" person. That mind is covered with defilements (*moha*.) Such a person would, just like an animal, go along with any temptation that comes to the mind. His/her "bad *gati*" will only get stronger.

- The chart in the middle applies to a wide range of humans with *avijjā*. *Avijjā* is a lower form of *moha*. When one removes the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, *moha* reduces to the *avijjā* level. Any human who knows right from wrong is an average human. It also includes those who are *Ariyā* (*Sotāpanna Anugāmi* and above) but not yet attained *Arahanthood.*
- Of course, any *Ariya* (Noble Person) is INCAPABLE of doing *apāyagāmi* deeds. An *Anāgāmi* is INCAPABLE of craving for sensual pleasures, etc. Therefore, as one move to higher stages of *Nibbāna*, one will "attach to" less and less *ārammaṇa* (sensory inputs.)
- But any average human — no matter how "moral" by conventional standards — is CAPABLE of doing even an *apāyagāmi* deed. The *ārammaṇa* must be strong enough to be tempted.

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- An *Arahant* has a totally-purified mind and has no "bad *gati*" left. Therefore, he/she WILL NOT initiate an "*Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda*" cycle under ANY circumstance. That is indicated in the third chart.

Difference Between *Vipāka Viññāṇa* and *Kamma Viññāṇa*

5. Above charts also help us clarify the difference between *vipāka viññāṇa* and *kamma viññāṇa*. Any sensory EXPERIENCE is a *vipāka viññāṇa*. *Vipāka viññāṇa* can come in through any of the six sense faculties, as shown at the top of the charts. Every living being, including an *Arahant*, experiences *vipāka viññāṇa*. In other words, ANY living-being can see, hear, etc.

- If one attaches (*taṇhā*) to a *ārammaṇa*, then that initiates the step "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in PS. That means one starts "pulling that *ārammaṇa* close (*upādāna*)." First, one starts thinking about it with *vacī saṅkhāra*. One does that with the sense of a "me" involved in the sensory experience. **As we have discussed, there is no need for a "me" or a "self" to experience a sensory input.** See, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."
- Therefore, at the beginning of that "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step, one starts generating *saṅkhāra* about that *ārammaṇa* with the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step in PS. That is when a PS cycle starts at the "beginning" and then runs through the end.
- The next step in PS after the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step is "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." **That *viññāṇa* is a *kamma viññāṇa*.** Since it arises ONLY in mind, that is a *mano viññāṇa*. This *kamma viññāṇa* appears at the bottom of the FIRST TWO charts. **An *Arahant* does not generate *kamma viññāṇa*.** Therefore, *kamma viññāṇa* is absent in the third chart.

Kamma Viññāṇa Generated with the View (*diṭṭhi*) and Perception (*saññā*) of "Me" or a "Self"

6. From the last bullet of #5, it is clear that one's mind will NOT go through the *Akusala-Mūla* PS at ANY TIME only if one is an *Arahant*.

- That is because it is ONLY an *Arahant* would have "seen" the futility of attaching to ANY sensory input (*ārammaṇa*.) **There is no sense of a "me" or a "self" in an *Arahant*.**
- That is a point that we will discuss in detail in upcoming posts. But it is good to know about that point ahead of the time. It is CRITICAL to understand the material presented so far to be able to "keep up" with the upcoming posts when we discuss *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.
- As we can see, ANYONE below the *Arahant* stage WILL attach to at least a few sensory inputs. That is because anyone below the *Arahant* will have at least a trace of *avijjā anusaya* left.
- It is impossible for an average human even to comprehend that. That is why the Buddha emphasized that it is not correct to say that a "self" does not exist. **The point is that for ANYONE below the *Arahant* stage of *Nibbāna*, a "self" with "*gati*" exists!**
- **However, anyone above the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* can "see" that it is unfruitful to take anything in this world to be "mine," and also can lead to future suffering.** That "seeing" is "with wisdom" and is *lokuttara* (or *lokottara*) *Sammā Diṭṭhi*. A fish biting the tasty bait on a hook does not "see" that it will be subjected to much suffering. Just like that, an average human cannot "see" the suffering hidden in sensual pleasures. We will discuss details in future posts.
- One becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* when one comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) to some extent. Even after that, the *saññā* (perception) of a "me" will be there. That perception will reduce with higher stages of *magga phala* and will disappear at the *Arahant* stage.

Starting with a "Self" or "No-Self" is not the correct approach

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7. As we summarized in #5 above (and discussed in the post mentioned there), attachment to a *ārammaṇa* happens instantly. That requires no conscious thinking and thus is NOT possible to stop. As long as one has "bad *gati*," one MAY attache to some sensory inputs (*ārammaṇa*.)

- The way to eliminate *taṇhā* is to reduce and finally remove one's "bad *gati*." Luckily, humans have the ABILITY to do that by understanding the PS process.
- Indeed, there is a "self" is in the PS process. However, that is not an unchanging "self" like a "soul" or a "*ātma*." I call it a "dynamic self," see "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream." That "self" disappears when one attains the *Arahant* stage!

8. **Therefore, until one becomes an *Arahant*, the there is a "self" that CAN make decisions on how to respond to sensory input.** As shown in the middle chart above, anyone can stop any "bad *vacī saṅkhāra*" that arises when tempted by a given sensory input. If that fails, one can stop *kāya saṅkhāra* that lead to physical actions. **In simple words, that means one should stop any bad conscious thoughts, bad speech, or bad (immoral) deeds as soon as one becomes aware of them.**

- When one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* by comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent, one's "*apāyagāmi gati*" will disappear.
- Until then, one can practice *Ānāpānasati* or *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā* to stop some temptations. One does not need to have formal meditation sessions. It is utterly useless to have formal meditation sessions and not to act with mindfulness when one goes through daily activities. That is when one generates most of the defiled thoughts and actions.
- Formal meditations become more relevant after getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage. That is why "*bhāvanāya pahātabbā*" comes last in the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (MN 2). There, "*dassanena pahātabbā*" of "removal via correct vision" is first on that list. That is the "correct vision" required to be a *Sotāpanna*. One must first understand what to meditate on!

Kamma Viññāṇa Have Future Expectations

9. What is the real difference between a *vipāka viññāṇa* and a *kamma viññāṇa*?

- ***Vipāka viññāṇa* provide the sensory experience.** One sees with *cakkhu viññāṇa*, hears with *sota viññāṇa*, tastes with *jivhā viññāṇa*, smell with *ghāna viññāṇa*, feel touch with *kāya viññāṇa*, and thoughts coming to the mind with *mano viññāṇa*.
- ***Kamma viññāṇa* arise via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."** When one gets attached to a *ārammaṇa* via greed or hate, for example, one has an EXPECTATION. If one likes the *ārammaṇa*, one wants more of it. If one dislikes it, one wants it to go away.
- Thus when one consciously thinks (*vacī saṅkhāra*) and takes actions (*kāya saṅkhāra*), there are "expectations" embedded in such *saṅkhāra*. Those *saṅkhārā* lead to *kamma viññāṇa* via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."

10. **Those "expectations" in *kamma viññāṇa* are energies generated by the mind in *javana citta*. They stay "out there in the world" as *dhammā*.** Those are part of the *dhammā* in "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati mano viññāṇaṃ*."

- Therefore, just like the other five types of *rūpa* are "out there in the world," *dhammā* are "out there," too. They can be detected by the *mana indriya*, just like a sound detected by the *sota indriya*, for example. That is how our future expectations periodically come back to our minds, i.e., how we remember our plans for the future. **Sigmund Freud called that the "subconscious."** Of course, he had no idea about the actual mechanism.
- ***Dhammā*** are *rūpa* too. But they are just energies that are below *suddhaṭṭhaka*. They are "*anidassanaṃ appaṭighaṃ dhammāyatanapariyāpannaṃ*." They "cannot be seen or touched." See, "What are Rūpa? – Dhammā are Rūpa too!"

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- The other five types of *rūpa* sensed via the five physical sense faculties are above the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level. Modern science is only aware of those five types.
- We will discuss *dhammā* in detail in the next post.

All posts on the new series at, "Origin of Life."

5.2.8.4.6.7 Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering

December 21, 2019

Upādāna Is a Key Concept That Has Been Hidden

1. The Buddha declared that his Dhamma or teachings on suffering "has not been known to the world" before him. In his first discourse, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11), he "defined" *dukkha* or suffering.

Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, ***dukkhaṃ ariyasaccaṃ****:*

jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhāṃ, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, ***yampicchaṃ*** *(****yam pi icchaṃ****)* ***na labhati tampi dukkhāṃ—saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā*** *(****pañca upādāna khandhā****)* ***dukkhā****.* **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

Translated: *Bhikkhus*, What is the **Noble Truth of Suffering**?

"Birth is suffering; getting old is suffering; getting sick is suffering; dying is suffering. Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering and having to separate from those things one likes is suffering. **If one does not get what one wants/craves (*icchā*), that is suffering** – in brief, the origin of suffering is the **"pulling close" (*upādāna*)** of the five aggregates of *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa* (*pañcupādānakkhandha*). [***iccha*** :[adj.] (in cpds.), wishing; longing; desirous of.]

- Any person knows that "Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering. Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering. Having to separate from those things one likes is suffering." That part is known to the world.
- May be it is a bit harder to understand birth to be suffering, but ANY birth ends up with decay and death at the end, so it is not that difficult to "see."

The "Hard-To See" Suffering That Is Hidden

2. **What is "previously unheard" is that craving (*icchā*) for sensory attractions leads to suffering eventually**. When one craves something, one would start thinking and speaking (*vacī saṅkhāra*), and doing things (with *kāya saṅkhāra*) to "get possession" of it. That "pulling close" of "mind-pleasing" things is "*upādāna*" ("*upa*" + "*ādāna*" as we discussed before.) [***Upādāna*** means "pulling it closer (in one's mind)" ("*upa*" + "*ādāna*," where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull"). [***ādāna*** : (nt.), taking up; grasping.]]

- Since we do not "see" that hidden suffering, we tend to do immoral deeds to get possession of such "mind-pleasing" things. That means generating *saṅkhāra* due to our *avijjā* (ignorance of the core teachings of the Buddha, including the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process.)
- The harsh consequences of such immoral deeds (*kamma vipāka*) may not be seen immediately, or even in this life. That is why it is hard to "see" this hidden suffering.
- That is contrary to our daily experiences. We do everything to get to live a luxurious life with a beautiful house, an attractive spouse, a nice car, etc. We do not see "any bad consequences" of the efforts that we put in the pursuit of those "mind-pleasing things."

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A Fish Does Not "See" the Hidden Suffering in a Delicious Bait

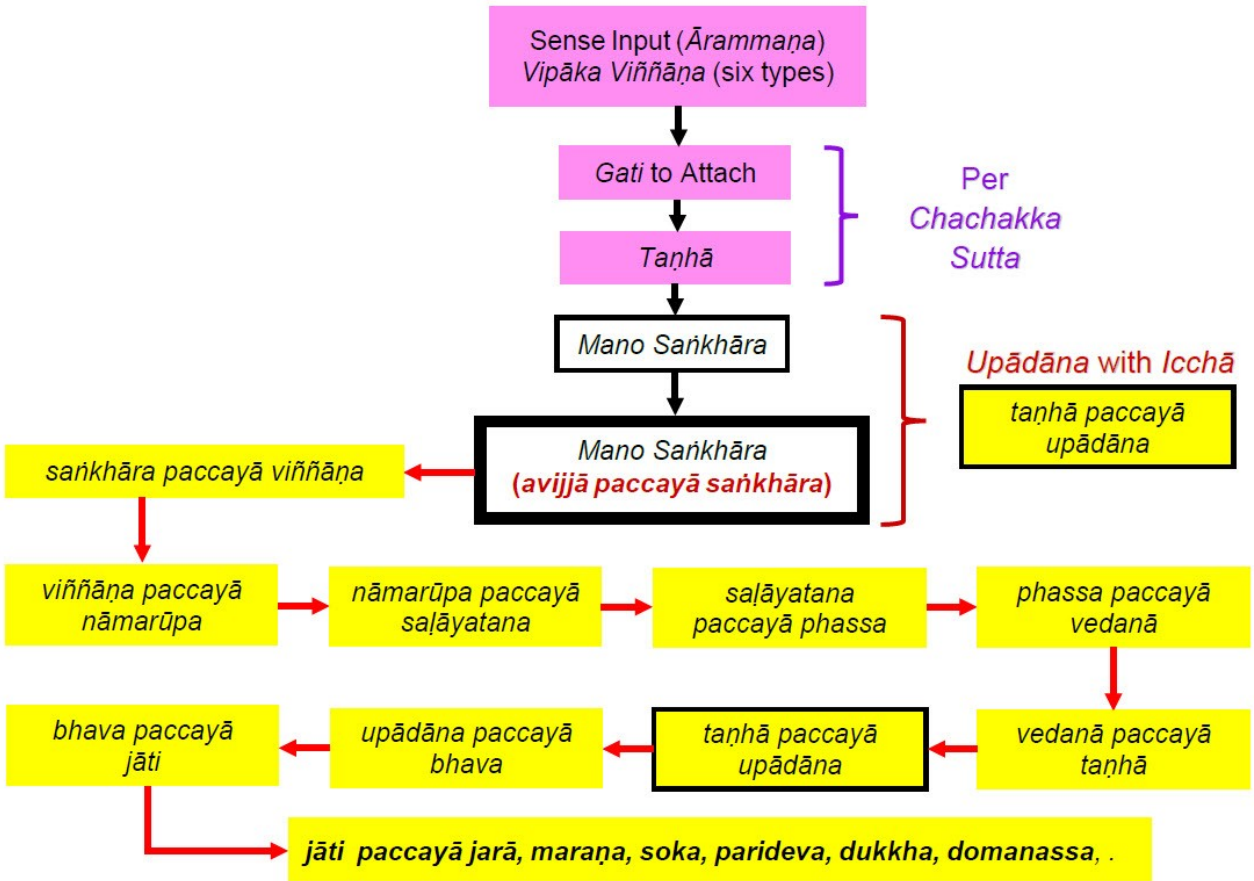
3. As we will discuss, we are not any different than a fish biting into a tasty bait, say, a worm. That fish does not see the hook hidden in the "delicious worm." It will be subjected to much suffering once it bites the worm, and the hook attaches to its mouth.

- The difficulty in our case is that the deeds we do to get those sensory pleasures may not show their CONSEQUENCES in this life. That is why it is useless to follow Buddha Dhamma if one does not believe in rebirth or *kamma/vipāka*.
- All that we tend to crave **(*icchā*)** are PARTS OF the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*). That small part is *pañc**upādāna**kkhandha.* We like certain types of *rūpa* (people and things), certain types of *vedanā* (feelings), etc.
- That is why it is critical to understand how "pulling close" **(*upādāna*)** of sensory inputs (*ārammaṇa*) lead to future suffering. The *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) ends up in "*jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa,..*" or the "whole mass of suffering."

Craving (*Icchā*) Starts the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* Process That Leads to Suffering

4. In the previous two posts, we discussed how an external sensory input (*ārammaṇa*) triggers the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in the PS. See, "Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda" and "Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa."

- Continuing on that discussion, let us look at how that future suffering arises. The following chart summarizes what we discussed. It shows all the steps in the PS process, starting with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" to the end, "*jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa,..*" or the "whole mass of suffering."



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Open pdf for viewing or printing: "WebLink: PDF-file: *Icchā* to *Upādāna* to Suffering."

Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda Example

Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda explains phenomena occurring in real-time, as they happen. That is easier to interpret compared to *uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda,* which describes events leading to future lives, especially in rebirths. [***idaṃ*** :[(Nom. and Acc. sing. of ima) nt.] this thing. ***paccayatā*** :[f.] causation. ***idappaccayatā*** : (*idaṃ* + *paccayatā*) [f.] having its foundation on this, i.e., causally connected.]

5. Let us revisit a simple example that we discussed in #13 of the recent post, "Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)."

A person is in the waiting room to see a doctor and sees that someone has dropped a wallet. The moment he sees the wallet, his mind attaches to it (*taṇhā*). Then he thinks that there could be some money in the wallet and that it is an easy way to get some "free money." That happens within moments of him seeing the wallet.

- "Seeing the wallet" is a *cakkhu viññāṇa* that resulted via, "*Cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ."* Within a split-second, he attaches to it (*taṇhā*) as we discussed in the posts on *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148.)
- Then he starts thinking about how much money can be in that wallet, and how to pick it up without being noticed. Those are *vacī saṅkhāra* that arise due to his ignorance (*avijjā*) about the harmful consequences of them. Thus, his mind has generated "*upādāna*" for the wallet because he has a craving (*icchā*) for money.
- Thus, his mind starts the step, "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS.)

Initiation of a new *Paṭicca Samuppāda* Process

6. Therefore, the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step now leads to the start of a brand new PS process with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." We discussed that in the previous post, "Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa."

- Those conscious thoughts about the wallet are *vacī saṅkhāra.* Now those *saṅkhāra* lead to a NEW *kamma viññāṇa*. That *viññāṇa* has the expectation of picking up the wallet and keeping it for himself. That is a *mano viññāṇa* that arises in his mind, and is different from the *cakkhu viññāṇa* of "seeing the wallet."
- Now, that ***kamma*** *viññāṇa* leads to "*nāmarūpa* formation" in his mind. He runs various scenarios in his mind (*vitakka/vicāra*), both regards to picking up the wallet without being noticed and also what he can do with the money in the wallet. That is "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*."
- That immediately leads to the involvement of several internal *āyatana*. For example, he may look around to see whether anyone is watching. He may stand up and see whether the receptionist can see that area where he is sitting, etc. That is "*nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana*."
- That, in turn, leads to "*salāyatana paccayā (sam)phassa*." The defilements (or "*saṁ*") in his mind affect all his thoughts and activities. That generates mind-made *vedanā*)"*phassa paccayā (samphassa jā) vedanā*) followed by "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*" and "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*." Those are the steps described in the *Chachakka Sutta*. See, the previous posts in this series: "Worldview of the Buddha."

Strengthened *Upādāna* Leads to a Temporary *Bhava*

7. His mind is now back to the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in the PS process, and it reinforces that *upādāna*. The above steps may be repeated many times in his mind as he sits there and contemplates various aspects. Those, by the way, are *vitakka/vicāra*.

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- With the strengthening of the *upādāna*, now he is born in the existence (*bhava*) of a thief. That is "*upādāna paccayā bhava*." Then immediately, he is "born" (*jāti*) a thief. That is "*bhava paccayā jāti*," By the way, in *uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda, jāti* can happen much later. The "*bhava*" remains energized as *dhammā*; see below.
- Now that "thief" goes and picks up the wallet and puts it in his pocket. Now, "stealing of the wallet" is accomplished. That is the "*maraṇa*" or "death" of that particular *jāti* as a thief.
- However, there is more to it than just *maraṇa. "Jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa,.."* will also follow.
- Even though he got what he wanted, his mind is very agitated. Even though there was no one else in the waiting room, he wonders whether the receptionist somehow saw his act. Also, now a new thought comes to his mind as to whether there is a video camera in the room. That "mental stress" is part of *domanassa.*

The Process Is Over, but the Consequences Will Prevail

8. It is possible that there was a video camera in the room. If so, he could be charged with theft a few days later. Those are part of the "mass of suffering" due to that immoral act of stealing.

- But the critical point is the following. Even if he did not get caught, he would definitely be paying for his immoral action in the future. The *kammic* energy of that immoral deed will follow him, waiting for an opportunity to bring a corresponding "bad *vipāka*" at some point.
- *Kammic* energy is in *dhammā* (with long "a" at the end, not as in Buddha Dhamma.) Let us address that in brief.

Dhammā Are Energies Created by Mind – With *Kamma Viññāṇa*

9. ***Dhammā* are the underlying energies (or "*kamma* seeds" or "*kamma bīja*") created by the mind.**

- A seed has the POTENTIAL to give rise to a tree under proper conditions like good soil, water, and sunlight. In the same way, *dhammā* (a *kamma bīja*) has the POTENTIAL to give rise to things (both living and inert) in this word.
- That is how such *dhammā* (or *kamma* seeds) can bring vipāka in the future.
- Just like an ordinary seed needs soil, water, and sunlight to germinate and bring about a tree, *dhammā* need proper conditions to bring about corresponding *vipāka*. That is also why *kamma* is not deterministic. For example, Aṅgulimāla killed 999 people. That kammic energy was there even after Ven. Aṅgulimāla attained *Arahantship*. However, with that *Arahantship*, his mind became pure, and any conditions to bring about the *vipāka* of those bad *kamma* could not materialize. See, "Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."
- I will discuss the role of *dhammā* in the next post.

Icchā (Cravings) Lead to *Upādāna* and to Eventual Suffering

10. What we discussed above is the key message embedded in the First Noble Truth of *Dukkha Sacca*.

- It is craving (*icchā*) for "mind-pleasing sensory attractions in the world" that lead to *taṇhā* and *upādāna* and to eventual suffering.
- **Based on *icchā*, we get "stuck in attractive sensory inputs" (*taṇhā*), and try to keep that *ārammaṇa* as close as possible in the mind (*upādāna*.)** We do that in our minds by generating unwise thoughts (*vacī saṅkhāra*), that leads to unwise speech (more *vacī saṅkhāra*) and immoral actions (based on *kāya saṅkhāra*). That is the start of an *akusala-mūla* PS process, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."

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- That process, of course, inevitably leads to the last step in the PS process, "*jarā, maraṇa, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa,..*" or the "whole mass of suffering."

11. The "*Icchā Sutta* (SN 1.69)" summarizes the importance of the *icchā*. One time, a *deva* came to the Buddha and asked:

"*Kenassu bajjhatī loko*,	"By what is the world bound?
kissa vinayāya muccati;	By the removal of what one is freed?
Kissassu vippahānena,	What is it that one must abandon
sabbaṃ chindati bandhanan"*ti*.	To cut off all bondage?"

[***bajjhati*** :[pass. of bandhati] is bound or captivated; is caught.
vinaya :[m.] discipline; the code of monastic discipline; removal.
muccati :[muc + ya] becomes free; to be saved or released.
vippahāna : (nt.) [vi+pahāna] leaving, abandoning, giving up.
chindati :[chid + ṃ + a] cuts; severs; destroys.
bandhana :[nt.] bound; fetter; attachment; imprisonment; binding; bondage; something to bind with.]

The Buddha replied:

"***Icchāya bajjhatī loko***,	"By **cravings**, **one is bound to the world**;
icchāvinayāya muccati;	By the removal of desire one is freed
Icchāya vippahānena,	Craving is what one must give up
sabbaṃ chindati bandhanan"*ti*.	To cut off all bondage."

- But, of course, craving for "mind-pleasing things" cannot be removed by just will power. One must understand the bad consequences of such cravings. That understanding comes through via moral living AND learning true and correct Buddha Dhamma.
- That is why Sammā *Diṭṭhi* comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path. The other steps in the Path will follow once one comprehends the teachings. But a badly corrupt mind is unable to grasp those teachings and that is why moral living is a pre-requisite.

5.2.8.4.6.8 Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections

December 28, 2019

Introduction

1. From the previous posts on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in this series, we can make the following conclusions:

- The MIND generates different types of *saṅkhārā*. They are involved in all thoughts (*mano* and *vacī saṅkhārā*), speech (*vacī saṅkhārā*), and bodily actions (*kāya saṅkhārā*.)
- Therefore, *saṅkhārā* (generated with *avijjā*) are responsible for all ten types of *akusala kamma.* Of those ten, three with the mind, four with speech, and three with the body.
- Such *kamma* create energies (or *kamma bija*) that are released to the world as "*dhammā*." We will discuss some details here. This word *dhammā* is different from *dhamma* (teachings) in Buddha Dhamma.
- Please review those previous posts as needed: "Paticca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'"

Manopubbangamā Dhammā – Mind Is the Precursor of All

2. The first *Dhammapada* verse is "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.." There are, in fact, two verses that go together. Those two verses have the following meanings:

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- All things and phenomena have mind as their forerunner. They all are mind-made. **If one speaks or acts with an evil mind (i.e., engages in *dasa akusala*), then suffering (*dukha*) will follow just as the wheels of a cart follow the footsteps of the ox that is pulling the wagon.**
- All things and phenomena have mind as their forerunner. They all are mind-made. **If one speaks or acts with a purified mind (i.e., engages in *dasa kusala* and *puñña kamma*), happiness (*sukha*) follows one like one's own shadow.**

Dhammā Are Energies Created by Mind – With *Mano Viññāṇa* (*Kamma Viññāṇa*)

3. **As I briefly stated in a previous post, *dhammā* are the underlying energies (or "*kamma* seeds" or "*kamma bīja*") created by the mind.** See, "Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa."

- A seed has the POTENTIAL to give rise to a tree under proper conditions like good soil, water, and sunlight. In the same way, *dhammā* (a *kamma bīja*) has the POTENTIAL to give rise to things (both living and inert) in this word.
- *Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes the complex process of a *dhammā* (a *kamma bīja*) giving rise to future lives. It also explains the arising of the external world that sustains life as well. We will address just the first part for now.
- The "seeds" here — *dhammā* (a *kamma bīja*) — are "created and fed" by "*kamma viññāṇa.*"
- Only the mind can generate *kamma viññāṇa*. Such *kamma viññāṇa* arise via, "*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda.* **Since that happens ONLY in mind, *kamma viññāṇa* are ALWAYS *mano viññāṇa*.** A *kamma viññāṇa* has ENERGY. Such *kamma viññāṇa* encompass our future hopes and expectations.
- All the other five types of *viññāṇa* (*cakkhu viññāṇa, sota viññāṇa, ghāna viññāṇa, jivhā viññāṇa, kāya viññāṇa*) are ALWAYS *vipāka viññāṇa*. *Mano viññāṇa* could be EITHER *vipāka* or *kamma viññāṇa*. To recall how *vipāka viññāṇa* arise, see, "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."
- ***Vipāka vedanā*** that we experience arise with ***vipāka viññāṇa***. See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

An Example Of a "Mild" *Kamma Viññāṇa*

4. Let us consider an example of how a *kamma viññāṇa* arises and how it could grow with *saṅkhārā*.

- Suppose X needs to buy a car. He saw a car in a showroom and "fell in love with it." **Here the impactful *ārammaṇa* was that moment of seeing his "dream car."** A *kamma bīja* was born at that time with that expectation via "*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa.*"
- He goes home and thinks about how to finance the purchase. He talks to his friends about how beautiful the car is, etc. All those are *vacī saṅkhārā* based on that car. Then he may go back to the showroom to look at it again and even to get a better price for the car. Those would involve *kāya saṅkhārā*.
- Every time he thinks, speaks and acts on issues relating to that car, he is "feeding that *viññāṇa*" for buying the vehicle. That happens with "*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa,*" and makes that *viññāṇa* stronger. We could also say that the *kamma bīja* or *dhamma* associated with that *viññāṇa* would grow.
- The stronger that *viññāṇa* becomes, the more often will it "come back" to his mind (as a *dhammā*) via "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ.*" **That is what Sigmund Freud called "the subconscious."** Of course, Freud had no idea of the working of the subconscious via *kamma viññāṇa.*
- Now, one day, X buys the car. At that time, the *kamma viññāṇa* (*kamma bīja*) for that expectation will go away. Even if he did not buy the car, that *kamma viññāṇa* (*kamma bīja*) would have died if he lost

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his job unexpectedly and realized that he could not afford the car. In either case, it would no longer be in his "subconscious."

An Example Of a "Strong" *Kamma Viññāṇa* Associated with a *Pāpa Kamma*

5. In the above example, we considered a relatively "mild" *kamma*. Even though there was some greed involved, that *kamma* (buying a car) was not a *pāpa kamma*. A *pāpa kamma* is a strong *akusala kamma* that could make one eligible for rebirth in the *apāyā*. Let us consider an example.

- Suppose X now wants to kill another human out of anger. The moment that he decides on that, his *vacī saṅkhāra* creates a new *kamma bīja* (and a *kamma viññāṇa*) on deciding to kill. His mind is "stuck with the idea of killing that person." That is *tanhā*. The conventional translation of *taṇhā* as "craving" is not quite right.
- From that moment, any time that X is thinking about how to carry out the killing, that *kamma bīja* (*kamma viññāṇa*) will grow. It happens via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*," where *saṅkhāra* are *vacī saṅkhāra* involved in his planning. This is "*upādāna*" ("*upa*" + "*ādāna*" or "keeping it close in the mind." He often thinks about how to kill that person. He dwells on it.
- Then, one day, X decides to shoot that person. Then he may go and buy a gun. That involves *kāya saṅkhāra*, and those will also contribute to the growth of that *viññāṇa* (*kamma bīja*.)
- Then X shoots and kills that person. That is the strongest *kamma* and it is a *kāya kamma* done with *kāya saṅkhāra*. But all those *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* involved were *abhisaṅkhāra.*
- **However, unlike in the previous case in #4 above, that *kamma viññāṇa* (*kamma bīja*) does not go away.** That is because it is an *akusala kamma*. Even though the expectation accomplished, that *kamma viññāṇa* will instead be "established in the *kamma bhava.*" It will "follow him" **just as the wheels of a wagon follow the footsteps of the ox** in #2 above. That *kamma viññāṇa* will be "with him" for billions of years waiting for an opportunity to bring its results (*vipāka*.)

Abhidhamma Explanation

6. **The following information is relevant but not essential.** I include it for those who are familiar with *Abhidhamma*. It is a good idea to read it in any case, to get the basic idea. Our minds create ENERGY when we focus on *ārammaṇa*. When a mind "gets strongly attached" to a *ārammaṇa*, a particular type of *citta vīthi* (*atimahantarammana* or *mahantarammana*) that runs in the mind.

- Towards the end of such a *citta vīthi*, seven especially powerful *citta* (*javana citta*) arise. Those *javana cittā* generate and release *kammic* ENERGY to the world. Those ENERGIES are *dhammā* or *kamma bīja.*
- Such ENERGIES generate in the steps, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa, viññāṇa paccayā nāmarupa"* in *Paṭicca Samuppāda.* That, of course, takes place during *citta vīthi.*
- These *kammic* energies generated in *javana citta* lie below the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level. A *suddhāṭṭhaka* is the smallest unit of matter in Buddha Dhamma. See, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka." [***suddha*** : [pp. of sujjhati] become clean or pure. ***aṭṭhaka*** :[nt.] a group of eight.]
- That is a very brief explanation. One could read about *citta vīthi* in *Bhikkhu* Bodhi's book, "Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma." As I said, it is not necessary to fully understand that process. But that could fill "some gaps in the picture."

Dhammā Are *Rūpa* Too!

Dhammā are also *rūpa* in Buddha Dhamma. As we have discussed, *dhammā* are pure energy that lies below "tangible matter" above the *suddhāṭṭhaka* stage.

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7. Those energies released to the "unseen world" or "immaterial world" stay there as *dhammā*. Therefore, *dhammā* are "out there" in the world, just like other types of *rūpa*.

- Another name for *kamma viññāṇa* or *dhammā* is *kamma bīja*. In Buddha Dhamma, such energies also come under the category of "*rūpa*." More on that below.
- While scientists can detect any of the other five kinds of *rūpa* with their instruments, *dhammā* can be detected only by the *mana indriya* in the brain.
- Let me first clarify what I mean by "unseen world" or "immaterial world." The world that we can "see" or "interact with" consists of the following. There are solid objects (people, animals, trees, houses, etc.) that we "see" with our eyes. They are "*rūpa rūpa*" or simply "*rūpa*." There are sounds that we hear (*sadda rūpa*.) Things that we smell are odors (*gandha rūpa*.) We taste the essence (*rasa rūpa*) in the food we eat. And we touch solid objects (*phoṭṭhabba rūpa*.)
- *Dhammā* are in a different category compared to other types of "tangible *rūpa*." It may be a good idea to read the post "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

8. Long before Einstein made the connection between matter and energy via his famous E = mc^2 equation, the Buddha treated both matter and energy as "*rūpa*."

- With advances in physics, now it is well-established that matter and energy are indistinguishable. For example, now scientists accept that light consists of particles (photons.)
- Some of those "*rūpa*" we can directly see, and we also know how others arise. For example, "*sadda rūpa*" are sound energy. Still, scientists know that sound propagates through the air via "pressure waves." We are familiar with the five types of "*rūpa*" that we sense with our five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body.)
- Scientists have not been able to detect *dhammā,* and are unaware of them. They think memories are "stored in the brain." That definitely is not compatible with the ability to recall past lives by many, including some children. Of course, the Buddha was able to recall past lives as far back as he wished (without seeing a "beginning.") See, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."

Dhammā Are *Anidassana Rūpa*

9. **The following information is relevant but not essential.** It is a good idea to read it in any case, to get the basic idea. The Buddha stated that "*dhammā* **cannot be seen or made contact with** (other than with the *mana indriya*.) *Dhammā* are "*Vedanākkhandho ... pe ... viññāṇakkhandho, yañca* ***rūpaṃ anidassanaṃ appaṭighaṃ dhammāyatana pariyāpannaṃ..*****"**

- That verse is in "WebLink: suttacentral: 2.3.2. Dukanikkhepa" of the Dhammasaṅgaṇī under the subsection 2.3.2.2.3. Sanidassanaduka.
- The critical point to remember is that *dhammā* include our memories (which are just records without energy) AND *viññāṇa* (which include *kamma viññāṇa* with *kammic* power.)

10. There is a lot to grasp here, but the main points are the following.

1. *Dhammā* (used normally in plural) **include** *kamma viññāṇa* or *kamma bīja.*
2. *Dhammā* **also include** memories from the past, including those from past lives. It is just that one may not be able to recall past lives until one attains *jhāna* and cultivates "*pubbenivāsānussati ñāṇa.*"
3. Those *dhammā* (including memories or "*nāma gotta*") are "out there" too, just like the other five types of *rūpa* are "out there." But an average human is unaware of *dhammā*. It takes a Buddha (with a perfectly purified mind) to uncover such details about the world.

- That is why I stated that *dhammā* are in the "unseen world" or "immaterial world." Details at "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

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Dhammā Behave Differently Compared to "Normal *Rūpa*"

11. *Rūpa* or "matter" behaves very differently below the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level. Again, we do not need to get into details, but it is essential to make that connection. For those who are interested, details at "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

- As we discussed, those "gross or dense *rūpa*" that we detect with the five senses are the only *rūpa* that modern science is aware of.
- However, when scientists started studying "matter' at very low density (like electrons and photons), they ran into problems. "Matter" at the sub-atomic level behaves very differently, and those investigations led to the discovery of quantum mechanics. For example, electrons and photons do not obey the same laws as large particles like stones or tennis balls.
- Even though scientists have made progress with quantum mechanics, they are still unable to explain some phenomena at the sub-atomic level. One key issue is that such "quantum particles" like electrons and photons seem to be interacting instantaneously across long distances. This phenomenon is known as "quantum entanglement." See, "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected."

12. Those *dhammā* are *kamma bīja* lie below the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level. They interact with the *mana indriya* instantaneously.

- All other types of *rūpa* detectable with the five physical senses are above the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level. However, some sub-atomic particles (closer to the *suddhāṭṭhaka* level) like electrons display the ability to interact instantaneously among themselves, just like *dhammā.* See, "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected." Quantum physicists are mystified by this effect.
- However, the Buddha explained all that 2500 years ago. That is what I have tried to explain to the physics community over the past few years. They do not see that connection yet. But at some point, they will have to. For those of you who have a physics background, "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

Those *Dhammā* Could Bring *Vipāka* via *Vipāka Viññāṇa*

13. Under proper conditions (*paccayā* in *Paṭicca Samuppāda,*) *kamma viññāṇa* (or ***dhammā***) COULD bring corresponding results (*vipāka*) and the associated *viññāṇa* are ***vipāka viññāṇa***. That happens via all SIX sense faculties. As we discussed in previous posts, "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhu viññāṇaṃ"* through "*mānañca paṭicca* ***dhamme*** *ca uppajjati* ***mano viññāṇaṃ.****"* All those are ***vipāka viññāṇa***.

- In other words, ***vipāka viññāṇa*** materialize via all six sense inputs (eyes, ears, tongue, nose, body, and mind.) We discussed that in several earlier posts on the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148.)
- As we discussed in #2, #3 above, ONLY *mano viññāṇa* can also be ***kamma viññāṇa***. Such kamma viññāṇa arise via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra,* ***saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa***."

Summary

14. It is the MIND that generates *saṅkhārā* with INTENTIONS to do, speak, or think. Such *kāya, vacī,* and *mano saṅkhārā* lead to *kamma* done with actions, speech, and thoughts.

- The strong *saṅkhārā* or *abhisaṅkhārā* generates *kammic* energy that are released to the world. Such energies are alternatively referred to as *dhammā, kamma bija, or kamma viññāṇa.* They can bring *vipāka* during a lifetime or bring future rebirths.

15. We have covered a lot of material in this post. It is not possible to go to details (if we do, we will not get to finish the discussion on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* for a long time!)

- Feel free to ask questions. That is the only way for me to gauge whether I am proceeding too fast.

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- It is not necessary to try to learn *Abhidhamma* in a rush. However, it is a good idea to try to understand the basic concepts.

5.2.8.4.6.9 Paṭicca Samuppāda – From Mind to Matter

January 11, 2020

Where is the "Mind-to-Matter" Step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*?

1. *Akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and ends with "*bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa,..*"

- The first step involves generating defiled thoughts (*mano*, *vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra*) due to *avijjā* (not being aware of the Four Noble Truths.) In the end, that leads to births of physical bodies (*jāti*) that will then undergo old age and death.
- How do thoughts lead to the births of human beings and other living beings?

Javana Citta Create Energy!

2. I laid the foundation for this post in a recent post, "Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections." Please review that as needed.

- The critical point is that our thoughts (specifically *javana citta*) CREATE energy! That may be hard to believe.
- Even a few hundred years ago, many people thought that the Buddha taught some other things that were "hard to believe." For example, Buddha taught that there are an uncountable number of planetary systems like our Solar system in the universe. However, before Galileo invented the telescope, people believed that Earth was at the center of the universe! See the "WebLink: en.wikipedia.org: Geocentric model."
- Even after reading the previous post mentioned above, many of you may not have caught on to the fact that the mind creates energy. And that is what leads to the "arising of physical bodies" in future existences (rebirths.) You may want to read that post after reading this one, and things will become more clear.

Thoughts Create "Seeds" That Can Give Rise to Physical Bodies

3. In that previous post, we discussed that such minute amounts of energies created by our thoughts are PART OF *dhammā* (with a long "a" at the end.)

- Of course, such minute amounts of energy cannot DIRECTLY create massive/dense bodies like ours.
- When a living being grasps a new existence (*bhava*), only a "mental body" or "*manomaya kāya*" for the new life appears. It is a "mental body" since it is mostly mental with only a trace of matter. **Very little *kammic* energy is enough to create that "mental body."**
- This "mental body" or "*manomaya kāya*" is the same as a *gandhabba* or a "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa.*" **One creates one's future via one's *saṅkhāra* (i.e. that is the way one THINKS). *Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes that process.**
- That is why it is CRITICAL to understand the previous three posts: "Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections," "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception," and "Cloning and Gandhabba."

4. The word "*kāya*" in Buddha Dhamma means a "collection." Thus, this "body" that is created by *kammic* energy consists mostly of the four "mental aggregates." **It has only a trace of matter (much smaller than an atom in modern science.)**

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- However, it has all five aggregates of *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*. **Of course, the "*rūpa kāya*" is unbelievable small, but the "four mental aggregates are the same as those experienced by a living person with a physical body.**
- That "mental body" or "*manomaya kāya*" is the same as *gandhabba*! However, after the initial formation, *gandhabba* can "solidify" somewhat by "taking in scents or aroma." Hence the name "*gandhabba*" ("*gandha*" + "*abba*" or "taking in scents.")
- For details on *gandhabba*, see, "Mental Body – Gandhabba."

It is *Kamma Viññāṇa* That Sets Up Energy for a New Existence (*Bhava*)

5. There are no "*rūpa*" in PS steps up to "*viññāṇa*." As we have discussed, a *kamma viññāṇa* that arises via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" is a type of "*rūpa*" because it has "energy." As Einstein showed with his famous equation, E = mc^2, energy is also a manifestation of matter. Again, see "Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections."

- **Then at the next step, there is "*nāmarūpa*." That is where a conventional "*rūpa*" becomes "live."** That is precisely what happens when a "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa* descends to a womb" and makes an inert zygote become alive! That occurs at the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step in *Uppatti* PS.
- The post "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" explains how a "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*" leads to the creation of a "new human body."
- Sexual intercourse only creates the "material basis" for a new life. An egg (from the mother) combines with sperm (from the father) to form a single cell, a zygote. **That zygote is inert (a *rūpa*),** just like the egg and the sperm. An existing **"mental body" or a *gandhabba* (*nāma* with energy)** needs to merge with that zygote to form the ***nāmarūpa* or the fetus (with mind and body).**
- Sexual intercourse is not necessary to form the zygote or the "material base" for a new "physical body." A zygote can be created in a laboratory, but still requires eggs from the mother; see, "Cloning and Gandhabba."

"*Nāmarūpa Paccayā Saḷāyatana*" in *Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda*

6. That "live person" or the fetus will grow for nine months to complete the formation of all six sensory faculties. That is the "*nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana*" step in *uppatti* PS. As we know, "*salāyatana*" represents the "six sensory faculties" of a living being with a "body and mind."

- Therefore, the transition starts with the step "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*," Then, it goes through the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step, before finalizing the formation of a "human with six sensory faculties" at the "*nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana*" step.
- However, it is essential to understand that a "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*" leading to a rebirth must have been cultivated previously. Such a *viññāṇa* "builds up" over MANY "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda" cycles that take place DURING a life or even over many lives.

Example of an Alcoholic Making an "Animal *Bhava*"

7. Let us consider an example to illustrate how one cultivates a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* suitable for an animal over time. Let us consider an alcoholic/drug addict. I am not talking about a person who takes an occasional drink. Instead, this person has an addiction to alcohol or drugs.

- As we have discussed in recent posts on the *Chachakka Sutta* (MN 148), one starts thinking about a certain *ārammaṇa* (in this case, drinking) when thought about that *ārammaṇa* comes to mind as a *vipāka viññāṇa*. In this particular case, it could be seeing an alcohol bottle, hearing about an upcoming party, or just habitually remembering that "it is time to have a drink."

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- As explained in those posts, one's mind quickly gets to "*taṇhā*" (or "getting stuck" in that *ārammaṇa*.) Thus, a PS process would start at the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step. See, "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering."
- That is when one starts THINKING about that *ārammaṇa* that came to the mind. That is the "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step of a new PS cycle.

Nāmarūpa in "*Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda*" Are Just "Visuals"

8. Suppose the alcoholic/drug addict in our example is sitting at his desk at work. Due to his habit, an upcoming party may come to his mind via "*manañca paṭicca dhammē ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ.*"

- Of course, he will be instantly "stuck in that *ārammaṇa,*" and the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in PS gets him started on "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra.*" Thus, he starts thinking about the experience that he is going to have in the upcoming party. Those are *vacī saṅkhāra*.
- That leads to the arising of a *viññāṇa* (anticipation or the expectation of the possible enjoyments) via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa.*" **The *javana citta* in his thoughts start creating energy for that *viññāṇa*.**
- That involves visualizing "party scenes" at the upcoming party and also his past experiences in similar situations. He will imagine the friends who will be there, what kind of alcohol, food, and other types of entertainment will be there. **These are all "*nāmarūpa*" or visuals that arise in his mind.** These *nāmarūpa* are very much like what we experience in a dream, just visuals.

Some of those *Viññāṇa* and *Nāmarūpa* Cultivated Could be Compatible with Animal Mindsets

9. Some of those *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* cultivated by the alcoholic/drug addict in our example could be compatible with those of animals. That is a critical point.

- During some of these parties, alcohol or drug usage could get to extreme levels. Some people may pass out and could be unable to walk. They will be dragging themselves on the floor like animals.
- Some may be engaging in sexual misconduct. Such bodily actions are more potent than such cultivating *vacī saṅkhāra*. However, in most cases, it is the cultivation of *vacī saṅkhāra* (thinking about such activities with *vitakka/vicāra*) that lead to bodily actions.
- Both kinds of *saṅkhāra* lead to the growth of *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* suitable to bring about an animal birth in the future (in an *Uppatti* PS process.)

Nāmarūpa In "*Viññāṇa Paccayā Nāmarūpa*" Are Two Kinds

10. It is critical to note that the "*nāmarūpa*" discussed in #8 are different from those in #5.

- The *nāmarūpa* in #8 helps build that *viññāṇa* via the backward step, "*nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇa.*" When the alcoholic is making those 'visualizations," he is cultivating that *viññāṇa*. Thus, each is helping grow the other. That often happens in "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda" cycles.
- For example, Ven. Sariputta in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Naḷakalāpī Sutta (SN 12.67)": "*Seyyathāpi, āvuso, dve naḷakalāpiyo aññamaññaṃ nissāya tiṭṭheyyuṃ. Evameva kho, āvuso, nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇaṃ; viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpaṃ;..*" OR "Just as two sheaves of reeds might stand leaning against each other, so too, with *nāmarūpa* as condition, *viññāṇa* comes to be. With *viññāṇa* as condition, *nāmarūpa* comes to be.."
- **On the other hand, the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step happens only once in *uppatti* PS cycles.** That involves a special "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*" (*gandhabba.*) When that *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* (or *gandhabba*) descends to the womb, it merges with the zygote and creates a new "*nāmarūpa*" or a "live

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fetus." See, #5 above and the posts referred to there, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."

It Is Important to Review Related/Past Posts Often

11. Another thing to remember is that even a given PS cycle does not proceed in just one direction. All those steps, as with many others in PS, go backward too. For example, "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" and "*nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇa*" steps may go back and forth strengthening each other in many cases (see #8, #9 above.)

- I have explained this in several previous posts in this series: "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'" A vital case discussed in "Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- There is a lot to grasp in this post. Please make sure to read the related posts mentioned above, so that these concepts are well-understood.
- It is critical to have a good idea about these concepts to see how one makes one's future rebirths. Furthermore, the type of rebirth CORRESPONDS to the kind of *abhi*(*saṅkhāra*) cultivated with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra.*"
- That is how "mind to matter" transitions take place. **And this is why the Buddha said that the mind is at the forefront.**
- All relevant posts at, "Origin of Life."

5.2.8.4.6.10

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction

Kāma Assāda – A Root Cause of Suffering

Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births – Saṃsappanīya Sutta

March 27, 2020

The uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism)

Kamma and *Paṭicca Samuppāda* are closely related, with *saṅkhāra* bridging the gap. We will get to the role of *saṅkhāra* in the next post.

1. Many Eastern religions (Buddhism, Hinduism, Jainism, Sikhism) believe in *kamma* and rebirth. So, what is the difference in Buddhism?

- *Abrahamic* religions do not believe in rebirth. But they also teach that the way to get to a state of permanent happiness is to live a moral life. That means one needs to do good kamma and avoid doing bad *kamma*.
- On the other hand, all religions other than Buddhism are based on finding a permanent existence of happiness in a heavenly world. **Buddha Dhamma does not promise sensory pleasures in a heavenly realm. Attachment to sensory pleasures is what leads to future suffering.**
- By the way, Buddhism is not a religion. It is a fully self-consistent world view. When one comprehends that world view, one can see a permanent solution to the problem of suffering.
- **Understanding the Four Noble Truths** first requires understanding that **suffering exists in the rebirth process**. That understanding will reveal three more truths at the same time. (i) The Causes of future suffering, (ii) that those causes CAN BE REMOVED, and (iii) the WAY to stop that suffering from arising. **Therefore, it is necessary to first understand the "previously unknown suffering" that the Buddha revealed to the world.**

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2. Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) says the following.

(i) There is no existence in this world where suffering is absent permanently. There are existences in higher-realms that are almost suffering-free, but they also have limited lifetimes.

(ii) Even if one does good deeds and lives a moral life, one can have bad future births because of *kamma* from previous lives.

(iii) On the other hand, even if one has lived immorally in this life, it is possible to attain *Nibbāna* in this life.

- **Those three points may not be clear. In the next few posts, I will address those issues.**
- The answers to those questions will also clarify the following. **The Buddha taught that it is not a good starting point to insist on whether a "self" exists or not.** Instead, we need to start by investigating how future births (and thus future suffering) arise. Just like in science,
- Like science, Buddha Dhamma is based on the Principle of Causality. Nothing can happen without causes. **Yet, NOT all causes inevitably lead to their outcomes.** That is a crucial point to understand too.

Causes and Conditions Bring Future Births

3. If all causes just lead to their consequences, then *kamma* would lead to deterministic outcomes. For example, some religions teach that immoral deeds WILL lead to their results. So, they try to find ways to remove existing bad kamma. That is what the Buddha also tried to do for six years while striving to attain the Buddhahood.

- **On the night of his Enlightenment, the Buddha discovered that causes could bring their effects (results) ONLY if the right conditions are there.** That is *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, the Principle of Causes and Conditions. But one must understand what those conditions are. That is why *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is a profound concept.
- By the way, *Paṭicca Samuppāda* pronounced, "patichcha samuppaada." The way Pāli words are written is different from standard English; see, "'Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and "'Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."
- *Paṭicca Samuppāda* explains how causes lead to their effects UNDER suitable conditions. **Therefore, we do not need to remove past *kamma*. We can purify our minds so that CONDITIONS for those bad *kamma* to bring *vipāka* will be absent.** That is how Aṅgulimāla, who killed almost a thousand people, was able to attain the *Arahanthood*; see below.
- Since this principle of CAUSES and CONDITIONS is a crucial point, let us discuss this a bit more with that analogy of a seed.

An Example of the Requirement of Conditions

4. An apple seed has the POTENTIAL to bring an apple tree to life, so the CAUSE is there in the seed.

- Suppose one prepares a plot by preparing the soil, providing water, and plants the seed there. If sunlight is also available, the apple seed will germinate, and an apple tree will grow. Those are the necessary CONDITIONS for that apple seed to germinate and give rise to an apple tree.
- However, if one keeps the apple seed in a cool, dry place, it will not germinate, i.e., necessary CONDITIONS are not present in that case for an apple tree to come to life. After a long time, the seed will become a "dud" and will never be able to give rise to a tree.
- Furthermore, when an apple seed is planted, a mango tree will not result from that, only an apple tree. **The RESULT (*vipāka*) is according to the CAUSE (*kamma* or more specifically *kamma bīja*).**

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Example From *Tipiṭaka* – The account of Aṅgulimāla

5. In the same way, someone who attains the *Arahanthood* may have done highly immoral deeds even in the present life. But he/she would have eliminated the CONDITIONS that can bring the results of those deeds to fruition.

- The account of Aṅgulimāla is a good example to illustrate this point. He had killed almost a thousand people. Thus he had done enough bad kamma to be born in the *apāyā* many times. Yet he was able to attain the *Arahanthood* in a few weeks! See, "Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."
- When one does a bad *kamma*, a *kamma bīja* (*kamma* seed) is created. Under suitable conditions, that *kamma* seed can "germinate" and lead to a new birth, just as a seed can lead to the birth of a plant. We will discuss how such a *kamma* seed is created by one's powerful thoughts (*javana citta*.)
- However, unlike in the case of plant seed, even potent *kamma* CANNOT bring *vipāka* to an *Arahant* **to bring rebirth**. In the case of Aṅgulimāla, the strong bad *kamma* of killing almost a thousand people was done in the same life that he attained *Parinibbāna*. At his death, those *kammic* energies were there, but his mindset would not grasp them, i.e., the "*upādāna paccāyā bhava"* step in PS would not take place.
- Of course, we need to discuss that last point in detail in the upcoming posts.

6. Furthermore, the result (if it manifests) is compatible with the *kamma*. That is analogous to only an apple tree arising due to an apple seed. *Akusala kamma* (an immoral deed) will only lead to a birth in the *apāyā*. It will not lead to a birth in the human realm or a higher realm.

- Similarly, a *kusala kamma* (a good deed) will not lead to a birth in the *apāyā*. It will only lead to a birth in a good realm.
- Most importantly, even if the causes are there, corresponding results (*vipāka*) would not materialize if necessary conditions are not fulfilled.
- We all have done uncountable *kusala* and *akusala kamma* in our previous lives. **We need to be mindful to make conditions for good *kamma* to bring their *vipāka* AND for bad *kamma* not to bring their *vipāka*.**
- So, we can see why both CAUSES and CONDITIONS play roles in our daily life and in the rebirth process.

"Self" and "No-Self" Are Misleading Concepts

7. We can get some insights about the concept of a "self" from the fact that an *Arahant* would not have a rebirth. **If a permanent "self" existed, it would be impossible for an *Arahant* to attain *Parinibbāna* and to end the rebirth process.** That means there was no everlasting "self" like a "soul" or an "*Atman*" or "*ātma*."

- However, that *Arahant* was possibly born in most of the 31 realms uncountable times in the past. During a human existence, for example, there was a "self" living his/her life. He/she was making his/her decisions.
- When that *Arahant* was born an animal, it would have had the mindset of an animal. When born In a *Deva* realm, that *Deva* would have enjoyed sensual pleasures for a long time.
- **Therefore, the idea that there is "no-self" while one is living life does not make sense either.** There is obviously "a self," making decisions about how to live life. Even a wild animal has to decide how to get the next meal.

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8. We can summarize as follows. While we live this life, we cannot deny that we exist. On the other hand, the idea of a "self" is a temporary one. That 'self" keeps changing even during life, but will change drastically when grasping a "new *bhava*." Thus, it is also not correct to talk about an "everlasting self."

- The "sense of a self" goes away entirely only at the *Arahant* stage. Until then, we need to try to comprehend WHY it is unfruitful to take anything in this world to be "mine."
- That does not mean one needs to start giving away everything that one owns. We have responsibilities to fulfill. Furthermore, the "giving" and "letting go" will happen AUTOMATICALLY as the mindset changes. I have personally experienced that.
- **Another critical point is that having the "big picture" helps clarify many issues.** That may sound contradictory, but that is true. See, "The Framework of Buddha Dhamma."

The Bigger Picture of 31 Realms

9. As we discussed in many previous posts, our world is much more complicated than what we can experience with our limited senses. I will summarize some relevant key points to the current discussion.

- The 31 realms in our world belong to three types of "*loka*" or "worlds." The "*kāma loka*" has 11 realms, including the human realm. There are 16 realms in "*rūpa loka*" where *rūpāvacara Brahmā* live. Then, there are four realms in "*arūpa loka*" for *arūpāvacara Brahmā*.
- Those higher-lying two *lokā* are the simplest. In those 20 realms, there is only *jhānic* pleasure. A human can experience all those by cultivating *jhāna*. The lower four *jhānā* correspond to the *jhānic* experiences of the 16 *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms. The higher four correspond to the four *arūpāvacara Brahma* realms. All those *Brahmā* do not have "dense bodies" like ours. Their "bodies" have very little matter. They are even harder to "see" than even *gandhabbā*.
- The remaining 11 realms are in the *kāma loka*. Sensory pleasures associated with eating, smelling, and body touches are available only in those 11 realms. Living beings in those 11 realms have relatively "dense solid bodies" or *karaja kaya*. There is a complex variety of "bodies" in *kāma loka*. We can see very high complexity even within the animal realm. In general, *Devā* in the six realms have "bodies" much lighter than ours but denser than *Brahma*.

What Leads to Rebirth in Different Realms?

This has answers from the close relationship between *kamma* and *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, where **saṅkhāra** plays a key role.

10. To be born in those higher 20 realms, a human must cultivate *jhānā*.

- It is not necessary to follow Buddha Dhamma to cultivate either type of *jhānā* and to be born in those higher 20 realms. *Anāriya* (or non-Noble) meditation techniques (breath and *kasina* meditations) can be used to cultivate those *anāriya jhāna*.
- However, that birth in a *Brahma* realm lasts only for the duration of the life there. Then one will be born back in the *kāma loka* based on the strongest *kamma vipāka* that comes to the mind of that *Brahma* at the dying moment.
- Rebirths in various realms in the *kāma loka* are much more complex. We will discuss those in the next post, where we will discuss the role of *saṅkhāra*.

Summary

11. We have discussed other ways of looking at the basic principles in Buddha Dhamma before. See, for example, "The Framework of Buddha Dhamma."

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- The above is a simple summary of yet another way. We will continue to explore the connection between *kamma* and *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in the next post.
- It is essential to grasp the basic framework from different "vantage points." Then we can slowly get into more profound aspects.
- Reviewing the "bigger picture" from different angles is necessary to get an idea of the beginning-less rebirth process. The world is complex, and understanding it is like putting together a big jigsaw puzzle. It takes a real effort, but it becomes joyful when one gets some traction.
- Once one starts understanding the essential aspects, one will see the value of the Buddha, his *Dhamma* (teachings), and the *Sangha,* who understood this profound Dhamma and transmitted it faithfully over 2500 years. **That is the real faith** (*saddhā*.)
- All previous posts in the series at "Origin of Life."

April 4, 2020; revised April 6, 2020

Kāma Assāda – Sensory Pleasures

1. ***Kāma assāda*, or simply "*kāma*," means "sensory pleasures."** See, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex."

- We all like and crave sensory pleasures. An average human likes to eat tasty foods, smell perfumes, and experience soothing bodily contacts, including sex. He/she also wants to see related objects and listen to related sounds. Thus, an average human enjoys such sensory events through all five physical senses.
- Besides, we also tend to endlessly think about such "pleasures" and how to get more of them. Thus, we use all six senses to "enjoy sensual pleasures." **That leads to kāma taṇhā, one of the three types of *taṇhā*: *kāma taṇhā*, *bhava taṇhā*, *vibhava taṇhā*.**
- The Buddha pointed out that we are trapped in the suffering-filled rebirth process because of this tendency to value sensory pleasures or *kāma assāda*. That is another way to discuss the "previously unknown suffering" that the Buddha introduced in his first discourse, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*. The dangers in *kāma assāda* stated there as one extreme way to live life, or "*kāmasukhallikānuyogo*."
- It is important to note that Buddha rejected the opposite extreme, too ("*attakilamathānuyogo*.") There is no need to force oneself to eat less or to eat not-tasty food, be subject to unpleasant bodily contacts, etc. The "middle way" is to live a simple life away from both extremes and to contemplate and comprehend the "true nature of this world 31 realms."
- It is not easy to comprehend the bad consequences/danger (*ādīnava*) of *kāma assāda*. We will go through a systematic analysis.

Connection to the Previous Post

2. In the previous post, we discussed that causes (*kamma bīja*) are not enough to bring about their results (*kamma vipāka*.) Just because one has done bad *kamma* does not mean one will have to face adverse consequences, especially unfortunate rebirths. The same is true for good *kamma*.

- We all have done enough good and bad *kamma* to sustain the rebirth process over billions of years. However, even Aṅgulimāla, who killed almost a thousand people, was able to nullify that *kamma*. He did that by purifying his mind (attaining *Arahantship*) and removing *avijjā* and *taṇhā* that fuel the *Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda* process.
- That indirect way of "overcoming" a *kamma bīja* is called *kammakkhaya*. It does not destroy any previous *kamma bīja*. Instead, one would remove the conditions for such *kamma bīja* to "germinate." As we know, the removal of *avijjā* will stop the tendency to attach to "worldly things" (*taṇhā*). Then, the "*upādāna paccayā bhava"* step in *Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda* will not take place.

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- The key message of the Buddha was that the rebirth process in "this world" is filled with suffering. When one comprehends that "hidden suffering" of "this world," one will strive to overcome the rebirth process and to attain *Nibbāna*.
- "This world" ("*ayaṃ loko"*) consists of three *loka*: *kāma loka* (with 11 realms,) *rūpa loka* (with 16 realms,) and the *arūpa loka* (with four realms.) As we know, at the *Sotāpanna* stage, one overcomes rebirths in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*.) Rebirths in all realms in *kāma loka* will stop at the *Anāgāmi* stage. At the *Arahanthood,* rebirths in all three *lokā* (i.e., in all 31 realms) will end, and *Nibbāna* realized.

Most Living Beings Are Trapped in the Four Lowest Realms (*Apāyā*)

3. Over 99% of the living beings are trapped in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*) in the *kāma loka*. It is extremely difficult to get rebirth in a higher realm.

- For example, there are less than eight billion people on Earth. But there are a million times more ants on Earth! **There are a trillion types of lifeforms on Earth**; see, "WebLink: sciencealert.com: The Largest Study of Life Forms Ever Has Estimated That Earth Is Home to 1 TRILLION Species." These are mind-boggling numbers! That is not counting the other three realms in the *apāyā* that we cannot see.
- While it is hard to get rebirth in the human and Deva realms, it is EVEN HARDER to get rebirths in *rūpa loka* and *arūpa loka*, collectively called *Brahma loka*. That is because one has to overcome (at least temporarily suppress) *kāma rāga* (craving for sensory pleasures) to get a birth in a *Brahma* realm. If one can attain a *jhāna*, that means one has at least temporarily suppressed (during this lifetime) attachment to sensory pleasures, especially desire for sex.
- That is why it is tough for most people to attain *jhāna*.

Easy to Describe and Hard to Imagine Life in the Two *Brahma Loka*

4. Those *Brahmā* do not need "solid, dense bodies" like ours since they have overcome the desire for physical touch, taste, and smell. Solid, dense bodies are required for those three sensory contacts.

- *Rūpāvacara Brahmā* still have cravings for seeing and listening. But those two functions can be achieved without dense bodies and just with the two corresponding *pasāda rūpa*. A *pasāda rūpa* is a *suddhaṭṭhaka* that is "energized" by *kammic* energy. A *rūpāvacara Brahma* also has *hadaya vatthu* (seat of mind), another "energized" *suddhaṭṭhaka*.
- Those living-beings in the highest *loka*, the *arūpāvacara Brahma loka*, have only the mind. They have given up the desire to see and hear as well. Thus, they just have *hadaya vatthu*, just a single *suddhaṭṭhaka*!
- It is not easy for an average human to even imagine such lifeforms. Only a Buddha can discover such details about the "wider world of 31 realms."
- Anyway, the point is that it is much easier to explain the lifeforms in the highest 20 realms. Furthermore, they mainly experience *jhānic* pleasures. Therefore, even sensory experience is easy to explain. That was briefly discussed in the previous post, "Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction."

Eleven Realms in *Kāma Loka* Are Very Complex – Simplest Are the *Deva* Realms

5. Compared to the higher-lying 20 *Brahma* realms, life in the 11 realms in *kāma loka* is very complex.

- The 6 *Deva* realms in the *kāma loka* are the simplest. They have *opapātika* births (instantaneous births) without a "growth stage" like ours. Even though they have all five physical senses, their "physical bodies" are much less dense, almost like the *gandhabbā*.

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- As we have discussed, a *gandhabba* is born with a mental body that is similar to a *Brahma*. That means just with a *hadaya vatthu* and a set of *pasāda rūpa*. Then that *gandhabba* can absorb aroma (scents) and become a bit denser, but still cannot be seen by average humans. See, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept." A *Deva* is similar to a *gandhabba* that has a "bit more dense body" than just the mental body.
- *Devā* enjoy sensory pleasures and do not experience significant bodily ailments or diseases. Thus, the main difference between them and *Brahmā* is while *Brahmā* enjoy *jhānic* pleasures, *Devā* enjoy sensual pleasures or *kāma assāda*.

Complexity Starts at the Human Realm

6. As we know, suffering is the highest in the lowest four realms including the animal realm.

- Therefore, the human realm is unique. Some humans enjoy life, almost like some *Devā*, without even any health problems. Then are others who suffer almost like some animals due to either financial or health issues. Furthermore, a human could cultivate *jhāna* and enjoy *jhānic* pleasures like *Brahmā*.
- *Brahmā* and *Devā* are content with their sensual or *jhānic* pleasures. It is mostly those who had attained *magga phala* as humans who are interested in following the Path. On the other hand, those in the *apāyā* do not have the mental capacity even to comprehend Dhamma.
- That is why the human realm is the best-suited to follow the Noble Path. Humans can comprehend Dhamma. Furthermore, other than a relatively few, they do experience enough suffering to be motivated to think about the problem of suffering.
- In this and a few upcoming posts, we will focus more on the reasons for living-beings to be born in all these different realms. That will help us understand the critical principles of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

Overview of the Three *Lokā*

7. We know that causes are not ENOUGH to bring rebirths in respective realms, as discussed in the previous post, "Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction." But causes are NECESSARY to bring rebirth in a given realm. Without a cause, there cannot be a rebirth in a given realm.

- A discussed in that post, one MUST cultivate a *jhāna* to get rebirth in a *Brahma* realm. A *rūpāvacara jhāna* leads to rebirth in one of 16 realms in the *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms (in *rūpa loka*). An *arūpāvacara jhāna* will lead to rebirth in an *arūpāvacara Brahma* realm (in *arūpa loka*).
- **Of the three types of *loka*, *kāma loka* is the "default *loka*" for living beings.** Living beings have cravings for sensory pleasures (*kāma assāda*,) and that is *kāma rāga*. One who has very strong *kāma rāga*, and is willing to do immoral deeds to enjoy them, has *lobha*.
- Those with *lobha* also have a higher version of *paṭigha,* and that is *dosa*. One acting with *lobha*/*dosa* can do immoral deeds (*pāpa kamma*) and make *kamma bīja* suitable to bring rebirths in the *apāyā* (four lowest realms in *kāma loka*.)
- To summarize, *lobha*/*dosa* are strong versions of *kāma rāga*/*paṭigha*; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Paṭigha, Avijjā."
- Those with *kāma rāga*/*paṭigha* are capable of engaging in moral actions (*puñña kamma.*) Such *puñña kamma* are the causes to bring "good rebirths" in the human realm or the six *Deva* realms.
- The bottom line is that living-beings in *kāma loka* have strong cravings for sensual pleasures (*kāma rāga*.) Until those cravings are removed, it is not possible to overcome rebirths in *kāma loka*.
- As we know, even a *Sotāpanna* has *kāma rāga*. Only an *Anāgāmi* has removed *kāma rāga*.

Craving for Sensory Pleasures Is the Root of Most Suffering

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8. From the above discussion, it should be clear that suffering in the rebirth process can be attributed to the innate tendency of living-beings to crave sensual pleasures (i.e, to have *kāma rāga*.)

- When they do immoral deeds (*pāpa kamma*) in their pursuit of sensual pleasures, they build-up *kammic* energies (*kamma bīja*) to bring about rebirths in the *apāyā*.
- Even those who just enjoy sensual pleasures (without doing immoral deeds like killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc) they cannot "escape" the realms in the *kāma loka*. This is clear in the "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna"* and "*upādāna paccayā bhava"* steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- In order to overcome or transcend the *kāma loka*, one MUST lose the cravings for sensual pleasures or *kāma assāda*. I will try to use the term "*kāma assāda"* in the future since it relates directly to *kāma loka*. Here "*assāda"* means "pleasures" and thus *kāma assāda* are sensual pleasures (taste, smell, and touches including sex.)

Dangers in *Kāma Assāda*

9. What we discussed above is an essential teaching of the Buddha that is hidden these days. **The Buddha described "*kāma assāda"* or just "*kāma"* to be very dangerous.**

- *Bhaya Sutta* (AN 6.23) says: " '***Bhaya**n'ti, bhikkhave, **kāmā**nametaṃ adhivacanaṃ; '**dukkha**n'ti, bhikkhave, **kāmā**nametaṃ adhivacanaṃ; '**rogo**'ti, bhikkhave, **kāmā**nametaṃ adhivacanaṃ;.." OR " '**Danger**', '**suffering**', '**disease**',..are terms for **sensual pleasures**."
- *Bhaya Sutta* (AN 8.56) says, "' danger' is a term for sensual pleasures. 'Suffering', 'disease', 'infected wound', 'pierced by spear', etc. are terms for sensual pleasures. And why is 'danger' a term for sensual pleasures? Someone who is caught up in sensual greed and shackled by lustful desire is not freed from dangers in the present life or in lives to come. That is why 'danger' is a term for sensual pleasures.."
- See the English translations there for more details.
- There are many *suttā* that emphasize the hidden dangers in *kāma assāda* or *kāma rāga*. For example, *Mahādukkhakkhandha Sutta* (MN 13), *Cūladukkhakkhandha Sutta* (MN 14), *Cūladhammasamādāna Sutta* (MN 45), and many others discuss the *ādīnava* or "bad and dangerous consequences of indulging in sensual pleasures, i.e., dangers of *kāma assāda*.
- I have given the links to the Pāli versions of those *suttā* at Sutta Central. One can access translations to several languages, including English, by clicking on the "down arrow" above the name of the *sutta*.

10. We will make the connection of various types of rebirths to *saṅkhāra* and *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in the next post.

- More on *assāda* and *ādīnava* at, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa."
- All posts in this series at, "Origin of Life."

April 11, 2020

Gati (Habits/Character) is a key concept

1. *Gati* (Habits/Character) is a key concept that has been hidden for hundreds of years, just like the true meanings of *anicca* and *anatta*. I just did a search for the keyword "*gati*" on *Tipiṭaka* at the Sutta Central and came up with "WebLink: suttacentral: 515 results of search for gati." At the end of the post, I will discuss one *sutta* as an example, which describes how one with "crooked *gati*" is a candidate to be "reborn crooked."

- Any given person thinks, speaks, and acts based on his/her views. If started with wrong views, one tends to go in the wrong direction. That is why *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or "correct views" comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path.

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- *Avijjā* and *micchā diṭṭhi* go together. See, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Avijjā Sutta* (SN 45.1)."
- Any person will have a certain set of *gati* at a given time, based on *avijjā* and *micchā diṭṭhi* at that time. As one makes progress on the path, *avijjā* and *micchā diṭṭhi* will be reduced and one's bad *gati* will be reduced too.
- *Gati* is a common Sinhala word with the same meaning as in Pāli, so it would be easier for a Sinhala-speaking person to understand this post (ගති. "බලු ගති" කිබෙනෙවාන මෝබලු උපතක් ලබන්න පුළුවනි.)
- The Buddha explained that if one cultivates "dog *gati*" that could lead to rebirth as a dog in the "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 57) – Kammakkhaya."
- An introduction to *gati* at, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)." Further information at, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."
- It is also important to know the difference between standard English and "*Tipiṭaka* English." See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."

Five Main Types of *Gati*

2. The Buddha explained that there are five main types of *gati*. The WebLink: suttacentral: *Gati Sutta* (AN 9.68): "*Pañcimā, bhikkhave, **gatiyo**. Katamā pañca? Nirayo, tiracchānayoni, pettivisayo, manussā, devā—imā kho, bhikkhave, pañca gatiyo. Imāsaṃ kho, bhikkhave, pañcannaṃ gatīnaṃ pahānāya ... pe ... ime cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvetabbā"ti.*"

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, there are five character qualities (*gati*). What five? (Those belonging to) hell, the animal realm, the ghost realm, humans (*manussā*), and *Devā*. To eliminate those five types of *gati*, you should cultivate *Satipaṭṭhānā."*

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: *Saṅgīti Sutta* (DN 33): "*Pañca **gatiyo**—nirayo, tiracchānayoni, pettivisayo, manussā, devā.*"
- By the way, *Saṅgīti Sutta* provides definitions of many key Pāli words.
- It is to be noted that all six *Deva* and 26 *Brahma* realms are included in the *Deva* category in many *suttā*, including the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.* See #7 of, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction."

3. In many English translations, the Pāli word "*gati*" is mistranslated as "destination." But the correct translation is "habits/character" as explained in detail in the links in #1 and also at #8 below. We can also see that in other *suttā*, for example, in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta* (DN 16.)

- In the WebLink: suttacentral: 9. *Anāvattidhammasambodhiparāyana* (DN 16) section of *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, Venerable Ānanda asks the Buddha about several people who had recently died: "*sāḷho nāma, bhante, bhikkhu nātike kālaṅkato, tassa kā **gati**, ko **abhisamparāyo**?*" OR "the monk named Sāḷha has passed away in Nādika. What is his ***gati*** (that led to the new birth) and **where has he been reborn**?"
- However, it is true that one with "bad *gati*" (or *dugati*), for example, will have a "bad destination" (or *du**gg**ati.*) Similarly, one with "good *gati*" (or *sugati*), will have a "good destination" (or *sugati.*) Note the subtle difference in *dugati* and *du**gg**ati,* whereas the same word "*sugati*" is used for both "*gati*" and "destination."
- Now, let us look at the connections between *gati, saṅkhāra*, and rebirths in various realms.

Connection to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

4. As we know, *Paṭicca Samuppāda* dictates future existences (*bhava*) and births (*jāti.*) One generates (*abhi)saṅkhāra* due to *avijjā* and engages in three types of *abhisaṅkhāra*. This was discussed in detail in

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the posts, "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra" and "Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra." It is essential to understand those posts.

- As explained there, those three types of *abhisaṅkhāra* are, *Puññābhisaṅkhāra* (*puñña abhisaṅkhāra*), *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* (*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*), and *āneñjābhisaṅkhāra* (*āneñja abhisaṅkhāra.*)
- Those lead to various types of rebirths, per *Paṭicca Samuppāda.*

5. We can understand the connection between those three types of *abhisaṅkhāra* and the five types of *gati*, in simple terms, as follows.

- *Apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* (in the mind) lead to the ten types of *akusala kamma* and thus lead to rebirths in the *apāyā*. In other words, such *kamma* committed by those with *niraya, tiracchāna, and peta gati.*
- On the other hand, one with *manussa or deva gati* does *puñña kamma* with *puñña abhisaṅkhāra.* They lead to rebirths in the human, *Deva*, and the 16 *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms. It is to be noted that cultivation of the four lower *jhāna* falls under *puñña abhisaṅkhāra.*
- *Āneñja abhisaṅkhāra* are cultivated while practicing the highest four *jhānā* leading to rebirths in the four *arūpāvacara Brahma* realms. It is interesting to note that "*āneñja*" means "un-dying" and thus "permanent." Ancient *yogis* (including Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta) thought these realms have infinite lifetimes and equated rebirths there to the cessation of the rebirth process. Of course, the Buddha found out that those also have finite lifetimes, even though extremely long, lasting eons (billions of years).
- Also see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka" and #14 of "Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)"

Good Realms Are *Sugati* and Bad Realms Are *Duggati*

6. There are several *suttā* that discuss various types of behaviors that lead to good and bad rebirths. Those with "good *gati*" tend to reborn in "realms with good *gati*" or "*sugati*" ("*sukha*" + "*gati.*") On the other hand, those with "bad *gati*" tend to reborn in "realms with bad *gati*" or "*duggati*" ("*dukkha*" + "*gati.*")

- For example, see, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Dukkha Sutta* (AN 5.3)," "WebLink: suttacentral: *Dukkha Sutta* (AN 6.75),"

7. The last verse of the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Vīṇopama Sutta* (SN 35.246)" is informative: "*Evameva kho, bhikkhave, bhikkhu rūpaṃ samanvesati yāvatā* ***rūpassa gati****, vedanaṃ samanvesati yāvatā* ***vedanāya gati****, saññaṃ samanvesati yāvatā* ***saññāya gati****, saṅkhāre samanvesati yāvatā* ***saṅkhārānaṃ gati****, viññāṇaṃ samanvesati yāvatā* ***viññāṇassa gati****. Tassa rūpaṃ samanvesato yāvatā rūpassa gati, vedanaṃ samanvesato ... pe ... saññaṃ ... saṅkhāre ... viññāṇaṃ samanvesato yāvatā viññāṇassa gati. Yampissa taṃ hoti ahanti vā mamanti vā asmīti vā tampi tassa na hotī"ti.*"

Translated: "So too, *bhikkhus*, a *bhikkhu* investigates a *rūpa* to see the connection to *gati* in that *rūpa*, he investigates feelings to see the connection to *gati* in those feelings, he investigates a perception to see the connection to *gati* in that perception, he investigates *saṅkhāra* to see the connection to *gati* in that *saṅkhāra*, he investigates *viññāṇa* to see the connection to *gati* in that *viññāṇa*. Through those investigations, whatever notions of 'I' or 'mine' or 'I am' had occurred to him before no longer occur to him."

- The Buddha described a living being as a "collection" of the five aggregates: *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, and viññāṇa*. A living-being, in any of the 31 realms, arises due to a certain *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* cultivated with a certain *gati*.
- What this deep *sutta* is saying that when one understands the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process, one would be able to "see" how various types of *gati* lead to **corresponding rebirths**.

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- Now we will discuss the WebLink: suttacentral: *Saṃsappanīya Sutta* (AN 10.216) which explains how a human can be reborn a "creeping creature" like a snake. [***sappana*** :[nt.] crawling. ***saṃsappi*** : [aor. of saṃsappati] crept along; crawled; moved slowly.]

Saṃsappanīya Sutta (AN 10.216)

8. In this sutta, the Buddha has explained that one who engages in *dasa akusala* has "**bad *gati***" or "*dugati*" or "crooked/bad character." Such people are eligible for rebirth in "bad realms" or "***duggati***."

- Similarly, one who abstains from *dasa akusala* has "**good *gati***" or "*sugati*" or "straight/good character." Such people are eligible for rebirth in "good realms" or "***sugati.***"

I am going to skip some standard verses and translate (explain) the critical verses to provide the essence.

- "*Bhikkhus*, I will explain to you how creeping, crooked creatures like snakes are born in this world."

"Crooked *Kamma*" Done With "Crooked *Gati*" Lead to "Crooked Births"

9. "And what, *bhikkhus*, is that explanation of the Dhamma on creeping creatures? *Bhikkhus*, living-beings are the owners of their *kamma*, the heirs of their *kamma.* **They have *kamma* as their origin, *kamma* as their bondage, bound to their *kamma*.** Whatever *kamma* they do, good or bad, they will inherit the corresponding *vipāka*.

- In the following, the numbers refer to each of the *dasa akusala*.

(1) "Consider **someone who destroys life.** He is murderous, bloody-handed, given to blows and violence, merciless to living beings. He is crooked in bodily actions, speech, and thoughts. His bodily *kamma,* verbal *kamma*, mental *kamma* are all crooked. His ***gati* is crooked and his rebirth is crooked (*jimhā gati, jimhupapatti,*** where "*jimhā*" is "crooked" and "*jimhupapatti*" is "*jimhā*" + "*upapatti*").

- For one with a crooked *gati* and rebirth, I say, there is one of two destinations: either the exclusively painful hells or a species of creeping animal. And what are the species of creeping animals? The snake, the scorpion, the centipede, the mongoose, the cat, the mouse, and the owl, or any other animals that creep away when they see people.
- **Thus a being is reborn from a being, meaning one is reborn through one's deeds.** When one has been reborn, one makes more (defiled) sensory contacts (to be born again.) **It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their own *kamma*.**

(2) "Similarly, someone takes what is not given … (3) … engages in sexual misconduct … (4) … speaks falsehood … (5) … speaks divisively … (6) … speaks harshly … (7) … indulges in idle chatter … (8) … is full of greed … (9) … has a mind of ill will and intentions of hate … (10) … holds the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. He creeps along by body, speech, and mind. His bodily *kamma* is crooked … His *gati* crooked and his rebirth is crooked….

- **Thus a being is reborn from a being, meaning one is reborn through one's deeds.** When one has been reborn, one makes more (defiled) sensory contacts (to be born again.) **It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their own *kamma*.**

"Straight *Kamma*" Done With "Straight/Honest *Gati*" Lead to "Good Births"

10. "*Bhikkhus*, beings are the owners of their *kamma*, the heirs of their *kamma.* They have *kamma* as their origin, *kamma* as their relative, *kamma* as their resort. Whatever *kamma* they do, good or bad, they are its heirs.

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(1) "Consider someone **who has abandoned the destruction of life**. With the weapons laid aside, conscientious and kindly, he dwells compassionate toward all living beings. He does not engage in crooked bodily actions, speech, and thoughts. His bodily *kamma,* verbal *kamma,* mental *kamma* are all straight. His *gati* are straight and his rebirth is straight (good.)

- For one with a straight *gati* and rebirth, I say, there is straight *gati* (***uju gati***; where "*uju*" means "straight") and births (***ujupapatti***). They have rebirths in either pleasurable heavens or eminent families, such as those of affluent householders, families that are rich, with great wealth and property, abundant gold and silver, abundant treasures and belongings, abundant wealth and grain.
- **Thus a being is reborn from a being, meaning one is reborn through one's deeds.** When one has been reborn, one makes more (defiled) sensory contacts (to be born again.) **It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their own *kamma*.**

(2) "Having abandoned the taking of what is not given, someone abstains from taking what is not given … (3) … abstains from sexual misconduct … (4) … abstains from false speech … (5) … abstains from divisive speech … (6) … abstains from harsh speech … (7) … abstains from idle chatter … (8) … is without longing … (9) … is of goodwill … (10) … holds correct views. He does not creep along by body, speech, and mind. His bodily *kamma* is straight … His *gati* are straight and his rebirth is straight.…

- **Thus a being is reborn from a being, meaning one is reborn through one's deeds.** When one has been reborn, one makes more (defiled) sensory contacts (to be born again.) **It is in this way, I say, that beings are the heirs of their own *kamma*.**

"*Bhikkhus*, beings are the owners of their *kamma*, the heirs of their *kamma.* They have *kamma* as their origin, *kamma* as their relative, *kamma* as their resort; whatever *kamma* they do, good or bad, they are its heirs.

11. Again, it is necessary to understand the posts, "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra" and "Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra."

5.2.8.5 Wider Worldview of the Buddha

The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth

Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths

Sammā Diṭṭhī – Only One Leads to the Noble Path

Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

5.2.8.5.1 The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

February 22, 2020; revised February 25, 2020

Introduction

The framework of Buddha Dhamma identifies the critical foundation upon which Buddha's teachings can be understood.

1. We have finished the section on "Worldview of the Buddha." There we discussed Buddha's analysis of sensory events, i.e., how we experience the external world. However, we have not addressed the "real nature" of that external world.

- With this post, I will be starting a new section on the "Wider Worldview of the Buddha." This section describes a world that includes 29 more realms than the two that we are familiar with, i.e., human and

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animal realms. The Buddha explained how any living being keeps moving from one realm to another in the rebirth process that has no discernible beginning (and no end until attaining *Nibbāna*.)

- The First Noble Truth on suffering is NOT about the suffering that we feel due to diseases, bodily pains, etc. **even though that is a tiny fraction**. It is about the much worse possible suffering in future lives, where most suffering will be in "undesirable realms."
- To understand the "suffering" that the Buddha said we could stop, it is essential to understand that "wider worldview."
- The Buddha laid out the critical components of that framework in the first two discourses that he delivered. In the word-by-word translations of the *sutta*, this "wider worldview" of the Buddha is just glossed over. No one seems to pay much attention to these key concepts, without which there is no point in doing further analysis. It is like trying to learn calculus without learning addition/subtraction first.

The First Two Discourses of the Buddha

2. *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11) was the first discourse delivered by the Buddha. The five ascetics Koṇḍañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji, listened to it several days after the Buddha attained Enlightenment (*Buddhahood*.) All five ascetics reached the *Sotāpanna* stage after several days of explaining by the Buddha.

- Then with the delivery of the second *sutta*, WebLink: suttacentral: Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta (SN 22.59), all five ascetics attained the *Arahanthood*.
- Later on, Ven. Sariputta delivered the WebLink: suttacentral: Saccavibhaṅga Sutta (MN 141) to a gathering of *bhikkhus* to explain further details of the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.*
- Therefore, a good understanding of Buddha Dhamma is possible with a discussion of those three *suttā*.

The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

3. *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* has most of the essential concepts, even though it is in a highly condensed form.

In the document, WebLink: pdf download: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Printout, I have divided the *sutta* to 14 sections, You may want to download and print for reference. We will discuss that document first. It has the framework of Buddha Dhamma.

- The name of the *sutta* comes from the combination of three terms: *Dhamma, Cakka*, and *Pavattana*. *Dhamma* here means the Buddha Dhamma or the true nature of existence. *Cakka* means "wheel." *Pavattana* means to "set in motion" AND to "maintain."
- Therefore, this first *sutta* "gets the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion." **It has all the critical concepts of Buddha Dhamma.**
- As in many Pāli terms, the word "*dhammacakkappavattana"* comes from the combination of three above words, with an additional "p" just before *pavattana*. As we discussed before, *pañcakkhandha* is the combination of *pañca* with *khandha* with an extra k in tying up the two words.
- Sometimes the *sutta* referred to as the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta* without combining those three words.
- Let us go through the *sutta* from the beginning. I will refer to sections #1 through #14 in the document above. We will first go through the main ideas without going to detail.

The "Middle Path" Recommended by the Buddha – Sections 1 and 2

4. Section #1 can be summarized as follows. "*Bhikkhus*, two extremes should not be followed by you. What two? The pursuit of sensual pleasures, which is low, vulgar, the way of the average ignorant person. The

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other is the pursuit of rituals that involve subjecting one to extreme hardships. Without veering towards either of these extremes, the *Tathāgata* followed the middle way of living a simple life leading to *Nibbāna*."

- That middle path is the Noble Eightfold Path of *Sammā Diṭṭhi, Sammā Saṅkappa, Sammā Vācā, Sammā Kammanta, Sammā Ājīva, Sammā Vāyāma, Sammā Sati, and, Sammā Samādhi.*

Four Noble Truths – Section 3

5. **The First Noble Truth of suffering:** Birth is suffering, aging is suffering, illness is suffering; death is suffering. Union with what is undesirable is suffering. Separation from what is desirable is suffering. **Not to get what one wants (*icchā*)** is suffering. In brief, clinging (***upādāna***) to the five aggregates is suffering.

- **The Second Noble Truth of the origin of suffering:** It is this ***taṇhā*** which leads to repeated rebirths. That ***taṇhā*** is three-fold: ***kāma taṇhā, bhava taṇhā, vibhava taṇhā***.
- **The Third Noble Truth of the cessation of suffering:** It is the remainderless fading away and cessation of the three types of ***taṇhā.***
- **The Fourth Noble Truth of the way to the cessation of suffering:** It is the Noble Eightfold Path or the Middle Path of *Sammā Diṭṭhi, Sammā Saṅkappa, Sammā Vācā, Sammā Kammanta, Sammā Ājīva, Sammā Vāyāma, Sammā Sati, and, Sammā Samādhi.*

The Previously Unheard *Dhamma* (Teaching) of Suffering in The Wider World – Sections 4 – 7

6. Sections 4 through 7 state how the Buddha attained the *Buddhahood* via comprehending — through *Paticca Samuppāda* — the ***tiparivaṭṭaya* (three ramparts or walls of bondage to this world)** that has **never been known to the world** (except during the times of previous Buddhā): "*..**pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu**.. .*"

- We will discuss Sections 4 through 7 in more detail later. Right now, we are taking a quick look at the framework of Buddha Dhamma outlined in the *sutta*.
- However, it is essential to discuss the verse, "*..**pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi**,"* that appears 12 times in the Sections 4 through 7. It is critical to understand this verse.

7. When the Buddha attained the Buddhahood via comprehending this Dhamma that has never been known to the world, five unique pieces of knowledge arose in him at that moment: *cakkhu, ñāṇa, paññā, vijjā, and āloka.*

- Here "*cakkhu*" is the "Dhamma eye," the ability to "see" the true nature of this world. We can loosely translate *ñāṇa* and *paññā* as "knowledge" and "wisdom."
- The next one is "*vijjā*" (the Sanskrit word is "*vidyā*"). That is the "ultimate science" about the world, what I called the "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma. " A Buddha Is the greatest scientist that comes to the world very infrequently.
- Simultaneously with the comprehension of *vijjā*, one is removed from "this material world" or "*āloka*" ("*ā*" + "*loka*"). The word "*āloka*" has other meanings, including "light," which we will discuss later.

Three "Rounds" or Bondage to Overcome – Section 8

8. "***Tiparivaṭṭa***" means the **three rounds** of bondage. One may visualize a living-being trapped inside the inner wall, a prison with three concentric walls or ramparts. To be freed (i.e., to get to *Nibbāna*,) all three barriers must be overcome. The 31 realms of this world (discussed below) divide into three sections with those three walls.

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- **The first** is to be released from the *apāyā* (four lowest realms), via the *Sotāpanna* stage, by removing the wrong views about existence in the 31 realms. **This requires the first stage of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or grasping the framework of Buddha Dhamma that we are discussing now.**
- In **the second round**, one overcomes the *kāma loka* (realms 5 through 11, which include the human realm and 6 *Deva* realms). That happens via two stages. A *Sakadāgāmi* will not be reborn with bodies subjected to diseases. Thus there will be no more rebirths for a *Sakadāgāmi* in the five lowest realms (*apāyā* and the human realm.) Then, at the *Anāgāmi* stage, *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* go away, and one is released from births anywhere in the *kāma loka*. That means complete cessation of ***kāma taṇhā.***
- In **the third round**, any linkage to anywhere in the 31 realms removed. The mind becomes free of attachment to any trace of matter, and the *Arahant* stage attained. See, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)." That is complete cessation of ***bhava taṇhā*** and ***vibhava taṇhā.***

The Result of *Arahanthood* (*Parinibbāna*) Is No More Rebirths – Section 9

9. The rebirth process among the 31 realms in this world is a crucial concept to understand. More details in #13 below. The "suffering" in the First Noble Truth is the harsh levels of suffering in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*.) **Even if one spends millions of years in a *Deva* realm, that "pleasurable time" is insignificant because one will spend much more time in the *apāyā* in the LONG RUN.**

- We will discuss that in detail, with *Tipiṭaka* references, as we proceed. But here I want to point out that the verse, "***Ñāṇañca pana me dassanaṃ udapādi: 'akuppā me vimutti, ayamantimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo'" ti.***
- There, ***ayamantimā*** is "*ayam antima,"* where "*ayam*" is "this" and "*antima*" means "last"), and ***punabbhavo*** is "*puna bhava*," where "*puna*" is "repeated," and "*bhava*" is "existence in THIS WORLD."
- Thus, the above verse means: "The knowledge and vision arose in me: 'Unshakable is the liberation of my mind. **This is my last birth. There will be no more rebirths for me.**'"
- Upon *Parinibbāna*, one is no longer born anywhere in the 31 realms of THIS WORLD. One is free of any future suffering.

Venerable Koṇḍañña Attains The *Sotāpanna* Stage – Section 10 and 14

10. At the end of the discourse, Venerable Koṇḍañña attained the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. Venerable Koṇḍañña understood the essence of the "framework of Buddha Dhamma": "***yaṃ kiñci samudaya dhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodha dhamman" ti.***

- That verse means: "Whatever *dhammā* that give rise to things in this world are subject to cessation." **Therefore, it is possible to stop any existence in this world from arising."**
- We all have gone through innumerable lives filled with suffering in the rebirth process because we never understood how to stop future lives from arising. **Of course, until a Buddha is born in the world, humans are NOT AWARE of the existence of the other 29 realms, including the four lowest realms (*apāyā*) filled with suffering.**
- Many of you must be wondering WHY would one ever want to stop future lives! That is an important issue that we will discuss in the next post.
- That involves the rebirth process in the "wider world of 31 realms" that only a Buddha can "see" upon Enlightenment. That is the "..***pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu..*" or "previously unknown nature of this world"** that we discussed in #6 above.

11. At the end of the *sutta* (in Section 13), it says that the Buddha saw that Ven. Koṇḍañña has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage and declared: "Koṇḍañña has understood! Koṇḍañña has indeed understood!"

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- That is how Venerable Koṇḍañña acquired the name "*Aññā* Koṇḍañña—Koṇḍañña Who Has Understood."

The Wheel of the Dhamma Set in Motion – Section 11 and 12

12. With the Wheel of the Dhamma set in motion by the Blessed One, the earth-dwelling *devā* (***bhummā devā***) belonging to the ***cātumahārājikā devā*** **realm** raised a cry. "At Baraṇasi, in the Deer Park at Isipatana, the **Wheel of the Dhamma has been set in motion** by the Blessed One. It cannot be stopped by any ascetic or brahmin or *Deva* or *Māra* or *Brahma* or by anyone in the world."

- **That Wheel of the Dhamma is still in motion.** It is supposed to be in effect for roughly 2500 more years for a total of 5000 years.
- Those *bhummā devā* are part of the *Cātumahārājika Deva* realm but reside among humans (even though we cannot see them). They first became aware of the *desanā* and notified their higher-lying main realm with their cries.
- *Devā* of the higher-lying ***cātumahārājikā devā*** **realm** then repeated that cry which then progressively transmitted to the other *Deva* realms lying further away from the Earth.

The 31 Realms of Existence – Section 13

13. Section 13 is long and takes a significant part of the *sutta*. That section names the 6 *Deva* realms and 15 out of 16 *rūpi Brahma* realms. See the document, WebLink: pdf download: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Printout. Most of this section missing in many published versions of the *sutta,* including that at Sutta Central. However, this section is essential for a couple of reasons.

- First, it clearly shows that the Buddha indeed described a "wider world" than experienced by us, consisting of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and "31 Realms of Existence."
- Second, it says that many *Devā*/*Brahmā* from those realms listened to the *desanā.* Starting from the 6 *Deva* realms, it lists 15 *rūpi Brahma* realms (except the *asaññā* realms, where beings have only a physical body and thus cannot listen to a *desanā*). Numerous *Devā* and *Brahmā* attained various stages of *Nibbāna*.
- Note that the Buddha discussed the contents of the *sutta* in detail with the five ascetics overnight, until Ven. Koṇḍañña reached the *Sotāpanna* stage. It took further discussions over several days before all five reached the *Sotāpanna* stage. Delivery of the second *sutta*, *Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta* (SN 22.59), took place after that.

14. Section 13 lists how the news progressively propagated to higher-lying realms, and eventually, *Devā* from all those 21 realms came to listen to the *desanā*.

- As you can see those realms match the names listed in the following post: "31 Realms of Existence" and "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Note that all of those realms referred to as *Deva* realms in the *sutta*, regardless of whether they belong to the 6 *Deva* realms or the *rūpi Brahma* realms.
- Of course, only five humans (the five ascetics) were present. Any living-being in the lowest four realms cannot comprehend Dhamma. Also, *Brahmā* in the four *arūpi* realms do not have ears to listen to. Thus section 13 lists 21 realms. Not listed are the four lowest realms, the *asaññā* realm, and the four *arūpi Brahma* realms. Many other *suttā* mention those other realms.

We will discuss the details of this "framework of Buddha Dhamma" in upcoming posts.

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5.2.8.5.2 The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth

February 29, 2020

Introduction

1. In the previous post, "The Framework of Buddha Dhamma" we discussed the framework of Buddha Dhamma as laid out by the Buddha in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11.) That is the "view from the 30,000 feet."

- The "30,000-foot view" is a common phrase that describes getting to a high enough level to see the "big picture." The next time you are in a commercial airplane and cruising around 30,000 feet, take a look out the window and note what you see—some clouds, large swaths of land, maybe a mountain range. The reality is you're too high up to see much of anything with any precision.
- Take a helicopter-ride between 500 to 1,000 feet, and you'll be able to recognize what you're looking at, with the benefit of seeing it from a new, higher perspective.
- Starting with this post, we will take a "1000-foot view" of the Buddha Dhamma by getting into a bit more detail, specifically on the First Noble Truth.
- First of all, we need to figure out "the suffering" that the Buddha wanted us to understand.
- By the way, I have discussed these ideas previously over the past five years. However, the website now has over 500 posts. Therefore, this series of posts is an excellent way to present a systematic approach. I will refer to existing posts as needed. Please make sure to read them.

What Is the "Previous Unheard" Suffering (*Dukkha*)?

2. In #6 and #7 of the previous post, we mentioned that the verse, "***..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi,***" that appears **12 times** in the Sections 4 through 7 of the *sutta*. See, WebLink: pdf download: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Printout.

- The word "***ananussutesu"*** comes from "*na*" + "*anussuta*" or "not heard." *Pubbe* means "previous," and thus "***..pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu..*****"** means a **Dhamma (teaching) that has never been known to the world** (except during the times of previous Buddhā.)
- The First Noble Truth is "*Dukkha Sacca*" so it should state "the previously unheard suffering." That is in Section 3 of the printout and #5 of the previous post. Remember that "*sacca*" is pronounced as "sachcha." See the two posts on "*Tipiṭaka* English" at ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."
- **The First Noble Truth of suffering: Birth is suffering**, aging is suffering, illness is suffering; death is suffering. Union with what is undesirable is suffering. Separation from what is desirable is suffering. **Not to get what one wants (*icchā*) is suffering. In brief, clinging (*upādāna*) to the five aggregates is suffering.**

First Noble Truth of suffering

3. In the above statement on the **First Noble Truth of suffering,** I have highlighted **in blue the "previously unheard parts."**

- Anyone knows that "aging is suffering, illness is suffering; death is suffering. Union with what is undesirable is suffering. Separation from what is desirable is suffering."

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- Anyone would also agree that **"Not to get what one wants (*icchā*) is suffering."** But it has more profound implications that an average human would not contemplate. One needs to know the "broader worldview" to see those more profound implications, as we will see later.
- But why did the Buddha say that "**Birth is suffering"?** Why did he state that "**In brief, clinging (*upādāna*) to the five aggregates is suffering"?**
- It is NOT correct to translate **the word "*saṅkhittena*" as "in brief."** The verse, ***saṅkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā***" has a deeper meaning than "**In brief, clinging (*upādāna*) to the five aggregates is suffering"?** We will discuss that later. **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**
- Instead, it is easier to get started with Section 8 of the printout on "***Tiparivaṭṭa.***" We discussed that briefly in #8 of the previous post. We will expand it a bit more here.

Tiparivaṭṭa – The Three Rounds of Bondage

4. The word "*tiparivaṭṭa"* comes from "*ti*" for three and "*vaṭṭa"* for "round" (actually a circular wall.) A "*parivaṭṭa"* is a complete circular wall. Thus, the word *tiparivaṭṭa* provides a good visualization of a living-being trapped in the middle of prison with three concentric walls.

- Most suffering is within the first barrier or the first round. Once one overcomes the first barrier, one is free from the four lowest realms (*niraya, peta, asura*, and animal.)
- The next reduced level of suffering is in between the first and second walls, which correspond to seven realms (human and six *Deva* realms.) Suffering and happiness both present in the human realm. The six *Deva* realms have much less suffering and much higher levels of "pleasures" compared to the human realm.
- The twenty *Brahma* realms lie between the second and third "walls.". Sixteen of those are in the *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms and the other four in higher *arupāvacara Brahma* realms. There is hardly any suffering in these higher realms. Even humans, who can cultivate *jhāna,* can experience such "*jhānic* pleasures."
- The 31 reams discussed in "31 Realms of Existence" and "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."

Much More Suffering Than Pleasures in the Rebirth Process

5. So, why don't we just do good deeds (*kamma*) and be born in a *Deva* realm and enjoy such "heavenly pleasures"? Or, cultivate *jhāna*, be born in a *Brahma* realm, and enjoy *jhānic* pleasures" for millions of years? **The problem is that such "pleasures" are very short-lived (in the rebirth process.)** The overall rebirth process subjects any living-being to much more suffering due to the following reasons.

- Any given living-being spends MUCH MORE time in the lowest four realms compared to the higher-lying reams. In particular, getting a human existence is VERY rare. See "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- Suffering in the lowest four realms is unbearable, as described in many *suttā*, for example, *Devaduta Sutta* (MN 130.) The animal realm is relatively better than the other three, and we can see the suffering in that realm.

Power of *Kammic* Energy

6. Birth in any realm is due to one's deeds (*kamma*.) Good deeds lead to "good births" and evil deeds to "bad births." There is a high-level of "mental energy" (*kammic* energy) associated with strong (good or bad) *kamma*.

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We can get a good idea of this "*kammic* energy" by looking at an angry person. Angry thoughts manifest as changes in the physical body. His/her face becomes distorted and unpleasant to look at. That angry person also has "pumped up" energy to strike another person or even to kill another person.

- Such "powerful thoughts" (*javana citta*) can arise while doing bad or good deeds. **They are the source of *kammic* energy that gives rise to births in different realms.**
- The lifetime in any realm depends on the strength of the corresponding *kammic* energy.
- Humans tend to do immoral deeds (***akusala kamma***) in their desire (***icchā***) to "enjoy life." *Akusala kamma* lead to rebirths in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*.) Thus it is essential to learn about the laws of *kamma*. However, they are NOT deterministic, as we will discuss.
- A good sutta to read about rebirths in bad realms due to *dasa akusala* and also rebirths in good realms due to the avoidance of *dasa akusala* is "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamanirayasagga Sutta (AN 10.211)." That link gives two English translations.
- Also, see "Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts" where *dasa akusala* and *dasa kusala* discussed with many short *suttā*.

Wider Worldview Is Necessary to Understand the "Previously Unheard Suffering"

7. From the above, it must be clear that "suffering" in the First Noble Truth is NOT what we perceive to be suffering. Everyone KNOWS about that "mundane suffering" associated with aches and pains, diseases, injuries, etc.

- As we saw in #4 above, we need to be MOST concerned with possible future suffering in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*.) Thus, we first need to figure out how to stop rebirths in the *apāyā*. As we saw in the previous post, that is accomplished by reaching the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.
- **Some people engage in "breath mediation" to alleviate their day-to-day stresses, or even to cultivate mundane *jhāna*.** Although that will give temporary relief, **that is not the "suffering" that the Buddha was concerned with.**
- To put it in a different way, the "mundane suffering" is included in *vedanā*. Specifically, it is the "*kāyika dukkha vedanā*" associated with the physical body or "*domanassa vedanā*" associated with mental stress. **Even "*jhānic* pleasures" are *vedanā* and belong to "this world" (specifically to *Brahma* realms.)**
- But one needs to "see" the "previously unheard suffering" in future rebirths (especially in the *apāyā*) with wisdom (*paññā*.) That is "*lokuttara Sammā Diṭṭhi*" needed to comprehend the First Noble Truth.

How Can We Believe This "Previously Unheard Teachings" of the Buddha?

8. This is another critical issue that we need to discuss. Many concepts discussed above are not self-evident. We have not seen first hand any harsh suffering in the apāyā, except for in the animal realm.

- We do that by first looking at the "preliminary material" taught by the Buddha. When we can see the self-evident truth in them, our confidence in Buddha's teachings on things that we cannot see for ourselves will grow. That is building faith/confidence (or *saddhā*) in the Buddha and his teachings (Buddha Dhamma.)
- One needs to go through primary and secondary schools before being eligible for a college education. In the same way, one needs to learn the fundamental principles in Buddha Dhamma first.
- **Understanding the laws of *kamma*, the validity of the rebirth process and associated concepts are essential.** That is cultivating "conventional *Sammā Diṭṭhi*."

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- **Only after that one can comprehend "*lokuttara Sammā Diṭṭhi*" (and the ability to "see" the harsh sufferings in the apāyā.)**
- The Buddha clarified that in the *Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta* (MN 117). I will discuss it in the next post.

Good or Bad Deeds May Bring Their Results Much Later

9. That is another CRITICAL issue. We tend to think only about "near-term results" of our actions. For example, person X may kill someone while robbing that person's house. X may not be caught and live a luxurious life with the valuables stolen from that house.

- However, person X's immoral deed (*kamma*) will not go unpunished by Nature. The corresponding result (*kamma vipāka*) can materialize in a future life, if not in this life. A strong bad *kamma* like killing a human can even be responsible for rebirth in one of the four lowest realms. In the same way, one who does a good *kamma* like engaging in compassionate deeds may be reborn in a *Deva* realm.
- *Kammic* consequences of either kind of action (good and bad) are stringent. Nature enforces them automatically. There is no "higher-being" reviewing one's deeds. There is a built-in mechanism in Nature to take into account various complexities automatically. Such laws of *kamma* can be complicated, but we can get a good general idea. We will discuss them in the future.
- But most people tend to believe just what they can experience for themselves. Not believing in rebirth is a strong wrong view that, by itself, can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*. **That is why one needs to remove the ten types of wrong views well before being able to grasp the "previously-unheard teachings" of the Buddha.**

There is No Permanently "Good" or "Bad" Person

10. No one is a "good person" or a "bad person" forever. Until one becomes at least a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*, one's character/habits (*gati*) can change. *Gati* (pronounced "gathi") is a crucial Pāli word even though very few people are aware of it these days. So, that is another topic that I will be discussing in detail.

- One with "good *gati*" is likely to do more "good deeds," and another with "bad *gati*" is likely to do more of "bad deeds."
- However, even one with "good character" may do evil deeds if the temptation is high enough. For example, we often hear about "good people" arrested for bribery or rape charges.
- In the same way, even a person labeled as a "bad person' may do meritorious deeds under certain conditions.
- One's family, friends, and associates play significant roles in the formation of new *gati* and getting rid of old *gati* (good or bad.)
- More details at, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

Having Wrong Views Is a Major *Akusala Kamma*

11. Any realm has a finite lifetime. One will NEVER live in a "good realm" forever or be trapped forever in a "bad realm." **Each of us has been in most of the 31 realms, many times over.** The rebirth process has no discernible beginning. See, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."

- In general, good deeds (*kusala kamma*) lead to good rebirths (those in the human and higher realms.) Evil deeds (*akusala kamma*) lead to bad existences (the lowest four realms or the *apāyā*.)
- One key factor that many people are not aware of is the following. Even if one does not do any "conventional immoral deeds," **just having wrong views about the world is one of the *dasa akusala*.** See "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

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- Most people consider immoral deeds to be only "bad bodily deeds" (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct) and "bad speech" (lying, gossiping, slandering, harsh speech.)
- That is the key to understand the first stage (first round in the *tiparivaṭṭa*) of the First Noble Truth.

12. However, there are three *akusala kamma* done with the mind, i.e., just with one's THOUGHTS. Those are greedy thoughts (*abhijjhā*), angry thoughts (*vyāpāda*), and wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*).

- Those three kinds of evil THOUGHTS lead to bad speech and bodily actions. Furthermore, wrong views are the root cause of greed and anger as well, as we will see.
- **It may be hard to believe, but wrong views are the main reason that most humans are reborn in the *apāyā*.** See "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- With this post, we are just expanding the worldview a bit more. Some people may be aware of these facts, but many people are not aware of them. I want to make sure everyone is on-board.

In the upcoming posts, we will discuss the above issues in detail. It is not beneficial to try to understand deep *suttā* without having a good understanding of the "essential fundamentals."

5.2.8.5.3 Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths

March 7, 2020; revised March 9, 2020

Introduction

1. We started this series of posts with "The Framework of Buddha Dhamma" to understand the details in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11.) As we noted, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* provides only an outline of the framework of Buddha Dhamma. Then in the subsequent post, "The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth," we noted that the Buddha pointed out that there are two "good paths" and "two bad paths."

The *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* (MN 117) describes those four paths. Any given person is on one of those four paths at a given time.

- One could be on **two paths that are certain to lead to much suffering in the *apāyā***.
- There are also **two "good" paths**. One COULD lead to rebirths in "good" realms. The other is the Noble Path leading to *Nibbāna*.
- **It all depends on the types of views about the world.** One with the **ten types of *micchā diṭṭhī* (wrong views) will be on one of the two paths leading to much future suffering**.
- We will discuss the "two bad paths" in this post and the "two good paths" in the next post.

2. **One who has removed the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhī* initially have mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhī***. *They are* on the path towards "good rebirths." However, that is NOT a guarantee for all future rebirths, since one could switch back to having wrong views in the future.

- **Someone who has removed the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhī* CAN go beyond that and remove the possibility of switching back to wrong views by comprehending the "real Nature," i.e., gain "*yathābhūta ñāṇa*."** That means comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* or the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature. At that point, one will be on the Noble Path and WILL reach *Nibbāna* within a limited number of rebirths in good realms.
- I will only discuss sections of the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* (MN 117) to discuss the four types of possible paths. The Pāli version and translations to several languages are at that link.

Steps to *Nibbāna – Sammā diṭṭhi, Sammā Samādhi, Sammā Vimutti*

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3. At the beginning of the *sutta,* the Buddha says: "*Bhikkhus*, I shall teach you ***sammā samādhi* with its necessary supports (*saupanisaṃ* or "with *upanisa*") and essentials (*saparikkhāraṃ* or "with *parikkhāra*".)**

"What is Noble *sammā samādhi* with its necessary supports? Those are *sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappo, sammā vācā, sammā kammanto, sammā ājīvo, sammā vāyāmo, sammā sati.* That is *sammā samādhi,* reached with the purification of mind, and equipped with those seven supporting factors."

- It is to be noted that one starts the Noble Path with *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or the "right views." That sequentially lead to *Sammā Samādhi* or the eighth factor.
- *Sammā Diṭṭhi* leading to *Sammā Vimutti* (or *Arahanthood*) is reached in TWO STEPS. The first stage of mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi* is reached by getting rid of the ten types of wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhī.*)
- Once one completes the mundane path with mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi,* one is able to start comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta.*) At that point, one is a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* and is on the Noble Path. He/she can get to "total release from all suffering" (*Sammā Vimutti*) via four stages of *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, Arahant*.

Ten types of wrong views (*Micchā Diṭṭhī*)

4. "**Therein, *bhikkhus, sammā diṭṭhi* (right view) comes first.** And how does the right view come first? **One understands the wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhī*) as the wrong views and right view as the correct view. That is one's right view.**

"And what are the wrong views?

(i) No profit in giving (*dāna.*)

(ii) No corresponding benefits in making offerings in a large scale.

(iii) Respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues has no merits.

(iv) Good and bad actions (*kamma*) do not lead to corresponding results (*vipāka.*)

(v) This world (*ayaṃ loko*) does not exist.

(vi) *Para loka* (of *gandhabba*) does not exist.

(vii) Mother is not a special person.

(viii) Father is not a special person.

(ix) Living-beings cannot be reborn spontaneously (*sattā opapātikā.*)

(x) There are no virtuous recluses in the world who have seen for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the *para loka* exist.

- **Those are the wrong views.** These are stated precisely the same way in over 30 *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* because of their importance. A partial list for such *suttā*: SN 24.5, AN 3.117 through AN 3.119, AN 10. 211, MN 42, MN 110, MN 41, MN 60, MN 76, DN 5, DN 34.

Why Are Those Views Bad? – Laws of *Kamma*

5. Before proceeding with the *sutta*, we need to ask, "why are those views bad and why are they so critical?"

- As we have discussed in the previous two posts, the worldview of the Buddha is VERY different from that of an average human. An average human is unaware of the existence of 31 realms and the endless rebirth process within those 31 realms.

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- The mechanism that sustains the rebirth process within the 31 realms is the fact that *kammā* (specifically meritorious and immoral actions) have their corresponding *vipāka*. The **first four wrong views** are associated with not having a good understanding of *kamma/kamma vipāka*.
- Rebirths among the 31 realms are based on *kamma vipāka* (results of previous *kamma*.) We discussed that briefly in #6 in the previous post, "The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth."

6. There is a rebirth process WITHIN the human existence (human *bhava*,) where one is repeatedly reborn with a human body many times. In between those human rebirths, that life-stream is in the *para loka* as a *gandhabba* (i.e., just with a "mostly mental" body.) That is why there are so many rebirth stories, where especially children, talk about their previous human lives (*jāti.*) On the other hand, it is very difficult to get a human existence (*bhava*.) **It is necessary to understand the difference between *bhava* and *jāti*.**

- Most people reject the laws of *kamma* because they cannot "see" the consequences of some deeds (*kamma*) in this life. But all causes lead to results. But there **must be the right conditions** for the results to appear. A seed does not germinate until the right conditions arise. See, "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?" That is why there is a "time delay" between *kamma* and *kamma vipāka*.
- Buddha Dhamma is amazingly self-consistent. It just takes an effort to see these "inter-connections." If one becomes interested and makes an effort, there will be many "Aha!" moments. That is when one starts having "real faith" or "*saddhā*."

Why Are Those Views Bad? – Rebirth Process Within 31 Realms

7. It is very frustrating to be in the *para loka* as a *gandhabba* without a physical body. One cannot eat, smell, or touch (and have sex.) One is in the *kāma loka* BECAUSE one craves those sensory pleasures. **On the spiritual side, it is impossible to concentrate and make any progress on the path either.** That is why one should be grateful to the mother and father for providing an opportunity to be born with a physical body. The **wrong views number five through eight** arise because one is unaware of that process involving "this world that we experience" and the "*para loka* of the *gandhabbā*."

- For a crude, but good, visualization of the *gandhabba* and *para loka* see the post, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- The **ninth wrong view** arises because one is not aware of the existence of realms other than the human and animal realms. Many living-beings (*sattā*) are reborn spontaneously (*opapātikā*) in many of those realms. In such births — unlike in the human and animal realms — one is not born a baby and grows to an adult; rather, the birth is in the "final form." Of course, many living beings do not have dense physical bodies like ours.
- Finally, it is possible to cultivate (*Ariya* or *anariya*) *jhāna* and be able to see one's previous lives. It is not easy to develop *abhiññā* powers to see previous other existences (*bhava*) such as previous existence in animal or *Deva* realms, for example. However, it is relatively easy to see one's past human lives WITHIN the current human *bhava*. Many can do that even today, including some children (rebirth accounts.) Discarding such true statements as "mere speculation" is the **tenth wrong view**.

Those With *Micchā Diṭṭhi* Are Destined to be Reborn in *Niraya*

8. As clearly states in the following *sutta*, those with ***micchā diṭṭhī*** end up in *niraya* (the lowest of the *apāyā*.) On the other hand, those who do not have any of the ten types of ***micchā diṭṭhī*** (and thus have mundane *sammā diṭṭhi*) are likely to be reborn in the higher realms at or above the human realm (collectively labeled *sagga.)*

The *Diṭṭhi Sutta* (AN 4.212) is short:

- "*Catūhi, bhikkhave, dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataṃ nikkhitto evaṃ **niraye**. Katamehi catūhi? Kāyaduccaritena, vacīduccaritena, manoduccaritena, **micchā diṭṭhiyā**—imehi kho, bhikkhave, catūhi dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataṃ nikkhitto evaṃ niraye.*

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- *Catūhi, bhikkhave, dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataṃ nikkhitto evaṃ **sagge**. Katamehi catūhi? Kāyasucaritena, vacīsucaritena, manosucaritena, **sammā diṭṭhiyā**—imehi kho, bhikkhave, catūhi dhammehi samannāgato yathābhataṃ nikkhitto evaṃ sagge"ti.*

Translated:

- *"Bhikkhave,* those who proficient in four types of *dhammā* (these are sometimes specifically called *adhammā* or "bad *dhammā"*), are bound to be born in the *niraya*. Those four types are bad conduct with body, speech, and mind, and **having wrong views**." **Those are *dasa akusala*.**
- *"Bhikkhave,* those who proficient in four types of *dhammā,* are bound to be born in the good realms. Those four types are good conduct with body, speech, and mind, and **having removed wrong views**." **They are *dasa kusala*.**
- Of course, *niraya* (hell) is the lowest realm of the 31 realms. A good *sutta* to read about rebirths in bad realms due to *dasa akusala* and also rebirths in good realms due to the avoidance of *dasa akusala* is "Paṭhamanirayasagga Sutta (AN 10.211)." That link gives two English translations.

Two Paths for Those With *Micchā Diṭṭhi*

9. Towards the end of the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*, the Buddha states that there are two paths (and 20 factors) with correct views (***vīsati kusala pakkhā***) and two paths (and 20 factors) with wrong views (***vīsati akusala pakkhā***). There are forty factors in all, and hence the name ***mahā cattārīsaka***: "*Iti kho, bhikkhave, **vīsati kusala pakkhā**, **vīsati akusala pakkhā**—**mahā cattārīsako** dhammapariyāyo pavattito appaṭivattiyo samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmiṃ*."

Mahācattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117) does not go into details about the two paths with wrong views. However, there are several *suttā* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (AN 4.204 through AN 4. 210) that specifically discuss those two paths for those with wrong views.

- *Dasakamma Sutta* (AN 4.204) states that one who engages in *dasa akusala* (that includes having wrong views) is an **immoral person** (***asappuriso***.)
- If that person also encourages or teaches others to engages in such activities, then he/she becomes a **highly-immoral person** (***asappurisena asappurisataro***.) Here, *asappurisataro* with "*taro"* at the end emphasizes the intense immorality. **Note that a highly-immoral person has the same types of wrong views, but they are much more ingrained or established in the mind.**
- The opposites are valid for a **moral person (*sappuriso*)** and a **highly-moral person (*sappurisena sappurisataro*.)**
- *Dasa akusala* discussed at, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

10. The *Paṭhamapāpadhamma Sutta* (AN 4.207) states the same in another revealing way. "*Katamo ca, bhikkhave, pāpo? Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco **pāṇātipātī** hoti ... pe ... **micchādiṭṭhiko** hoti. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, **pāpo***."

- That means a person who engages in *dasa akusala* (including killing, stealing,..wrong views) is a ***pāpo*** or an **immoral person.**

The next verse: "*Katamo ca, bhikkhave, **pāpena pāpataro**? Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco attanā ca pāṇātipātī hoti, parañca pāṇātipāte samādapeti ... pe ... attanā ca micchādiṭṭhiko hoti, parañca micchādiṭṭhiyā samādapeti. Ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, **pāpena pāpataro***."

- If that person then also encourages others to engages in such activities (or teaches wrong views), then he/she becomes a **highly-immoral person** (***pāpena pāpataro***.)

Note that the two *suttā* uses two different words to indicate an immoral person, ***asappuriso*** and ***pāpo.*** Both mean "an immoral person."

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Summary

11. Those **with extreme wrong views** (i.e., highly-immoral persons) can get to ***micchā vimutti*** (and become someone like Hitler or Pol Pot in Cambodia.) It is extremely difficult to change the mindset of such a person. However, it is possible to do that as illustrated in the example of Aṅgulimāla who had killed almost a thousand people but attained *Arahanthood*, see, "Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."

- In the next post, we will discuss the two "good paths" with two corresponding "correct views" in detail. Here one first gets to the **mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi* by cultivating ten factors that are opposites of the ten factors in *micchā diṭṭhi*.**
- We will see that one with mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi* can get to **Ariya *sammā diṭṭhi* by learning the true teachings of the Buddha on the Four Noble Truths.** Specifically, one needs to comprehend that the "suffering" in the First Noble Truth is the suffering associated with the rebirth process.
- When one starts comprehending the First Noble Truth by grasping the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature of this world, one becomes a *Sōtapanna Anugāmi*. That understanding becomes complete at *Arahanthood* and one attains ***Sammā Ñāṇa* (by fully comprehending "*yathābhūta ñāṇa*")** and ***Sammā Vimutti*** (release from all future suffering.)
- We will discuss that in the next post and complete the discussion on the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* regarding the four possible paths.

5.2.8.5.4 Sammā Diṭṭhī – Only One Leads to the Noble Path

March 14, 2020

Introduction

There are two types of *sammā diṭṭhī* or "right views." Only one belongs to the Noble Path and leads to *Nibbāna*.

1. We are continuing the series of posts on "Wider Worldview of the Buddha." In the previous post, we started a discussion on the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* (MN 117) to clarify the four worldviews and four possible paths.

- There are "two good paths" and the Noble Eight-fold Path is the only path to *Nibbāna*.
- In the previous post, "Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths" we discussed the "two bad paths." In this post, we will discuss the "two good paths."

Two Types of *Sammā Diṭṭhi*

2. After discussing the two "bad paths" for those with the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhī* in the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta*, the Buddha asks: "What, *bhikkhus*, is right view? **Right view, I say, is twofold**:

- **There is the right view that is tainted with cravings (*sāsavā* or with *āsavā*), meritorious and bringing good *vipāka*.**
- That "good path" is available to the world even in the absence of a Buddha. Ancient *yogis* were there before the Buddha (like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta) who lived moral lives and even cultivated the highest *jhāna*. They were able to get "good rebirths." However, that is a temporary solution to the saṃsāric suffering, since one can "fall back" from that "good path" and be born in the *apāyā* in the future.
- **Then there is the right view that is Noble (*Ariya*) and without cravings (*anāsavā* or without *āsavā*), supramundane (*lokuttarā*), a factor of the Noble Path."**

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Sammā Diṭṭhi for the Noble Path Includes Comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*

3. The difference between those two paths is CRITICAL. We need to discuss that in detail.

- The first, mundane right view, is mostly followed by those who "live a moral life." That could be just following the five precepts, for example, as many people do. However, to attain *Nibbāna*, one needs to comprehend the "unfruitful, and dangerous nature" of this world (*Tilakkhaṇa*) or the "real Nature," i.e., gain "*yathābhūta ñāṇa*."
- **Upon Enlightenment, the Buddha discovered that living a moral life, by itself, CANNOT solve the problem of suffering in the rebirth process.** Following a moral life COULD lead to a future "good rebirth." However, since we have also done both good and bad deeds in our past lives, such bad deeds done in the past CAN bring births in a bad realm. Of course, we do not know what kind of good/bad deeds we have done in our past lives.
- To start on the Noble Path leading to *Nibbāna*, we need to understand that our cravings for sensory pleasures are ultimately the root cause of suffering. Those cravings (*āsava*) lead to *taṇhā*. See, "Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering."
- Then the "'*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*" step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* leads to "*upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti*", i.e., the "whole mass of suffering."
- That is a brief summary. We will discuss that in detail in upcoming posts. Let us first discuss *sammā diṭṭhī* for the mundane path.

Mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi*

4. After saying that there are two right views (#2 above,) the Buddha asks: "And what, *bhikkhus*, is the **right view that is tainted with cravings (*sāsavā* or with *āsavā*)**, meritorious and bringing good *vipāka?* " and explains that is the view where one believes that,

(i) There is profit in giving (*dāna.*)

(ii) More profit in giving generously.

(iii) Respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues is beneficial (*bhikkhus,* Noble Persons, *yogis*, etc.)

(iv) Good and bad actions (*kamma*) lead to corresponding results (*vipāka.*)

(v) This world (*ayaṃ loko*) does exist.

(vi) *Para loka* (of *gandhabba*) does exist.

(vii) Mother is a special person.

(viii) Father is a special person.

(ix) Living-beings can be reborn spontaneously (*sattā opapātikā.*)

(x) There are virtuous recluses (like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta) in the world who have seen for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the *para loka* exist.

Those are the **(mundane) right views that are tainted with cravings.** They are meritorious and bring good *vipāka.*

- **As you remember from the previous post, the above are the opposites of the ten types of wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhī*.)** Those who have those ten "good factors" can get "good rebirths" as discussed in #2.

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Why Is Mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi* a Prerequisite for *Ariya Sammā Diṭṭhi*?

5. The main goal of a Buddhist is to STOP all future suffering in the rebirth process.

- How can one start on the Noble Path to stop the rebirth process, if one does not even believe in the rebirth process?
- But how do we know that there is a rebirth process with much suffering? How can we believe that there are 31 realms in this world instead of just two realms that we can see?

6. As we discussed briefly in #2 above, those were known to the world even before the Buddha. There were *yogis* like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta who had cultivated *abhiññā* powers and were able to see their past lives as well as could confirm the existence of higher *Deva* and *Brahma* realms.

- Therefore, it is possible to verify the above ten factors even in the absence of a Buddha in the world.
- Even without *abhiññā* powers, one is able to come to the logical conclusion that those ten factors are indeed true. Accounts of past lives from children all over the world and Near-Death Experiences (NDE) of many heart-patients provide evidence. See, "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."

Inviolable Axioms – Could Be Self-Evident for an Undefiled Mind

7. The core teaching of the Buddha is that our efforts in seeking happiness within the rebirth process are futile. **The only way to reach a state where there is absolutely NO suffering is to disengage from the rebirth process.**

- Seeking that goal REQUIRES the following "axioms" in the terminology of science.
  1. Existence of the 31 realms.
  2. The rebirth process.
  3. The laws of *kamma* that determine how rebirths take place.
  4. Existence of *gandhabba* and *para loka* that makes it possible for many human (and animal) rebirths within a single existence.
- An axiom in science is a "fundamental truth" that is taken to be "self-evident." However, the above axioms may not be "self-evident" until explained in a logical way. After all, there were *yogis* like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta these days who could see past lives. Waharaka *Thero* had some such capabilities, but unfortunately, we have lost that resource.
- By the way, evidence for the *gandhabba* from the *Tipiṭaka* discussed at, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipitaka." Other evidence discussed at, "Evidence for Rebirth" and "Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya."

Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency

8. **However, those axioms CAN become self-evident** if one spends enough time contemplating the laws of *kamma*. They are logical and self-consistence. For example, see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek 'Good Rebirths'" and "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"

- As we know, one cannot learn higher mathematics like calculus without learning basic arithmetic first, then algebra, and so on. Buddha Dhamma describes the laws of nature. **Nature's laws are much more complex than advanced mathematics or quantum mechanics.**

9. There is an additional factor involved too. The ability to understand becomes easier when one starts "cleansing one's mind." That does not just mean following some precepts (even though they are an important part). See, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

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- One has to start on the mundane path, live a simple life (away from both too much sensory pleasures and also hardships). One's mind will become less stressful and less agitated.
- As one lives a moral life and keeps learning (and seeing the self-consistencies) one's faith in the teachings will grow. See, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

The "Previously Unheard" Teaching

10. Even though the "good path" followed by *yogis* like Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta led to the cultivation of *abhiññā* powers and even "good rebirths," it did not lead to the end of suffering. That is because one would still be engaged in the rebirth process.

- All births, even in the highest *Brahma* realms, have finite lifetimes. At the end of those long lifetimes, previous bad *kamma* can and will bring rebirths in lower realms.
- Rebirths in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*) are unavoidable until one start comprehending the true nature of this world described by the Three Characteristics of Nature or *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*.) That essentially means any "good" existence in the 31 realms cannot be maintained. Future rebirths in the *apāyā* cannot be avoided until one comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa.*

All Births (*Jāti*) End Up in Suffering

11. From *Paṭicca Samuppāda*: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra; saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa; viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā salāyatana, salāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā,* ***taṇhā paccayā upādāna****, upādāna paccayā bhavo,* ***bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, maraṇa, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti****"*

- "**The whole mass of suffering**" is inevitable for each ***jāti*** (birth) because each birth ends up in death. Any birth (even in good realms) MUST come to an end. That is the harshest suffering to face (in the sense of leaving behind everything.)
- A birth does not happen without ***bhava*** (existence.) Therefore it is critical to understand what *bhava* and *jāti* are. **That is why one needs to understand the mundane right views of (v) through (viii) in #4 above**, BEFORE trying to understand what is meant by *Nibbāna* (the stopping of ALL future suffering by stopping ALL future *jāti*.)
- One grasps a new *bhava* (existence) at the end of the current *bhava*, ONLY because one has cravings for "worldly pleasures" (whether sensual pleasures or *jhānic* pleasures). Those inevitably lead to ***taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, jāti*** **and then** "**the whole mass of suffering**" is inevitable.
- **One CANNOT stop those cravings** as long as one values those sensory/*jhānic* pleasures; in other words, until one gets rid of *avijjā* or the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths.
- Now we get to the verse that requires a good discussion to understand the ***Ariya Sammā Diṭṭhi*** that come at the forefront of the ***Ariya Aṭṭhaṅgika Magga*** **or the Noble Eight-fold Path**.

The *Ariya Sammā Diṭṭhi*

12. Next verse from the *Mahācattārīsaka Sutta* (after the verse in #4): "*Katamā ca, bhikkhave,* ***sammādiṭṭhi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggaṅgā****? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato paññā paññindriyaṃ paññābalaṃ dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo sammādiṭṭhi maggaṅgaṃ—****ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggaṅgā***."

- There are many factors summarized in that verse. But we can get started with the following.

"And what is the **right view that is Noble, without cravings** (***anāsavā*** or without *āsavā*), and is a factor of the Noble Path leading to *Nibbāna*? Note that in the *sutta*, the word *lokuttarā* means "*loka*" + "*uttara*"

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where *loka* is "this world" and *uttara* implies "better than." Thus, ***lokuttarā maggaṅgā*** means "a factor of the Noble Path **that overcomes this world**, leading to *Nibbāna."*

- As we mentioned in the first two posts in this series on "Wider Worldview of the Buddha," Buddha's teachings were "previously unknown to the world."
- **That "previously unknown part" is to see the suffering hidden in what we perceive to be "pleasures".** Such pleasures — whether sensory pleasures or *jhānic* pleasures — belong to this world. They are temporary. Furthermore, people tend to do immoral things in seeking such pleasures.

The Suffering Hidden in Sensory Pleasures

13. *Anusaya* are our hidden cravings. They come to the surface triggered by mind-pleasing (or unpleasant) thought-objects (*ārammaṇa*.) See, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā."

- Then one attaches to that *ārammaṇa* via greed or anger depending on whether the *ārammaṇa* is mind-pleasing or distasteful. That is *taṇhā*. Whether one gets attached or not depends on one's *gati*. We have discussed this in detail in earlier posts in the "Worldview of the Buddha."
- The key to attaining ***Nibbāna* (*āsavakkhaya* or the removal of *āsava*)** is to understand how to get rid of our *gati* to attach (*taṇhā*) to various *ārammaṇa.* As we will see, that has origin in our ignorance of the true nature of this world. What we perceive to provide happiness actually leads to suffering.
- The best analogy is a fish who bites into a tasty bait not realizing the dangers hidden in that bait (a tasty worm.) Imagine the suffering associated with a hook piercing one's mouth. Of course, that suffering ends up in an agonizing death due to lack of oxygen since the fish is unable to breathe outside water.
- In the same way, we do not "see" the long-term consequences of our cravings for sensory/*jhānic* pleasures. That is the core idea embedded in *Tilakkhaṇa*. We will discuss that in detail in the upcoming posts.

5.2.8.5.5 Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)

March 18, 2020

Introduction

1. I have presented an outline of the Buddha Dhamma in the "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" subsection. As explained there, the key message of the Buddha is that future suffering can be stopped only by stopping the rebirth process, i.e., by attaining *Nibbāna*. Now I need to clarify a few things.

- The main issue that I want to address is the "fear of *Nibbāna*." **That arises with the wrong view of "I exist." Then the implication is that by stopping the rebirth process "I will be extinct." It is also a wrong view to say that "I do not exist."** It is true that "I exist now as a human." In the future, I may exist as *Deva, Brahma*, or an animal, based on the cumulative effect of my *kamma* (causes) up to now.
- If I attain the *Arahanthood* in this life, then after my death I will not exist anywhere in the 31 realms of this world. I would merge with *Nibbāna*.
- These days there are many unfruitful discussions about whether a "self" exists or not. As the Buddha pointed out, that is the wrong starting point to discuss life-cycle. **A given life-stream evolves according to causes (*kamma.*)** When the ability for past *kamma* to bring their *vipāka* is stopped (i.e., *taṇhā* or *upādāna* stopped,) then that process will stop and one merges with Nibbāna at the death of that last physical body.
- The Buddha clearly stated that Nibbāna exists. See, "*Nibbāna* "Exists", but Not in This World."
- I have discussed the Buddhist concept that while a "self with *gati*" exists until one attains *Nibbāna*, that is NOT a "permanent self" like a soul. See, for example, "Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – No

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'Unchanging Self'," "An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation," and "Paticca Samuppāda – A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā." Also see, "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) – Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering."

2. We will re-visit that deeper concept in upcoming posts again, in a systematic way.

- First, I would like to explain in simple terms that there is no need to be fearful about "stopping the rebirth process."
- I did a Google search and found the following comments by two people in online discussion forums. Those are representative of the comments of many others and thus I would like to address those.

First Myth – Fear of "Vanishing" or "Extinction" Equated to *Nibbāna*

3. The following are extractions from the comments of Person 1.

- "I started taking the Buddhist path not long ago, less than three years ago. At that time, life felt too heavy and it felt like it was pushing me towards not wanting to *play the game* anymore. So Buddhism seemed like the way to go."
- "**I can't forget the first time I faced the idea of vanishing from this existence forever**, the true death; never being able to come back once I 'saw it'. Nevertheless, I kept investigating."
- "Then I contemplated the idea of being trapped in this. Existence has no way out, anywhere you go there is still existence. In other words 'What if it has been like this for millions, billions of years, maybe even for eternity?"
- "But if enlightenment is the only escape, **I am afraid of never being able to come back.** I am afraid everything is just an illusion, that there aren't others, just images and I'm alone. Sometimes I fear there isn't even enlightenment to save me. My question is: Am I going crazy? Am I getting it all wrong?"

There Are Those Who Want to "End the Existence"

4. First of all, think about the mindset of those who commit suicide. Why do those people want to leave this world? Most of them probably do not believe in rebirth. But they just "wanted out" because they could not bear whatever the suffering that they were experiencing.

- In fact, that is the mindset of living-beings in the *apāyā*. They just want to "end it all." But no matter how much they "want out," that will not happen. That is a good example of the suffering expressed by the Buddha in the verse, "***yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ,***" or "not to get what one desires (*icchā*) is suffering", in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (SN 56.11.)
- In the WebLink: suttacentral: *Saccavibhaṅga Sutta* (MN 141), Ven. Sariputta explains the meaning of that verse: "*Katamañcāvuso,* ***yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ****? Jātidhammānaṃ, āvuso, sattānaṃ evaṃ* ***icchā uppajjati****: 'aho vata mayaṃ na jātidhammā assāma; na ca vata no jāti āgaccheyyā'ti.* ***Na kho panetaṃ icchāya pattabbaṃ.***"
- **Translated:** "In a living-being subject to (some) births the **wish (desire) arises**, 'Oh, may I not be subject to such a birth, and may that birth not come to me.' But **such a desire will not be fulfilled** (and thus one will be subjected to suffering.)"

5. Thus, it is only when faced with physical pain/mental stress that one wishes it would just go away. Many people become interested in Buddhism when they run into either physical problems (getting sick or starting various body ailments due to old age) or mental problems (day-to-day stresses or even depression.)

- They can, of course, get relief from those issues by living a simple life and abstaining from immoral deeds.
- But then they start reading about *Nibbāna* as "ending of one's existence" and then they freak out. That is what happened to Person 1 above.

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Life in "Good Realms" Is Short-Lived

6. We normally do not realize the kind of harsh suffering experienced by many living beings. Of course, we can see only the animal realm other than the human realm. Even then, we do not pay much attention to the suffering of animals. In fact, we are conditioned to "not see" or "not recognize" the suffering of many animals that is in full display.

- For example, people enjoy watching animal shows on TV where, for example, a tiger chases a deer, catches up with it and eats it alive.
- Those who enjoy fishing do not see the suffering of a fish that is subjected to excruciating pain, with its mouth pierced by the hook, and unable to breathe outside water. But unlike some animals, fish cannot show emotion, which is a part of their *kamma vipāka*.
- On the other hand, we can clearly see many animals showing their suffering by either yelling out or by their facial expressions.
- **All those animals had been humans at some point in the rebirth process!**

7. Suffering in the other three realms of the *apāyā* is much worse. Therefore, those are the births (*jāti*) that we would not want for sure.

- The point is that as long as we are in the rebirth process, such births cannot be avoided. Such births are much more likely than human birth just based on the statistics we can verify.
- For example, there are less than eight billion people on Earth. But there are a million times more ants on Earth! There are a trillion TYPES OF lifeforms on Earth; see, "WebLink: sciencealert.com: The Largest Study of Life Forms Ever Has Estimated That Earth Is Home to 1 TRILLION Species." These are mind-boggling numbers! That is not counting the other three realms in the *apāyā* that we cannot see.
- That is why the Buddha said that a human *bhava* (existence) is VERY rare. Any "pleasures" that we experience as a human is of VERY SHORT duration. The suffering that the Buddha taught was the suffering in the rebirth process where a given living-being spends much more time in the *apāyā*.
- Now we turn to the issue of "fear of non-existence in this world."

We Are "Effectively Not in Existence" During at Least a Third of a Day

8. Even though we may fear "extinction out of existence," we are not aware of "our existence" during sleep. We are not conscious while we sleep, especially during the deep sleep cycle. Most of the time, we go to sleep and until we wake up the next morning, we are completely unaware of our existence in the world.

- We don't think about that normally. But I became acutely aware of this fact when I was made unconscious for over 9 hours during my brain surgery. I remember losing consciousness after the injection of the drug. The next thing I was aware of was when I came out of the drug-induced unconsciousness state.
- While unconscious or in deep sleep, we are (effectively) "not in this world."
- When an *Arahant* dies, it will be like in such an "unconscious state (as far as this world is concerned)" forever. But he/she would have merged with *Nibbāna*. The Buddha clearly stated that *Nibbāna* exists. We just cannot explain it in terms of the concepts (*rupa, citta, cetasika*) in this world. See, "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."
- There is no overlap between "this world of 31 realms" and *Nibbāna* (full *Nibbāna* or *Parinibbāna*.) They are mutually exclusive. One is either "in this world" or "in *Parinibbāna*." Either the Buddha or any of the *Arahants* who have passed away are not in this world anymore.

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- Once an *Arahant* dies and merges with *Nibbāna*, there will be no more deaths. Attainment of *Nibbāna* is by removing ALL causes for the birth and death cycle (with complete removal of *avijjā*.) That is why *Nibbāna* is also called "deathless."

Comments of Person 2

9. The second comment that I chose was from Person 2. Some of the selected parts are below.

- "..I was meditating yesterday and had this weird "experience." **It freaks me the hell out because it was like I was never there.** I'm just feeling scared now after that experience. It felt extremely beautiful to me yesterday but right now I'm just freaking out for some reason. My mind is just racing with the thought "I don't want to die" and I'm just having an existential crisis."
- "I'm wishing I never did any of this meditation or consciousness work in the first place because it's making me think that I can delude myself into thinking I'm alive but I've always been dead and have just been an empty void. I feel like I'm going insane. I'm just feeling a wave of negativity."
- "I know that the way I'm phrasing it is silly but **I'm just curious about people who are completely enlightened (if such a thing is 100% possible).** Are these people like talking corpses? All these words can come out their mouth and it looks like they're alive, but they're really dead?"

Can One Lose Perception While Meditating?

10. The first part of Person 2's comment is to do with meditation. What he experienced was a "perception-less meditative state" or an "*asañña samādhi*."

- Such a state is reached by focusing on getting rid of ALL thoughts that come to the mind. That is NOT Buddhist meditation. In Buddhist meditation, one stops ONLY those thoughts that are immoral. One would CULTIVATE good or moral thoughts.
- One who cultivates such an *anāriya* meditation may be reborn in the *asañña* realm. That realm has a very long lifetime and there are no thoughts arising. It is like being unconscious for a billion years! Of course, that life will also end and one would be back in another realm.

Is An *Arahant* a Zombie?

11. Now, let us discuss the second highlighted comment from Person 2. An *Arahant* does not lose perception like in the case above in #10. A living *Arahant* "engages with the external world" just like anyone else.

- The only difference is that a living *Arahant* WILL NOT generate greedy, angry, or unwise thoughts.
- But he/she will recognize people as his/her mother, friend, an attractive person/object. He/she will experience the sweetness of sugar or the bitterness of vinegar, etc. Until the death of the physical body, an *Arahant* will live like any other human.

Nibbāna is Escape From Suffering – Two Types of *Nibbāna*

12. The Sinhala word for *Nibbāna* is "*Nivana*" or "Niveema" (නිවන/නිවීම.) That means "a cooling down."

- WebLink: suttacentral: *Ādittapariyāya Sutta* (SN 35.28) is one of the early discourses of the Buddha. In that *sutta*, the Buddha compared said that the world is burning. That means the mind of anyone who embraces the world as good and fruitful is always "burning" or "under stress." That stress goes away at the first stage of *Nibbāna* (*saupādisesa Nibbāna*) experienced by a living *Arahant*.
- However, a living *Arahant* has a physical body that arose due to past *kamma*. That body can experience bad *kamma vipāka* from the past. After the death of that physical body, an *Arahant* will not be reborn and that is the end of any and all suffering. That is *anupādisesa Nibbāna* or *Parinibbāna* (full *Nibbāna*.)

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13. Finally, if anyone has other issues related to this topic, this is a good time to discuss them. This kind of discussion will help clarify issues that I may not have thought about, but others may have.

5.2.8.6 Worldview of the Buddha – Explanatory Material

Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept

Mental Body Versus the Physical Body

"Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1

"Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2

5.2.8.6.1 Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept

January 17, 2020

Introduction

1. I have been trying to get across the concept of a *gandhabba* (or mental body or *manomaya kāya*) over several years now. But I don't think many readers have a good grasp of the concept. One critical problem is that sometimes it is tough to explain a new concept with just words.

- Then a couple of days ago, I remembered that 1990 movie "Ghost" that I had watched at that time. I only had a vague recollection of the film, so I watched it again. It became instantly clear to me that it would help me make "some key clarifications" with the aid of that movie. After watching the movie, I abandoned the post that I was writing and started on this post.
- A description of the movie and the plot is in the Wikipedia article "*Ghost* (1990 film)." **However, one MUST watch the movie and read the following discussion to be able to get a good understanding of the *gandhabba* concept.** A free version of the full movie is available online.

The Background (Up to 23 Minutes)

2. From the above article: "Sam Wheat, a banker, and his girlfriend Molly Jensen, a potter, renovate and move into an apartment in Manhattan with the help of Sam's friend and co-worker Carl Bruner. One afternoon, Sam confides in Carl his discovery of unusually high balances in obscure bank accounts. He decides to investigate the matter himself, declining Carl's offer of assistance. That night, Sam and Molly are attacked by a mugger who shoots and kills Sam in a scuffle before stealing his wallet. Sam sees Molly crying over his body and discovers **he is now a ghost**, invisible and unable to interact with the mortal world."

- The ghost, of course, is the *gandhabba* or the *manomaya kāya* of Sam. The movie clearly shows some of the features of the *gandhabba* that I have tried to explain with words. When Sam dies, his *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body. Initially, he does not even realize that he has died. By the way, if one dies such a sudden death, there is no time to feel the physical pain.
- So, Sam is confused when he sees his dead body and his girlfriend, Molly, crying. It takes him a little while to realize what happened. He sees his own bloodied body held up by Molly. He tries to touch the body, and his fingers "go through the dead body." We can disregard the next few moments showing the "white light" coming to "take him to heaven." This will be discussed in #12 below.
- When a human dies suddenly by a gunshot, likely, his "*bhava*" will not change. So, Sam probably has more time left in the human *bhava*, but he now has to stay in the "*gandhabba* state" until a matching mother's womb becomes available for his next human birth. See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

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- In any case, according to the movie script, Sam's mind is focused on Molly, and thus the "white light" goes back without him.

Gandhabba Is Not a "Scary Misty Ghost"

3. Many of you may have imagined that a *gandhabba* is like a "scary misty ghost" as depicted in popular cartoons. However, a *gandhabba* coming out of a body is a "complete imprint" of that human including the clothes that he/she had been wearing.

- Thus, Sam's ghost or Sam's *gandhabba* looks just like Sam when he died, complete with whatever he was wearing. That is part of the "*utuja kāya*" or the "fine body" around the "mental body." That mental body by itself is just a few *suddhāṭṭhaka*.
- However, when that *gandhabba* is pulled into a womb, the *utuja kāya* is shed and only the "pure mental body" of a few *suddhāṭṭhaka* merge with the zygote in the womb. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."

At the Hospital (Up to 26 minutes)

4. An ambulance takes Sam's body to the hospital, and he keeps staying by the dead body trying to make sense of things. Of course, with that "mental body," he can go anywhere he wishes.

- While he is sitting by his dead body, another *gandhabba* (old guy) comes and talks to him. They also watch another patient dying and his "ghost" or *gandhabba* taken to heaven with the "white light." As the old guy says, most of the dead go to hell and not heaven.
- **Then an attendant comes and takes his dead body "right through him." That is what I try to say that a *gandhabba* has a "very subtle fine body." It is just an "energy body" or a "force field."**
- His *gandhabba* body" has only a trace of matter. Solid objects can go right through, and "he" can go through solid objects!

Sam's Ghost (*Gandhabba*) Learning About the *Gandhabba* World (*Para Loka*) – (Up to 54 minutes)

5. Sam sees another "*gandhabba* woman" walking through a tombstone at his funeral. Later on, at Molly's place, he goes "through a door" for the first time. Sam's killer comes to Molly's apartment, and Sam follows him back to the killers' apartment. On the subway train ride, Sam meets a violent "subway ghost" who has learned how to move physical objects with mind power. Later on, Sam would learn from him how to focus mental energy and to move physical objects.

- That is possible per Buddha Dhamma. Even though most *gandhabbas* do not have such an ability, a few of them may also get such capability due to "*puñña iddhi*" or due to exceptional past *kamma vipāka*.

6. Anyway, Sam finds out that the name of his killer is Willie. In Willie's neighborhood, Sam also meets psychic Oda Mae, a charlatan pretending to communicate with spirits of the dead. However, it turns out that Oda's mother actually had such capabilities, and after the meeting with "Sam's ghost," Oda is also able to hear his voice.

- That is also possible per Buddha Dhamma. Some humans are born with *puñña iddhi* to be able to hear and/or see *gandhabbas*. It is possible that such accounts (over long periods) are responsible for the "cartoon versions" that we come across in books and movies such as this movie.
- Sam persuades Oda Mae to help him. They still have a hard time convincing Molly. But Molly is finally convinced by the personal details that Sam provides through Oda.

At this point, you may want to watch the movie. **I will be revealing the storyline from this point.** If you want to enjoy the film, it is a good idea to finish watching the movie and then to read the rest of this post.

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Sam's Friend Carl – (Up to 72 minutes)

7. Molly decides to contact Carl, who was a friend and co-worker of Sam. She tells him that Sam's ghost found out that his killer was Willie. Carl promises to check on that.

- Molly goes to the police, and they don't believe the story either. The detective says there is no record on Willie, but Oda Mae has a history of deceiving people.
- Meanwhile, Carl goes to meet Willie and Sam follows him. Sam is shocked to find out that it was Carl who hired Willie. It turns out that Sam had a bank code in his wallet for an account that had four million dollars, and Carl wanted Willie to get Sam's wallet. But things did not go as planned, and Willie shot and killed Sam.
- Later on, Carl goes back to Molly and tries to seduce her. Sam gets into a rage and lunges at Carl. Of course, he cannot make contact, but he was astonished to see that he was able to knock a picture off a table.

Sam's Ghost Learns How to Make Bodily Contact – (Up to 78 minutes)

8. Sam then remembers the "subway ghost" who can move physical objects with mind power. He goes back to the subway and learns how to focus the mind power to move physical objects.

- In Buddha Dhamma, that is possible via cultivating *jhāna*. As we discussed before, there are rare cases where a *gandhabba* would be able to make physical contact via *puñña iddhi.* However, this aspect of the movie is unlikely to happen in real life.
- This is why it is not fun to be a *gandhabba*. Some *gandhabbas* (ghosts in the movie) can see and hear humans. But they are frustrated that they cannot touch, eat food, or smell scents like humans do. There is a scene in the movie where the "subway ghost" says he would give anything to smoke a cigarette (@ 76 minutes.)
- (I have mentioned in previous posts that a *gandhabba* can "take in various types of scents" and become a bit denser. That is a different mechanism than inhaling through the nose (a *gandhabba* only has an imprint of a nose and not a real nose.)

Mind Power – (Up to 78 minutes)

9. The "subway ghost" explains to Sam that he has no physical body even though he seems to be wearing clothes etc. He says, "you've got no body (meaning no physical body), son. It is all up here" and points to the head. (But of course, the seat of the mind is not in the head. It is close to where the physical heart normally is.)

- Subway ghost says, "If you want to move something, you've got to move it with your mind. You've got to focus all your anger, all your love, all your hate, and push from all the way here, **from the middle of your stomach**. And let it explode like a reactor." (That turns out to be the right place!)
- That is a CRITICAL point. Even from our own experience, we know that when we try to do something hard, the "push" comes from the heart area, and not the head.
- The real power is in our thoughts (specifically *javana citta*.) That power can be highly focused when one is in a *jhāna*. But it is when one is in *jhāna samāpatti*, that one can focus the mind power and even CREATE matter! See, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?." [***samāpatti*** :[f.] attainment; an enjoying stage of meditation.]

Oda Mae Is Now a Genuine Psychic Reader – (Up to 80 minutes)

10. Oda Mae is no longer a fake. She can make contact with many "ghosts" or *gandhabbas* in the *para loka*. As you see, the *para loka* co-exists with our *loka*; it is just that we cannot see those in the *para loka*.

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- However, she is now in trouble since Carl knows her identity. The story gets interesting now and there are no more "technical details" that need to be discussed here.
- If there are questions, we can discuss them at the discussion forum. This is a very complex subject, but I hope you get a general idea.

Other Relevant Points – Births in Different Realms

11. A human *gandhabba* (ghost in the movie) comes out of a dead body ONLY IF that person has more *kammic* energy left for human *bhava*. That is the case in many instances, especially if one dies by a gunshot as in this case.

- However, if the *kammic* energy for human *bhava* runs out at the moment of death, then an entirely different event takes place. Let us consider specific cases of a human dying and grasping an animal, *Deva*, and *Brahma bhava*.
- If the dying human grasps an animal *bhava* (say a dog), then instead of a "human ghost" it is a "dog ghost" or a "dog *gandhabba*" that comes out of the dead body. That "dog *gandhabba*" will not stay in that vicinity. It will be attracted to somewhere there are dogs with matching *gati*. Then it will stay there until a suitable womb becomes available, at which point it will be drawn into that womb.
- A very different thing happens if a *Deva bhava* is grasped by the dying human. In that case, **there will be no "ghost" or *gandhabba* coming out of the dead body.** Instead, a full-blown *Deva* will appear in a matching *Deva* realm instantaneously. If a *Brahma bhava* is grasped, a *Brahma* will appear at the matching *Brahma* realm.
- What we discussed in that last bullet is a critical point. **There is no "being" going from here to the *Deva* or *Brahma* realm** (located far above the Earth.) The human dies here and *Deva* (or *Brahma*) is born there. Due to a past cause (*kamma*), a *Deva* or a *Brahma* is born at the appropriate location.

Other Misconceptions in the Movie

12. The movie shows that "good people" like Sam get to go to heaven (though the white light) and "bad people" like Carl and Willie are taken to hell by "hell beings." But Buddha Dhamma has a different picture of rebirth.

- First, hell and heaven (*Deva* realms) are not the only two "destinations." One can be born among any of the 31 realms, including the animal realm that we see.
- The second is that one's human *bhava* does not normally end at death. A human *bhava* can last thousands of years and unless one has used up all that time, one could be reborn with a human body again. In that case, the "mental body" corresponding to the human *bhava* (i.e., human *gandhabba*) comes out of the dead body and has to wait until a matching womb becomes available.
- There is an exception to the rule in the last bullet. If one has done a *ānantariya kamma* (like killing a parent or cultivate a *jhāna*) then one's **human *bhava* will end at death** even if there is more *kammic* energy left. In the first case, one will be born in hell and in the second (*jhāna*) one will be born in a *Brahma* realm.
- There are few other inconsistencies in the movie, but those are the major ones.

Pāli Word for Ghost is "*Bhūta*"

13. Another interesting point is that the Pāli word for "ghost" is "*bhūta*."

- *Bhūta* in Pāli (and Sinhala, භූත) means an entity that one cannot really grasp.
- For example, scientists are trying to figure out the fundamental "blocks" that all matter is made of. They initially thought an atom would be the smallest unit of matter. Then they found out that an atom is made of

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electrons, protons, and neutrons. They kept probing deeper and now are down to levels where it is hard to distinguish between "matter" and "energy."

- The four great elements (*cattāri mahā**bhūtā**ni*) in Buddha Dhamma are *paṭhavī*, *āpo*, *tejo*, *vāyo*. But they can NEVER be detected individually. They ALWAYS come in packets called "*suddhāṭṭhaka*." A *suddhāṭṭhaka* has those four great elements and four more elementary units. Even that unit cannot be "seen" and is said to be at the "*bhūta* stage."
- A *gandhabba* (ghost in the above discussion) has only three *suddhāṭṭhaka* (they are called *dasaka* because when vibrational and rotational "modes" are added to become "ten units each."
- To be visible to our eyes, billions and billions of such *suddhāṭṭhaka* need to be piled up. Now we can see that a *gandhabba* hardly has any "matter." That is why it is called "ghost" or a "*bhūta*."

One Last Thing

14. At 109 minutes, Oda Mae "lets" Sam to get into her physical body so that Molly will be able to "touch him" for the last time.

- That is possible according to Buddha Dhamma. If a human is willing, a *gandhabba* can "get into" that physical body.
- Even if the human is not willing, but has a "weak mind," a rogue *gandhabba* can "get in." It is said that the human is now "possessed." Such cases are still reported in Sri Lanka and the human is said to be "possessed by a demon." But it is usually a *gandhabba* with bad character and not a demon.
- By the way, I was very much moved by that last scene. This is part of the suffering that we tend to be unaware of or even disregard. It is a good example of "*piyehi vippayogo dukkho*" OR "separation from what is loved is suffering." We will all face that at least at the moment of death. We will have no choice but to leave all that we love.

There are many more details like that. But the above discussion should provide the basic ideas involved with a *gandhabba*. As the Buddha admonished, we will never be able to uncover and sort out all such complexities. But it is good to be aware of the general ideas involved.

5.2.8.6.2 Mental Body Versus the Physical Body

February 2, 2020

Essential Facts for this post

1. The mental body is far more important than the physical body. Let me first summarize the relevant conclusions from the "Origin of Life" section for this post.

- The mind does not exist by itself. **There must be at least a trace of matter for the mind to exist.** That is a critical point in Buddha Dhamma that many people do not realize. The "seat of the mind" is called "*hadaya vatthu*." It is unbelievably small and is created by *kammic* energy when a living being grasps a new existence. In addition to *hadaya vatthu*, up to five "*pasāda rūpa*" are created by the *kammic* energy at that time.
- That package, *hadaya vatthu* together with the set of *pasāda rūpa* is the "smallest unit of existence." It is called the "*manomaya kāya*" because the energy for the creation of it comes from the *kammic* energy based on a strong past *kamma*. See, "Origin of Life – One Creates One's Own Future Lives."
- In the 20 *Brahma* realms (out of 31 realms in this world) that "*manomaya kāya*" is all they have. They do not need a physical body with "flesh and blood" because those *Brahmā* do not experience taste, smell, or touch.

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- When a living being is born in the human realm, it is born with that "*manomaya kāya*" which is given a special name of *gandhabba*. When a suitable womb with "matching *gatī*" appears, that *gandhabba* is drawn into it and merges with the zygote there. That "living zygote" first grows into a baby (by taking in food from the mother.). After born, that baby grows into an adult with a body weighing a hundred plus pounds (or tens of kg.) Details in #4 below.
- Thus, it is clear that virtually all physical matter in a human body comes from food.

The Critical "Body" Is Not "Physical Body" But "Mental Body" (*Manomaya Kāya*)

2. Therefore, in most of the realms below the *Brahma* realms, there is an "additional body," the "physical body."

- That physical body is required ONLY to provide sensory inputs on tastes, smells, and touches.
- In contrast to the physical body, the mental body has "something extra" that makes it ALIVE, as we will discuss below. It is quite clear that the "physical body" is secondary to the "mental body" (*manomaya kāya* or the *gandhabba*.)
- In fact, the mental body can perform the other functions (seeing and hearing) BETTER if it is not trapped inside the physical body.
- The lady in the following video was born blind. She could not see only because there was something wrong with her PHYSICAL eyes, the optic nerve, or the visual cortex in the brain. Once the *gandhabba* (mental body) came out, she was able to see for the first time in her life:

  WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body
- In the previous post, "Origin of Life – One Creates One's Own Future Lives," I added another relevant video a day after that post was published. You may want to watch that video too. Both these videos present powerful evidence of not only the existence of *gandhabba* but also why it is the "essence of a human." The physical body is just a shell.
- **All mental activity occurs in the *gandhabba* or the mental body.** However, we cannot taste, smell, or touch without that physical body.

Relevance to *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā – Paṭikūlamanasikāra Pabba*

3. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (DN 22,) the Buddha allocated several sections under the *Kāyānupassanā* section to discuss the physical human body.

- The subsection on 1.4. *Kāyānupassanā Paṭikūlamanasikāra Pabba* describes the 32 parts of the human body. That title is incorrectly translated as "Applying the Mind to **Repulsiveness** of the Body." That section is there to show that the physical body of a human is just a "collection of parts."
- The Buddha never emphasized "repulsiveness" of anything. (He only emphasized the "unfruitfulness" of getting attached to "mind-pleasing" things in this world.)
- If one starts contemplating that one's body is repulsive (as many people mistakenly do,) that only leads to *paṭigha* (friction) in the mind. Such a mindset is not conducive to meditation.

Relevance to *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā – Dhātumanasikāra Pabba*

4. The next subsection, 1.5. *Kāyānupassanā Dhātumanasikāra Pabba,* points out that the physical body only has four great elements (*pathavī dhātu*, *āpo dhātu*, *tejo dhātu*, *vāyo dhātū*.) Bodies of any other living beings are, as well as inert objects, also have the same four great elements. There is NOTHING in the PHYSICAL BODY of a human being that is different compared to an animal or an inert object.

- In the language of modern science, all those have the same atoms and molecules.

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- There is nothing special about the composition of the human body. The basic unit of a living cell is the same for a human as an animal. See the video in #9 of the post, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin." That post started the series of posts on "Origin of Life." We will be referring back to those posts often.
- If there is anything "special" in a human or animal body, that is the cell. We remember that a human physical body starts with just a single cell (zygote) and, of course, a *gandhabba*. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- By the way, plants have cells too. A tiny seed grows to a big tree because of cell division. However, only humans and animals have mental bodies, that set them apart from plants. Plants cannot think.

Relevance to *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā – Navasivathika Pabba*

5. Then the section on 1.6. *Kāyānupassanā Navasivathika Pabba* is about contemplating on what happens to that physical body after one dies.

- Once the *gandhabba* or the *manomaya kāya* leaves a dead physical body, that physical body is no different from a log of wood.
- It is the *manomaya kāya* that keeps a physical body "live" and "warm." As soon as the *gandhabba* leaves for good, the physical body loses the "aliveness." Our dog died several years ago, and I was shocked when I touched its dead body. It was cold and rigid, just like a piece of wood. The body warmth may be there for a little while because it takes some time to lose the body heat.
- In the days of the Buddha, most dead bodies were taken deep into the forests and discarded. Then wild animals would come and eat those bodies. If a body is not eaten by animals, it will start decaying and will start smelling bad. Then it will lose the flesh over time, and only the bones would be left. Even those bones will degrade and become dust in the long term.
- This *Navasivathika Bhāvanā* needs to be done in that fashion, to realize the unfruitfulness of getting overly attached to the physical body. Of course, we need to keep it in good shape by eating healthy and exercising regularly. If the physical body becomes out-of-shape that will lead to illnesses and much discomfort. We need to live a comfortable (not luxurious) life in order to be able to make progress on the Path.

The Uniqueness of the Mental Body (*Manomaya Kāya*)

6. It helps a lot to realize that one's physical body cannot be taken as one's essence.

- Even the mental body does not have an essence since that also will be discarded when a new existence (*bhava*) is grasped.
- However, the mental body is ESSENTIAL to make progress on the Path. The mental body of human existence is "hard to get" and thus we should utilize it now that we have that rare opportunity.

Why Is Mental Body Unique?

7. **The mental body (*gandhabba*) is VERY DIFFERENT from the physical body.** The mental body has a few of the smallest units of matter (*suddhāṭṭhaka*) TOGETHER with the essential elements of LIFE. Those ESSENTIAL elements are the *hadaya vatthu* and a set of five *pasāda rūpa*. **Those are the only LIVE things in a human (or an animal.)**

- The *hadaya vatthu* is the "seat of the mind" and where thoughts (*citta*) arise.
- We experience the five physical sensory inputs with the five *pasāda rūpa*.
- **Those essential items (collectively called *gandhabba*) are created by *kammic* energy and sustain the human *bhava*.**

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How the Mental Body Controls the Physical Body

8. A live physical body has a *gandhabba* (mental body) in it. In the post "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba," we discussed a good analogy of how the mental body controls the physical body (see #8 in that post.)

- That *gandhabba* consists of a UNIQUE set of seven items called "*dasaka*" or "packages of tens." Those are listed in #9 of the post "Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body." In many posts, I often refer to six entities: *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa*.
- Different types of *dasaka* are formed just by incorporating **one mode of spin (*bramana*) and one mode of rotation (*paribramana*)** to a *suddhāṭṭhaka* (smallest unit of matter.) That is how an inert *suddhāṭṭhaka* becomes ALIVE. **When the *kammic* energy wears out, those motions stop, and that is the end of that existence (*bhava*.)**
- Details are in the two posts, "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba," and "Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body." One can get a deeper understanding by reading those posts. It is good to have at least a general idea.

The Mental Body Is Created by *Kammic* Energy

9. In fact, as we have discussed, when ANY living being grasps ANY new existence a corresponding mental body is created by the *kammic* energy. That mental body matches the particular *kamma* that was responsible for the new existence (*bhava*.)

- If that *kamma* was a *pāpa kamma* done with anger (say the killing of a human,) then the new *bhava* could be in a *niraya* (hell.) If that *kamma* was a *puñña kamma* done with compassion (say taking care of an invalid or sick person,) then the new *bhava* could be in a *Deva* realm. See, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."
- Both those two scenarios could be true of ANY person who is below the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage.
- The point is that even if one did not kill a human in the CURRENT life, that could have been done in a previous life. **We have no idea what we have done in our previous lives. That is the danger in the rebirth process.**

Gandhabba (Mental Body) Is Unique to Human and Animal Realms

10. We started the series with five posts ("Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin" to "Cloning and Gandhabba" that laid the basic foundation of the Buddha's description of life. As summarized in that first post, Buddha taught that there is no "traceable beginning" to life. That means each of us has existed (among the 31 realms of this world) "forever."

- The next four posts specifically dealt with life in the human realm. It is a bit complex because human life involves a physical body (collection of material body parts) in addition to the mental body created by *kammic* energy. That same picture also holds for the animal realm.
- Living beings in all other realms just have "one integrated body." For example, a *Brahma* only has a "body" very similar to the human mental body (*gandhabba*.) Such a "body" is "mostly mental" and the amount of matter is million-times smaller than a mustard seed. Of course, it expands to the size of the human body while inside the human body (it is like an energy field.)
- A *Deva* has a bit more dense "material body," but is still invisible to us. Again, it has no *gandhabba*-type separate mental body.
- Beings in the lower realms may have denser bodies, but again do not have separate mental bodies.
- We need to focus more on human life. The growth of a "human body" **starting with an inert single cell** in the mother's womb cannot be explained without the concept of *gandhabba*. That is why I published those four posts on *gandhabba* at the beginning of the series.

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Summary

11. It is the mental body that is much more important than the physical body due to the following reasons.

- The "essence of a human" is the mental body that has the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) and the five *pasāda rūpa* (that "sense" visuals, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches.) Those entities are what constitute "the mind." The ONLY WAY those can be created is via our *kammic* energy in our thoughts (specifically *javana cittā*.)
- The mental body (*gandhabba*) controls the physical body.
- A physical body lives only about a hundred years, while the mental body (*gandhabba*) may last many hundreds of years.
- However, we also need a healthy physical body to live a healthy life. We especially need a healthy brain since all external sensory inputs are first processed by the brain.

5.2.8.6.3 "Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1

February 8, 2020; added #13 (pronunciation guide) on July 23, 2020

Background

1. Just three months after the *Parinibbāna* (passing away) of the Buddha, the First Buddhist Council (*Dhamma Sangāyanā*) took place. The leading disciples of the Buddha realized the importance of organizing the teachings of the Buddha accumulated over 45 years. That process was organizing the material into "three baskets" (*Tipiṭaka*) was completed only at the Third Council held 200 years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha.

- The material in the *Tipiṭaka* was transmitted mostly verbally from one generation to the next over roughly the first four hundred years. It was only at the Fourth Council that the *Tipiṭaka* was written down.
- The *Tipiṭaka* (or the Pāli Canon) was written down at the turn of the first century, 2000 years ago, in Matale, Sri Lanka. Pāli is a spoken language and does not have its own script. The *Tipiṭaka* was written with the Sinhala script.
- See details at "Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma."

Writing Pāli Words in English – Different Convention

2. There are two specific issues in writing Pāli words in any language. Note that this is **not** regarding **translation to English**.

- Pāli is a phonetic language, meaning words need to provide the original sounds. Many words have their meanings explicit in the way they sound. See, "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"
- However, In "Standard English," the same letter combinations may yield different sounds. For example, "**th**" is pronounced differently in "**th**em" than in "**th**ief." Therefore, "Standard English" writing will lead to problems in writing Pāli words.
- The second problem is that Pāli words written with "Standard English" become very long. I see many Sri Lankans writing "*anicca*" as "*anichcha*" (අනිච්ච in Sinhala) because that is how it is pronounced. I also used to write "*gati*" as "*gathi*" since that is how it is pronounced.
- However, we need to adhere to the convention adopted by the Early Europeans (in the late 1800s) to avoid confusion.

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3. When the early Europeans started writing the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* using the English alphabet (which originated from the Latin alphabet), they realized the necessity to represent the original sounds in an "unambiguous and efficient" way.

- We will call the convention they adopted "*Tipiṭaka* English."
- **That "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention is DIFFERENT from "Standard English."**
- Let us first address the "sound" issue.

English "th" Sound Depends on the Word

4. We know that "**th**" represents a different sound in the word "**th**em" than in "**th**ief."

- A **phoneme** is the smallest contrastive segment in a language. In other words, they are the smallest building blocks that make the difference between two different words. The term ***digraph*** describes a combination of two letters that represent only a single phoneme.
- In words like them, father, and writhe, the ***digraph*** is **th (voiced),** and the **phoneme** is /th/. This is the "ද්" sound in Sinhala, as we will see below.
- On the other hand, in words like thief, Catholic, and both, the ***digraph*** is **th (voiceless)** and the **phoneme** is /th/. This is the "ත" sound in Sinhala.
- Don't worry about the above technical terms. **The point here is that one MUST be aware of the correct "Standard English" when pronouncing those English words.**
- That was one reason to adopt a new "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention. Now, let us discuss the second reason.

Pāli Words can become very long in "Standard English"

5. Now let us see why the "Standard English" convention leads to long words written with the English (Latin) alphabet. Let us take a simple Pāli word, "***citta***". In the original *Tipiṭaka*, it was written as "චිත්ත" in Sinhala.

The "ch" sound in English is seen, for example, in "china" and "chain." It takes two English letters to produce the **"ච"** sound. In the same way, the "ත" sound requires two letters, "th," in English as in "Thailand" or "both."

- Therefore, in "Standard English," "චිත්ත" would be reproduced as "**chiththa**."
- As you can see, to write that word using "Standard English," it would take eight letters instead of five letters in "**citta**."
- With more complex Pāli words, the corresponding "Standard English" reproduction would be cumbersome. **That seems to be the second reason for using a different "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention; see below.**

Evolution of "Tipiṭaka English"

To address both the above issues, a "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention was adopted in the 1800s, as we discuss below. If you have not grasped what I am trying to get to, you will see it below.

6. I came across an old book, by James D'Alwis, published in **1870** (**Ref. 1**), that describes the historical process of cataloging the Pāli literature found in Sri Lanka (called Ceylon at that time.) The book is available at Amazon.

- The seed for the project was a request by a government agent in 1868 to the "Chief Translator to Government" to assist with a project in India to collect and compile Sanskrit literature.

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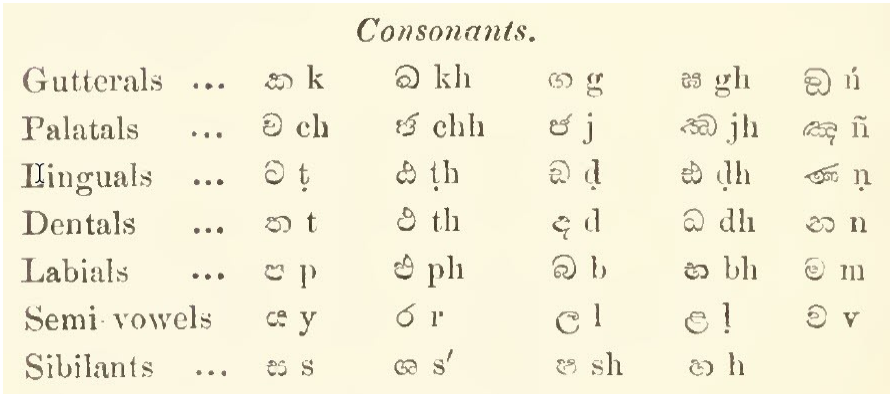
- In 1869, the Chief Translator to Government replied that nearly all Sanskrit manuscripts in Ceylon were "importations from India." He suggested that it would be worthwhile to initiate a similar effort to collect and compile the Pāli and Sinhalese manuscripts that existed in Ceylon.
- That proposal was approved in early 1870. James D'Alwis, who had done some work on Pāli/Sinhalese literature and Buddhism, was selected to collect and compile such manuscripts mainly from Buddhist temples ("*pansalas*.)"
- Mr. D'Alwis was a civil servant of the British Government at that time. At that time, there was a concerted effort by the English civil servants to recover and preserve all ancient literature that they came across in the Asian countries. See, "Background on the Current Revival of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma)."
- The above background is confirmed by Dr. Malalasekera's account in **Ref. 2**, pp. xv-xvii.

The Original Convention for "*Tipiṭaka* English"

7. The goal was to collect all Pāli manuscripts and write them with the English (Latin) alphabet. The early work by Mr. D'Alwis followed (as quoted from p. xxviii of the book) "the system sanctioned by Government in the Minute, which is published in the Appendix."

- A full-page in the Appendix has the complete alphabet of the Sinhala language (and the corresponding English script adopted.) Download here: Complete Orthography – Sinhala to English
- That page (on p. 234 of the book) has the Sinhala alphabet, together with the Latin letters adopted to represent those sounds (**adopted on August 28, 1866.)** That was the first version of the "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention. As we will see below, one more change was adopted based on a recommendation by D'Alwis.
- It may be difficult to read that page. The following is an enlarged section containing the consonants.



Consonants.

Gutterals ...	ක k	ඛ kh	ග g	ඝ gh	ඞ ṅ
Palatals ...	ච ch	ඡ chh	ජ j	ඣ jh	ඤ ñ
Linguals ...	ට ṭ	ඨ ṭh	ඩ ḍ	ඪ ḍh	ණ ṇ
Dentals ...	ත t	ථ th	ද d	ධ dh	න n
Labials ...	ප p	ඵ ph	බ b	භ bh	ම m
Semi-vowels	ය y	ර r	ල l	ළ ḷ	ව v
Sibilants ...	ස s	ශ s′	ෂ sh	හ h	

Download here: Pāli Words – Sinhala to English Script – Consonants

Consonants

Gutterals	කk	ඛkh	ගg	ඝgh	ඞṅ
Palatals	චch	ඡchh	ජj	ඣjh	ඤñ
Linguals	ටṭ	ඨṭh	ඩḍ	ඪḍh	ණṇ
Dentals	තt	ථth	දd	ධdh	නn
Labials	පp	ඵph	බb	භbh	මm
Semi vowels	යy	රr	ලl	ළḷ	වv
Sibilants	සs	ශs'	ෂsh	හh	

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- Now, let us discuss some of the adopted conventions in "*Tipiṭaka* English."

Only "t" Represents the "ත" Sound

8. The letter "ත" in Sinhala **represents the sound "th" is in Thailand or north. But the "*Tipiṭaka* convention" is to use "t."**

- Therefore, Thailand in "ordinary English" becomes "Tailand" in "*Tipiṭaka* English."
- The word "gati" is pronounced as "gathi," where **the sound "th" is in Thailand.** But the "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention is to write as "gati."
- The word "***Tipiṭaka"*** also starts with the "ත" sound. In "Standard English," it would be, "***Thipiṭaka.***"

Anatta in "Standard English" would be "anaththa."

- Therefore, words become significantly shorter with the "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention. With more complex words with the "ch" and "th" sounds, the corresponding English words can become very long.

Only "d" Represents the "ද" Sound

9. Another is the "ද" sound, pronounced like "this." In "***Tipiṭaka* English," the letter "d" represents the "th" sound in "this" or "that."**

- For example, the Pāli word "දස" in "Tipiṭaka English" is "dasa." which needs to be pronounced like the "th" sound in "the" or "that."
- Of course, the word "dasa" appears in "dasa akusala" for "ten immoral deeds."
- More examples are sadda, *hadaya* and ***D****eva.*

The "ච" Sound In the Above Table is With "ch"

10. It is interesting to see that the above Table (in #7) has the "ච" sound In the represented with "**ch**" as in "Standard English." **Thus the decision to just use "c" to represent the "ච" sound was made later on.**

- The text in D'Alwis's book represented that "mixed convention." On p. 136, for example, the name "Kacchchāna" appears. In modern texts, it is "Kaccāna."
- The word "vivicchati" (විවිච්ඡති in Sinhala) appears on p. 73 as "vivichchhati," where "ch" represented the "ච" sound and "chh" represented the "ඡ" sound. We can see why they decided to make that change too!
- By the time "The Dhammasangani" by Edward Müller came out in **1885** (**Ref. 3**), they had adopted the current convention to use "c" to represent the "ච" sound.

Current Convention – Only "c" Represents the "ච" Sound

11. For example, the letter "ච" frequently appears in Pāli verses, and it has the "**ch**" sound (as in **ch**ai tea). In "ordinary English," the Pāli word *anicca* (අනිච්ච) would be "anichcha." You can see why that would lead to very long words in English. I used to do that too, and I still see some Sri Lankans writing words that way.

- Therefore, in almost all cases, **a single English letter "c" represents the "ch" sound in "Tipiṭaka English."**
- Note that "chai tea" would be "cai tea" in "*Tipiṭaka* English"!

"*Tipiṭaka* English" Conventions Hold Everywhere

12. The "ත" sound is ALWAYS represented by "**t,**" and, following are some examples that we use often.

- Atta, Anatta, gati, sota, tanhā, tejo, Tilakkhana, Tisarana, āyatana

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The "ḍ" sound is ALWAYS represented by "d" as in the following:

- Hadaya, sadda, dosa, Deva, desanā, diṭṭhi, dukkha, dugati, pasāda

Finally, the "ඦ" sound is ALWAYS represented by "c" as in the following:

- Anicca, citta, cakkhu, cuti, paccayā, sacca, rūpāvacara, cetasika, cetanā

The above words are pronounced in the audio below:

Pāli-words-Tipitaka-English-Post-1

Pāli Alphabet with Illustrations & subtitles

13. The following video could be very useful in learning the Pāli alphabet (in English.) Moreover, it provides excellent instructions on pronunciation.

WebLink: youtube: PALI 101 – Pāli for Beginners – Level 1 - Pāli Alphabet with Illustrations & subtitles

REFERENCES

1. James D'Alwis, "A Descriptive Catalogue of Sanskrit, Pāli, and Sinhalese Literary Works of Ceylon, Volume I" (**1870**)
2. G. P. Malalasekera, "Pāli Literature of Ceylon" (2010 edition; first edition 1928)
3. Edward Müller, "The Dhammasaṅgani" (**1885)**

A few more important features of the "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention discussed in the next post, "Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2.

5.2.8.6.4 "Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2

February 15, 2020; added #12 (pronunciation guide) on July 23, 2020

Introduction

1. In the previous post, we discussed the reasons for the adoption of a "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention to write Pāli words by the European scholars in the 1800s. It is necessary to read that post first: "'Tipiṭaka English' Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1."

- As we discussed, those early European scholars realized the importance of the need to preserve the "Pāli sounds" as much as possible. Of course, the other requirement was to keep the corresponding English version short.
- In that post, we discussed the adoption of "**ṭ**," "**ḍ**," and "**c**" to represent the "ට," "ඩ," and the "ච" sounds in Pāli.
- Here we will continue that discussion. The "**ṭ**" (with a "dot" underneath the "t") represents the "ට" sound in Pāli.
- Then there are **aspirated** sounds "**th**", "**dh**", "**ch**", and "**ṭh**" respectively for the "**t**", "**d**", "**c**", and "**ṭ**" sounds. SOME of those "aspirated words" represent "emphasized versions" of the "unaspirated words." I will explain it below.

We Need to Be Familiar With the "*Tipiṭaka* English" Convention

2. As I mentioned in the previous post, the above convention went into effect before the year **1900**. Thus all Pāli documents compiled by the Pāli Text Society are consistent with this convention.

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- It seems that the **Pāli texts (with the English alphabet)** available at the Sutta Central website are directly from the Pāli Text Society. **Those texts are accurate.** For example, here is the "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta (SN 56.11)" that was the first discourse delivered by the Buddha.
- It is an excellent idea to examine that *sutta* (and try pronunciations of those Pāli words) with the guidelines provided with my two posts on the "*Tipiṭaka* English" Convention.
- Many of my posts at the puredhamma.net website are not entirely consistent with the "*Tipiṭaka* English" Convention, but I will try to make them compatible gradually. I have been trying to "upgrade" several posts each week in recent months.
- Of course, as I have repeatedly pointed out, many **English translations** of Pāli words at Sutta Central site are **not correct.** Examples include *anicca*, *anatta*, *Ānāpāna Bhāvanā,* and *viññāṇa*. See, for example, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- Now let us continue with the introduction to the "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention.

Only "ṭ" Represents the "ට" Sound

2. The "ට" sound in Pāli is the "ta" sound in English, as in "**T**om." The "ට" sound in Pāli is ALWAYS represented by "**ṭ.**" **Note the "dot" underneath the "t."**

- Some examples are *Paṭicca, paṭigha, paṭiloma, paṭisandhi, paṭipadā.*
- In the previous post, we saw that the "ත" sound is ALWAYS represented by "**t**" (without the "dot" underneath the t.)
- The word ***T**ipiṭaka* is an excellent example of both sounds, the "**t**" and the "**ṭ**." I hope you can catch the difference in the audio in #4 below.

Aspirated Versions

3. Now let us consider the "aspirated versions" of those four sounds that we have discussed so far. We need to keep in mind that we are dealing with "*Tipiṭaka* English" and NOT "Standard English."

- **The aspirated version accompanies a forceful expulsion of air.** If you hold a thin piece of paper in front of the mouth, it should move when you make an "aspirated sound."
- The following video explains that for English words. But it is the same idea.

  WebLink: youtube: Aspirated sounds

Putting Emphasis on "ට" Sound to Make the "ඨ" Sound

4. The "**ṭ**" ("ට") sound, when aspirated with "**ṭh,**" becomes the "ඨ" sound. It is not that common to have the "**ṭh**" by itself. An example is ***ṭh**apetvā*, meaning "placement."

- In most cases, the "**ṭ**" sound is in a word just before the "**ṭh**" sound as in *aṭṭha* (අට for number 8.)
- Here are more examples of the "**ṭ**" ("ට") AND "**ṭh**" ("ඨ") sounds coming together: *diṭṭhi* (දිට්ඨ for view), *sandiṭṭhika* (සන්දිට්ඨික for "seeing '*saŋ*'"), *aṭṭha* as in *aṭṭha purisapuggalā* and *aṭṭhaṅgika, kammaṭṭhāna, satipaṭṭhāna.*
- In #2, we mentioned some example words with the "**ṭ**" sound: *Paṭicca, paṭigha, paṭiloma, paṭisandhi, paṭipadā.*
- Compare all those with the following words with just the "**t**" ("ත") sound: a**tt**a (අත්ත for the truth), sa**tt**a (සත්ත for living being; note that *Bodhisatta* is a living being who is striving to attain the *Buddhahood*.)
- Here is the pronunciation of the unaspirated *paṭicca, paṭigha, paṭiloma, paṭisandhi, paṭipadā* AND aspirated ***ṭh**apetvā*. Both aspirated and unaspirated in *aṭṭha, diṭṭhi, sandiṭṭhika, aṭṭhaṅgika, kammaṭṭhāna, and satipaṭṭhāna*. Also, ***T**ipiṭaka.*

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WebLink: mp3 file: Pali words Tipitaka English Post 2-1

Putting Emphasis on "ත" Sound to Make "ථ" Sound

5. The sound "**th**" is the "aspirated version" of "**t**" as in *Samatha* (සමථ in Sinhala) in *Samatha Bhāvanā*. The word ratha (රථfor "vehicle") is another.

- Here are more words with both the "**t**" and the "**th**" sounds: **t**a**th**āga**t**a (තථාගත), na**tth**i, a**tth**i, ya**th**ābhūta, hadaya va**tth**u.

6. There are a few words with both aspirated and unaspirated versions. For example, when the "*atta*" (අත්ත) refers to the meaning "truth," it is (the "true-ness") emphasized with the word "*attha*" (අත්ථ).

- There are a few words like that where the **meaning is emphasized with the aspirated version.** We will discuss that with examples from the *Tipiṭaka* later on. Two more such words addressed in #8 below.
- Many other words do not have such an "emphasized" and "non-emphasized" versions. Here are some examples with ONLY the "**th**" sound: *vi**th**i, Itt**h**i, Samatha, **Th**ero*, For example, **there are no words as** vi**t**i, Itti, Samata, or **T**ero.
- Here is the pronunciation of *Samatha, ratha, tathāgata, natthi, atthi, yathābhūta, hadaya vatthu, vīthi, Itthi, Samatha, Thero*.

WebLink: mp3 file: Pali words Tipitaka English Post 2-2

Putting Emphasis on "ද" Sound to Make the "ධ" Sound

7. The sound "**dh**" is the "aspirated version" of "**d**" as in ***Dh**amma* (ධම්ම). More examples of words with the "**dh**" sound: ***Dh**amma, a**dh**amma, **dh**ātu, gan**dh**a, gan**dh**abba, mid**dh**a, niro**dh**a, sad**dh**ā, **an dh a, san dh i, sā dh u, paṭisan dh i, samā dh i.***

- Both the unaspirated and the aspirated sounds are in words, ***Dh**ammapada* (ධම්මපද in Sinhala) and *Buddha* (බුද්ධ), i.e., both the **dh** and **d** sounds appear. More examples: *passaddhi, iddhi, middha.*
- Here is the pronunciation of ***Dh**amma, a**dh**amma, **dh**ātu, gan**dh**a, gan**dh**abba, mid**dh**a, niro**dh**a, sad**dh**ā, **an dh a, san dh i, sā dh u, paṭisan dh i, samā dh i, Dh**ammapada, Buddha, passaddhi, iddhi, middha.*

WebLink: mp3 file: Pali words Tipitaka English Post 2-3

Putting Emphasis on "ච" Sound to Make the "ඡ" Sound

8. The sound "**ch**" ("ඡ") is the "aspirated version" of "**c**" ("ච") as in ***ch**anda* (ඡන්ද) meaning "desire." The unaspirated is in ***c**alana* (චලන), meaning "movement."

- Most Pāli words with the "**ch**" sound also have the "**c**" sound coming first. Some examples are, *i**cch**a, vicikii**cch**ā, appi**cch**a* (*appa i**cch**a*), *ma**cch**ariya, mi**cch**ā, mi**cch**ācāra, mi**cch**āvācā, pari**cch**eda, ga**cch**ati, u**cch**eda.*
- Two more critical Pāli words have the aspirated version emphasizing the meaning of the unaspirated version, just like in the case of atta/attha discussed above in #6.
- Those two are *i**cc**a/i**cch**a* (ඉච්ච/ඉච්ඡ) and *ani**cc**a/ani**cch**a* (අනිච්ච/අනිච්ඡ). The two aspirated words emphasize the meanings of unaspirated words. We will discuss that in the next post.
- Here is the pronunciation of ***ch**anda, **c**alana, i**cch**a, vicikii**cch**ā, appi**cch**a, ma**cch**ariya, mi**cch**ā, mi**cch**ācāra, mi**cch**āvācā, pari**cch**eda, ga**cch**ati, u**cch**eda, i**cc**a, i**cch**a, ani**cc**a, ani**cch**a.*

WebLink: mp3 file: Pali words Tipitaka English Post 2-4

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Connection to Key Concepts in Buddha Dhamma

9. The next post will focus on some specific subtleties in Pāli that will help clarify some key concepts, including *anatta*.

- Over the past year, I have realized that many misconceptions could be easily avoided by looking at a few Pāli words and their inherent meanings.
- For example, the Pāli word *atta* has two different meanings. Furthermore, the word *attha* emphasizes just one of those two meanings.
- Similarly, the meanings of the words *icca* and *anicca* become emphasized in *iccha* and *aniccha*.

Many of Posts at Puredhamma.net May Not be Up To "*Tipiṭaka* English" Convention

10. I became aware of this issue gradually over the past several months. During that time, I have progressively taken into more of the above rules. I will try to stick to this convention in future posts and will gradually revise old posts to be compatible too. That will take some time.

- All Pāli literature at the Sutta Central website seems to be compatible with the "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention. The "legacy site" with the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* is at "SuttaCentral."
- Once you select a *sutta*, you can access translations to several languages using the "hamburger icon" on the top left.
- Of course, all translations there have errors, especially with keywords like *anicca*, *anatta*, *Ānāpāna Bhāvanā,* and *viññāṇa*.

Singular to Plural in Pāli

11. The following issue is not somewhat unrelated, and many people could be aware of it. But I would mention it here since it is essential to know.

- Many Pāli nouns ending in "short *a* (/ə/)" converted to plural by replacing that "short *a*" with a "long *a*" or *ā*.
- For example, *Deva, Brahma, sutta, citta, apāya, gandhabba, jhāna* are singular and the corresponding plural are *Devā, Brahmā, suttā, cittā, apāyā, gandhabbā, jhānā*.
- Finally, Pāli Glossary pages with pronunciation available at "Tables and Summaries."

Pāli Alphabet with Illustrations & subtitles

12. The following video could be very useful in learning the Pāli alphabet (in English.) Moreover, it provides excellent instructions on pronunciation.

WebLink: youtube: PALI 101 – Pāli for Beginners – Level 1 - Pāli Alphabet with Illustrations & subtitles

5.2.9 Origin of Life – One Creates One's Own Future Lives

January 25, 2020; revised January 26, 2020 (video inserted in #15)

Introduction – Origin of Life

1. In the first post in this series, I pointed out that there is no traceable "beginning" to the life of any existing living being. See, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."

- However, any living being's FUTURE LIVES are created by that living being.

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- It is critical to understand how one's mindset and thoughts (in particular *abhisaṅkhāra*) can lead to different types of rebirths. That is the basis of Buddha Dhamma and is explained in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS.)
- In simple terms, "bad thoughts/mindset" lead to "bad births" and "good thoughts/mindset" lead to "good births." The problem is that most are "bad births" and those infrequent "good births" do not last long.
- The Buddha said, "One who sees *Paṭicca Samuppāda* sees the Dhamma. One who sees the Dhamma sees *Paṭicca Samuppāda*." See, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"."

2. In the first several posts in "Origin of Life," we discussed the background material necessary to understand how a complex **physical body of a human** starts with a single cell, a zygote.

- However, **the most important part of a human is not the physical body, but the mental body**. It goes by various names in Buddha Dhamma, *manomaya kāya* and *gandhabba* being the most common. However, that mental body arises due to a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* and remains as a *kamma bīja* until coming to the mind of a living being at the beginning of a new existence (*bhava*) as a *dhammā.*
- Average humans focus only on keeping the physical body in good condition. It is much more beneficial to improve the "mental body." That way, one will be able to stop ALL FUTURE SUFFERING.

Critical Role of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

3. The seed (*kamma bīja*) for a future existence (*bhava*) is the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* cultivated via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" in PS. I briefly discussed/explained that with nine recent posts on *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS.) The last of those posts, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – From Mind to Matter" came to that conclusion.

- In many previous posts, we have discussed that *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*, *gandhabba*, *kamma bīja*, and *dhammā* are very similar terms. See, "Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections."
- When grasping a new human existence, that *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* becomes a human *gandhabba* with the complete blueprint of that human. See, "Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections."
- Then we discussed the 1990 movie "ghost" to provide visualization of a human *gandhabba*. A *gandhabba* has only a trace matter. An average human cannot see a *gandhabba*. **However, it has the complete "blueprint" for a human.** See, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- That *gandhabba* then gives rise to a fully-grown human as explained in the two posts, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."

4. There is a lot of information summarized above using different terms. In the following, I will try to organize that in a systematic way and will also describe the "bigger picture" within the 31 realms of existence.

The General Process of Grasping an Existence (*Bhava*)

5. In broad terms, there are three main existences (*bhava*) but they branch out to thirty-one. Existence in the *kāma bhava* (i.e., 11 realms in *kāma loka*), *rūpa bhava* (16 realms in *rūpāvacara Brahma loka*), and *arūpa bhava* (4 realms in *arūpāvacara Brahma loka.*) The 11 realms in *kāma loka* are the 4 realms in the *apāya*, one human, and six *Deva* realms.)

- **Thus, there are 31 existences (*bhava*) in this world. Any living being belongs to one of those.** Each such existence has a finite lifetime. Some are fixed and others are variable. *Deva* and *Brahma* realms have fixed lifetimes. Lower realms starting with the human realm have variable lifetimes. See, "31 Realms of Existence."
- However, when a living being grasps a new existence in ANY realm, the duration of that existence WILL BE fixed. For the human and lower realms, that lifetime depends on the *kammic* energy that "feeds" that

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particular existence. For example, one human may have that human existence for 10,000 years and another may have only 900 years.

Each *Bhava* Starts With a Mind-Made Body (*Manomaya Kāya*)

6. Any living being (other than an *Arahant*) will grasp (or latch onto) a new existence when the current existence runs out of its lifetime. At that moment, *kammic* energy for the new existence creates a **"mind-made body" or a *manomaya kāya***.

- That transition from one existence (*bhava*) to another happens with an *uppatti* PS process. Specifically, that happens with the "*upādāna paccayā* ***bhava***" step in that *uppatti* PS cycle.
- But it is a ***paṭisandhi viññāṇa***" created via "*saṅkhāra paccayā* ***viññāṇa***" step in PS that is responsible for that new existence (*bhava.*)
- In other words, the *kammic* energy embedded in that *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* is the energy that creates the *manomaya kāya* of the new existence (*bhava.*) **Thus, *manomaya kāya* has only a tiny bit of energy that was created by the mind.**
- **That manomaya kāya does not die until the end of that bhava. Living beings in each and every realm will have a manomaya kāya.**
- Details are at the nine posts on PS, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'."

Brahma Realms Only Have *Manomaya Kāya*

7. A *manomaya kāya* has a *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) and UP TO five *pasāda rūpa* (that enable experiencing the external world.) The *hadaya vatthu* is different for different realms and also has INDIVIDUAL characteristics. **Thus even two humans will have different *hadaya vatthu* embedding their personal characteristics.** The following is a brief summary of different realms.

- The four highest *Brahma* realms (*arūpāvacara Brahma* realms) have ONLY the *hadaya vatthu*. Those *Brahmā* can only think.
- *Brahmā* in the 16 *rūpāvacara Brahma* realms have *hadaya vatthu* and TWO *pasāda rūpa*: *cakkhu* and *sota pasāda rūpa*. They can see and hear with just those *pasāda rūpa*. They do not have physical bodies, and thus do not have eyes and ears like us. Their "seeing" does not require light and they "see' things far away. In the same way, they can hear sounds that are far away. But they need to "direct their attention" to a particular location to see or hear.
- All those *Brahmā* in the 20 *Brahma* realms have only *manomaya kāya.*

Living Beings in *Kāma Loka* Realms Have Denser Bodies In Addition to *Manomaya Kāya*

8. Things become complex when we get to the 11 realms in the *kāma loka*.

- *Devā* in the six *Deva* realms have *manomaya kāya* with *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa.* They also have "physical bodies" like ours but at a much finer level. Those "subtle bodies" are also created by *kammic* energy and thus *Devā* are born with their "full bodies." That means they do not grow or get old but just die at the end of their lifetimes. There is only one "*jāti*" within a *Brahma* or *Deva bhava*. We cannot see either *Brahmā* or *Devā*.
- Human "structure" is the same as that of the *Devā* but, of course, human physical bodies are much denser. Furthermore, human "structure" has many common features with the animal realm. The other three lower realms in the *kāma loka* are more complex and we will not discuss them here.
- Let us briefly discuss the features of the human and animal realm. I will address only the human realm, but most of those features are the same for the animal realm.

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There are Multiple *Jāti* Within a Human *Bhava*

9. A human also has a *manomaya kāya* with a *hadaya vatthu* and five *pasāda rūpa*. But a human can exist in TWO forms.

- **ONE:** Much of the time in the human *bhava*, it stays with JUST the *manomaya kāya.* That state is normally referred to as the *gandhabba* state. A *gandhabba* is like a *Brahma* in the following aspect. A *gandhabba* can see and hear without the aid of physical eyes and physical ears. Even though it has five *pasāda rūpa*, it cannot touch, taste, or smell since there is no dense physical body.
- **TWO:** A human will have a "dense physical body" only after that *gandhabba* (*manomaya kāya*) gets into a womb and creates a physical human body.
- It is good to contemplate how such a tiny amount of energy in a *manomaya kāya* can "build" a human body that can weigh over a hundred pounds (or many kilograms.)

A *Gandhabba* for a Human Is Like a Seed for a Tree

10. A good point to start is to think about how a tiny seed grows into a huge oak tree.

- That seed has the blueprint for the whole tree. The seed germinates and pulls in food and water from the soil to grow into a large tree. The tree trunk, limbs, and leaves are all made from the food and water extracted from the soil.
- In the same way, the "seed" for a full-grown human is a zygote, which is a single cell. But a zygote by itself cannot grow into a human. A "human mental body" (or a *gandhabba*) needs to merge with the zygote to start the process. See, "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba."
- The mental body or the *gandhabba* has the blueprint for a full-grown human. Some features of the physical body come from the parents via the zygote.

11. We saw that the seed takes all the "building material" from the soil to grow to a tree. A "live zygote" grows first by taking food from the mother to become a baby. Once outside the womb, that baby starts eating food and becomes a grown human.

- This is why the physical body is secondary to the mental body (*gandhabba*.) **All mental activities are with the *gandhabba*. Furthermore, a *gandhabba* is fully human. It just does not have a dense body to be able to touch, eat, or to smell odors.** See, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept."
- The physical body is just a shell. The *gandhabba* makes all the decisions. The physical body is needed for the *gandhabba* to experience touches, tastes, and odors. See, "Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body."

The Lifetime of a *Gandhabba* Is the Length of Human *Bhava*

12. Therefore, within a human *bhava,* there can be many "human births" (*jāti*.) See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- When a physical body dies, the *gandhabba* comes out and waits for another womb. However, **that *gandhabba* state in between two human lives is not an *antarābhava* because it is within the SAME human *bhava***. See, "Antarābhava and Gandhabba."
- A human *jāti* lasts around a hundred years, but a human *bhava* may last thousands of years.
- Those different human births (*jāti*) within a human *bhava* will have similar characteristics. The physical appearance will change since those of parents influence via the zygote. But the successive lives usually have similar *gati* and also tend to have close geographic locations of birth.

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- A good example is Dhammruwan, who is now a Sri Lankan, but was born in India at the time of Buddhaghosa 1500 years ago; see, "Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years." More rebirth accounts at, "Evidence for Rebirth."

How Does a *Gandhabba* (or a *Brahma*) See and Hear Without Eyes and Ears?

13. In the movie "ghost" we saw that a *gandhabba* can see not only other *gandhabbā* (which is the plural for *gandhabba*) but also humans and anything else in the world. See, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept." How is that possible without having physical eyes and ears?

- Our understanding of nature is extremely limited. Before modern science made some technical breakthroughs within the past hundred years or so, we would not have believed that it would be possible to "see" an event happening thousands of miles away, in real-time. Yet, we do that with televisions now and don't think twice about it.
- These days we can record such visuals with micro-sensors that are so small that they are hard to see. Details at, "Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body."

14. When a human *gandhabba* is born (at a *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment of grasping a new *bhava*), the following amazingly miniature "sensors" are made by *kammic* energy.

- They are *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) and five *pasāda rūpa* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya.*) Of course, the *ghāna, jivhā,* and *kāya pasāda rūpa* REQUIRE signals from a physical body (of odors, tastes, and touches) to function.
- The *cakkhu* and *sota pasāda rūpa* can detect visuals and sounds without the aid of eyes and ears. The *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* is the smallest entity that can "see." *Sota pasāda rūpa* is the smallest entity that can hear.
- Evidence for the existence of *gandhabba* (*manomaya kāya*) has accumulated over the recent years, as we discuss now.

Seeing and Hearing With the "Mental Body" (*Gandhabba*)

15. People who had Near-Death Experiences (NDE) say they could see and hear even though their physical bodies (and the brains) were "clinically dead." They say they were watching doctors operating on their bodies from the ceiling. Their "mental bodies" (*gandhabbā*) had come out of the physical body. The book "Consciousness Beyond Life" by physician Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of NDE experienced by people undergoing heart operations. Here is a youtube video on the subject:

WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experiences & Evidence of the Afterlife

- Some people can have Out-of-Body Experiences at will; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." They can remove their *gandhabba kāya* from the physical body at will. Then they do not need eyes and ears to see and hear.
- Even though there are people who say they can teach others how to do that, I don't think that is possible. That ability is due to a *puñña iddhi* or due to past good *kamma*.

16. It is critical to realize that there phenomena that cannot be explained with our ordinary sensory experiences. Only a Buddha can discover these "hidden" facts about a wider world with 31 realms.

- However, the Buddha said that average humans are not capable of fully comprehending the characteristics of living beings in various realms. It is good to know the basic facts, but it does not serve any purpose to try to rationalize them with the limited sensory faculties we have.
- Yet any average human is capable of figuring out that these explanations are self-consistent and help clarify many of our experiences. That confidence will grow as one starts following the Path (i.e., not only

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living a moral life but also learn the true nature of this world.) The mind becomes purified and is able to "see" at deeper levels.

Why Do We Have Physical Bodies?

17. We need physical bodies to be able to touch (and for sex), taste foods, and to smell odors. But a physical body comes with a price. We have to endure all kinds of diseases including cancer, body aches, the decay of body parts, etc. *Brahmā* and *Devā* do not experience those, but of course, death is inevitable to all.

- Furthermore, it is a burden to "carry around" this heavy body. As I have mentioned before, even breathing requires an effort (but only asthma patients feel that.) It is such a relief to come out of the physical body, as described by those who have had NDE or OBE experiences.
- However, **if one is forced to stay with the *gandhabba* body for a long time**, one will start "missing" the ability to touch, taste, and smell. That is why all human *gandhabbā* desperately wish to be able to get into a womb to get a human birth.
- The point is that a *gandhabba* with an unimaginably small "body" can experience everything better, except the ability to touch, taste, and smell.

Why Are There So Many Different Terms for *Kammic* Energy?

18. Even though *viññāṇa, kamma bīja, dhammā*, and *gandhabba* are related, those terms are used in different contexts. Here is one way to remember how these different terms appear in different situations.

- First, energy for future *vipāka* (including future rebirths) created via "*(abhi)saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."
- Such tiny amounts of energies stay in the "*nāma loka*" (out there) as *kamma bīja* (*kamma* seeds.) See, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."
- When the conditions are right, a strong *kamma bīja* can give rise to a new existence (*bhava*) when those *kammic* energies come back to the mind as *dhammā.*
- Such a new existence are grasped as *paṭisandhi viññāṇa.* That *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* gives rise to a *manomaya kāya,* which has a special name of *gandhabba* for human and animal realms.
- *Manomaya kāya* means "a body made by the mind." **That is how we create our own future lives!**
- If you do not fully understand the above, you can read the previous posts in this series, or ask questions. It may take a little while to fully comprehend all relationships.

19. We have now finished the first phase of Buddha Dhamma dealing with the origin of life. **Life is not created by a Creator. It does not arise arbitrarily either.** We discussed those two extreme views earlier in "Origin of Life" series.

- Those concepts discussed above could be new to many, and thus may take some time to understand or get used to. But I assure that there is complete self-consistency of what I have described and also consistency with the *Tipiṭaka*. My suggestion is to print out this series of posts and to have them ready for quick reference. If there are any questions, please comment at the forum or send an email: lal@puredhamma.net.
- We will discuss several significant implications that can be reached with this "correct world view" of the Buddha in future posts.

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5.3 Good Explanations – Key to Weeding Out Bad Versions of Dhamma

1. Today, we have many different religions, world views, cults, and even different versions of the Buddha Dhamma: *Theravāda, Mahayana, Zen, Vajrayana* (Tibetan), etc. Actually, *Zen* and *Vajrayana* both originated from *Mahayana* (see, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze"); thus *Theravāda* and *Mahayana* are the two main categories. How could one decide which one to choose?

2. Here is a good example of an obvious inconsistency:

In *Mahayana* Buddhism, one is supposed to take a vow as to not to attain Enlightenment (*Nibbāna*) until ALL BEINGS are ready to attain *Nibbāna*. Whoever came up with this idea did not understand that there are an infinite number of beings.

- On this Earth alone, scientists estimate that there are 10 trillion of just ants (million ants for each human being!). It also displays a lack of understanding that most beings are incapable of attaining Nibbāna, until a human or *deva* birth is attained, which are rare events; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- As the Buddha advised in the *Kalama Sutta*, everyone needs to examine the different options and choose the one that is without any contradictions.

3. In Buddha's time, there was of course no "science" that educated the masses about the physical world. Even though the Buddha referred to the innumerable world systems and innumerable beings in them, people just had to believe those only based on faith. Today we are fortunate to have a well-established scientific method to rule out "bad theories" and to focus on "good theories."

- This method cannot match the Buddha's method of deciding by EXPERIENCE that he advised in the *Kalama Sutta* as mentioned above, but it gives a filtering mechanism to weed out the stuff that is clearly not worth pursuing. Thus the scientific method can be used as "pre-screening" to get rid of obviously unsuitable paths or "theories."

4. What is the "scientific method"?

An acceptable "theory" must have,

- power (ability) to explain as many things that we experience in this world,
- consistency, i.e., not one explanation can be inconsistent with another within the same theory,
- the power to predict, i.e., point out things that are still unknown but could be verified in the future.

5. If one would want to read more about the scientific method, I can recommend two books: "The structure of scientific Revolutions" by Thomas Kuhn is a classic; "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch is a recent and more easy-to-read book which also discusses infinity which is a key concept in Dhamma.

6. Thus explanatory power, consistency, and the power of prediction are the three measures of the validity of a scientific theory. Buddha Dhamma is a theory about existence for someone who has not yet "seen" its validity.

- My goal with this website is to present the Dhamma as a scientific theory. I will try to point out the explanatory power of the Dhamma, that there are no inconsistencies in Dhamma, and that many things in the Dhamma that were so far ahead of the times and only now are being confirmed by science.
- In the following video Dr. Deutsch explains the start of the scientific revolution on a few hundred years ago.

  WebLink: YOUTUBE David Deutsch: A new way to explain explanation
- As explained above, science proceeds via conjectures (theories) that are continually tested. There are no conjectures in Buddha Dhamma. The truths revealed in Dhamma are still being re-discovered by science. The vagaries of life can only be explained in terms of Buddha Dhamma; see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths."

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7. Buddha Dhamma is not a religion in the normally accepted sense of the word "religion." The Buddha never said that he can take someone to "salvation" if someone believed in him. **One attains *Nibbāna* by purifying ONE'S OWN mind.** The Buddha just showed WHY one should strive for *Nibbāna* and HOW to purify one's mind by following the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Buddha Dhamma is a complete description of existence, or nature. A Buddha discovers the laws of nature appears by his own mental efforts. It is for us to decide whether that world view makes sense to us, and then to use the Path he showed to attain *Nibbāna*, the state of unconditioned, permanent happiness.
- One could start on the Path of the Buddha in a gradual manner, verifying for oneself the benefits at each step; see, "Living Dhamma."

Next, "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem", ...

5.3.1 Consciousness and the Brain

I think Professor John Searle is one of the great philosophers of today who have the right ideas about consciousness. If he comes to learn about pure Dhamma, he may be able to articulate his points even better. Here is one of his presentations:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Consciousness & the Brain

5.3.2 Matter Creates Mind or Mind Creates Matter?

The deep meaning of "*Manopubbangama Dhamma, mano setta manomaya*", is that mind is the origin of everything. This is unfathomably a strange statement at first, but when one studies Abhidhamma, it becomes clear why this is true.

Before I get into the details, it is important to know that some scientists are beginning to realize this. Even though they cannot yet make the right connection, they can see that the reality has to be that way. It will be interesting to see whether how much progress they can make, without really approaching the problem other than from Buddha Dhamma.

Anyway, let us listen to these "new ideas" from a special group of scientists. They are indeed new from their perspective, since they have not been exposed to Buddha Dhamma, which is at the moment is hidden for most people.

In the following video a group of scientists discuss why the time has come to change the paradigm:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Consciousness & Quantum Physics

Here is a presentation by Dr. Robert Lanza who's book "Biocentrism" basically says that life did not arise from matter (universe), but the universe arose from life (pretty much agreeing with the Buddha Dhamma):

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Robert Lanza on theory of Biocentrism

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5.4 Consciousness – A Dhamma Perspective

- What is Consciousness?
- Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions
- Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World
- Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology
- Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind
- What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?

5.4.1 Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions

For an introduction to consciousness, see, "What is Consciousness?."

1. When we look deeply into the issue of consciousness, we come to realize the unimaginable possible varieties of life. Let us start with the issue of dimensionality. Humans live in a four dimensional world; in other words, humans are aware of four dimensions -three dimensions of space plus time.

- Even though we used to think time being different from spatial dimensions, with his Theory of General Relativity, Einstein demonstrated that space and time are interrelated. He showed that the force of gravity can be explained as perturbations in the space-time fabric due to mass.
- Can there be beings existing in higher dimensions that we are not aware of?

2. Of course, we cannot even begin to imagine more than four dimensions (or more than three spatial dimensions). However, it is easier to think of, and visualize, lower number of dimensions.

- Imagine a two-dimensional creature living on your kitchen table. An ant would be the closest real example, if we imagine that the ant cannot see above the table (a real two-dimensional creature would have only a length and width and no height). Now if we put a hand on the table, the 2D creature could see part of the projection of the hand on the table. Now if we take the hand off the table, as far as the 2D creature is concerned, the "hand" disappeared; it cannot "see" any part of the hand if it is off the table, and thus it has no "awareness" of that hand existing anywhere. It does not exist in its "2-D universe"
- For an amusing story of a 2D creature, see "Flatland: A Romance of Many Dimensions" by Edwin A. Abbott (2002). It was written in 1884 by Abbott, a mathematician.
- Here is a "fun video" from Dr Quantum which illustrates the idea:

  WebLink: YOUTUBE Dr. Quantum in Flatland

3. Therefore, the "awareness" of the 2D creature on the kitchen table surface is limited to its 2D world. It is not aware of anything outside the surface of the table (if it is a "2D world" the surface can extend to infinity and as far as our 2D creature is concerned it would not have "an end"). Furthermore, a 1-D world embedded in that 2D world would be a line on that surface. A 1-D creature in that 1-D world will not see anything that lies outside the line. Thus, the 2-D creatures can go in out of the 1-D world by crossing that line!

- It is clear that the consciousness of a 1-D creature is very limited, not necessarily by its mental capabilities, but just by the dimensions of the "world" that it is in. A 2-D creature has an expanded consciousness compared to the 1-D creature. We in the 3-D world have even farther expanded consciousness. (It must be kept in mind that one needs to incorporate the time dimension in all the above cases where only the space dimensionality was considered).

4. Therefore, if our world has more than three spatial dimensions, there may be other worlds that we are not aware of, since our consciousness is limited to the three spatial dimensions.

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- Thus, there may be beings in different dimensions that we are not aware of. We may be able to see "projections" of them if there is some overlap in 1, 2, or 3 dimensions. If there is no overlap at all, then we will not be able to see them at all, i.e., we will not be "conscious" of the presence of them.
- For example, in the low dimensionality case we considered above, if a 2-D creature crosses over the "1-D line world", the 1-D creature will see a "dot" during the time when there is an overlap of the 2-D creature with the line. Yet, if the "1D world" lies above the table top, there is no overlap and the both creatures will not be conscious of the presence of each other's worlds.

5. It is possible the "see" beings other than humans and animals by developing certain *jhānic* (*abhiññā*) powers. There were many yogis even before the Buddha who could access and interact with such beings. One does not have to attain *Nibbāna* to do that, and there are *Arahants* who have not developed such powers. In fact, the Buddha discouraged people from interacting with such beings, particularly with those in the lower realms.

- "Our world" is much more complex than what is grasped by our senses, even though technology has enabled us to expand our consciousness; see, "Expanding Consciousness using Technology." Yet, we can expand consciousness even more by purifying our minds; see, "Expanding Consciousness by Purifying the Mind." A purified mind can see the truth in the Buddha's wider world; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- And our lives do not end with this one; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Those two facts constitute the basis of the true nature of existence, and need to be thought about critically; one cannot comprehend the message of the Buddha until one at least has some idea about this "big picture."

Next, "Six Kinds of Consciousness in our 3-D World", ……..

5.4.2 Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World

Having looked into the issue of the "awareness" or consciousness issue related to dimensions, now we turn to our familiar 3-D space. Even here the possibilities are endless, as we see below.

1. We become aware of our surrounding "objects" (i.e., visual objects, sound, smell, taste, tangible objects) using the five "external senses" of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body. We see visual objects with our eyes, sounds with our ears, smell with our nose, taste with the tongue, and touch or feel with our body.

- Correspondingly, the Buddha stated that there is eye-consciousness, ear-consciousness, nose-consciousness, tongue-consciousness, and body-consciousness. The cognitive processes that involve those "five physical doors" are called five-door processes.
- In addition to the above mentioned five traditional physical senses, in Buddha Dhamma there is mind and the associated mind-consciousness, since we are also conscious about mind objects such as thoughts and visual images. The mind-consciousness is also involved in each of the five-physical-door processes.

2. Note that the Buddha did not mention brain in the mind-consciousness, and he used the term "mind element" without mentioning the brain. This is because the mind belongs to the "*manomaya kāya*" and the brain belongs to the "physical body"; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body."

- Also note that five "*indriyas*": "eye","ear", etc are not the physical eye, physical ear, etc. The five indriyas are called internal *rūpa* or *pasāda rūpa* that are extremely fine and cannot be seen.The physical eye is different from the *pasāda* eye *rūpa*; but the physical eye is needed for seeing for normal humans.
- When one develops the mind, it is possible to see without the physical eye, and also much more (like beings in other realms). **Similarly, the mind is not the brain, but the brain is needed for a normal human for the mind to work.**

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3. Therefore, our consciousness is limited by our six senses; we perceive the "world" as we sense it with our six senses.

- The "world" or "the universe" is much more complex than we perceive. This is one reason that we think everything around us is permanent, and is why it is so hard for us to understand the true nature of "this world", i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*
- With our "enhanced consciousness" from our scientific and technological advances, recently we have realized that even our universe is not permanent; it came into being some 14 billions years ago and will eventually re-collapse or disintegrate.
- Furthermore, as I mentioned elsewhere, we can still "see" only 4%-6%% of the "stuff" in the universe. The other 96% or so is termed "dark energy" and "dark matter" by the scientists because we do not know what that 96% consists of; see, "The 4% Universe", by Richard Panek (2011). Thus, even though we have vastly expanded our awareness, we are far from being conscious of the "world as it really is."

4. In Buddha Dhamma, the above discussion with six sense bases applies specifically to humans, but in general applies to many but not all animals as well as other beings in the "sense sphere" (*kamaloka*).

- The Buddha categorized all the living beings that are subject to the rebirth process in the *saṃsāra*, and the categorization is according to the consciousness. Beings in the other planes of existence have totally different kind of consciousness compared to humans or animals.
- For example, beings in the *Arupaloka* ("form-less sphere") have only the mind consciousness, since they do not have physical bodies. Before getting into that discussion, let us first discuss different aspects of consciousness that we see around us.

5. Even though the "beings" in the "sense-sphere" that includes humans and animals in general have five external sense-doors (eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body), there are many exceptions.

- For example, some animals do not have fully-developed five external senses. Others have different types of sense doors; a jellyfish has eyes, but no brain for information processing, so its visual consciousness is still very limited. It can distinguish between dark and illuminated areas, and that is about all. On the other hand, a dog has visual consciousness comparable to humans, and it can possibly catch a rabbit by chasing it.
- A bat does not have visual consciousness, so it cannot hunt during the day time, but has different consciousness using radar that enables it to hunt at night. So, it is clear that the "consciousness" or "awareness" has many different "avenues" (for example, humans become aware of their surroundings by using sight, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and thoughts).
- Lower life forms may have less avenues of consciousness, and the degree of consciousness can vary too (a jellyfish has minimal visual consciousness). In a few cases, we may be less conscious than an animal. For example, a bat would be much more conscious about surroundings in the dark, compared to a human.

6. Even though most of the animals have the same five physical senses as humans, they are "aware" of only their immediate environment.

- But the contemporary humans are aware of the existence of a huge Black hole at the center of our Milky Way universe that is millions of light years away.
- Humans used to have much limited awareness even a few hundreds years ago, before the advent of the telescope and the microscope. Since then humans have slowly built up our awareness by using technology; see, "Expanding Consciousness by Using Technology."
- However, we need to keep in mind that a complete theory of consciousness (Buddha Dhamma) was described by the Buddha 2500 years ago. It had been hidden for possibly close to 2000 years, at least in its pure form.

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7. Therefore, it is clear that "the awareness' or the "consciousness" can come in different flavors as well as different levels of intensity, even within the "sense sphere" (*kamaloka*):

- The humans and *devas* in the *kamaloka* have the highest levels of consciousness (especially mind-consciousness).
- In the "form-sphere" (*rupaloka*), the consciousness level in general is higher, even though they have only visual, auditory, and mind-consciousness; their minds are at a much higher level.
- The beings in the "form-less sphere" (*arupaloka*) do not have physical bodies at all, and have highly developed minds and thus have even higher levels of consciousness.
- Those three levels of consciousness are called *lokiya* (mundane).
- Beings in the three mundane levels have finite lifetimes, and a given "being" wanders through possibly all these different planes in the unfathomably-long *saṃsāra* (rebirth process). Even a sentient being born in the *arupaloka* may end up in the lowest level (*apāya*) in the *kamaloka*, depending on the unspent *kamma*.

8. The higher levels of consciousness are supermundane or "beyond mundane" (*lokuttara*), and there are four levels of supermundane consciousness with *Nibbāna* achieved by the *Arahants* being the highest.

- The first three levels of supermundane consciousness are Stream Enterer (*Sotāpanna*), Once-Returner (*Sakadāgāmī*), and Non-Returner (*Anāgāmī*).
- As one progresses on the Path, the consciousness starts to clear up, first by removing the five hindrances (*panca nivarana*) at the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Consciousness is totally purified by the *Arahant* stage; the pure mind becomes totally separated from any trace of matter (four great elements or *satara mahā butha*) at the death of the *Arahant*, and thus the *Arahant* is not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms and his/her mind becomes free, *Nibbāna*.
- All the suffering we experience is due to trying the satisfy the "body" that is attached to the mind. When attachment to that body (which is subjected to decay and death) is severed, the worldly bonds are broken (*Nibbāna*) and the mind attains the complete "cooled down" (*Nivana*); see, "How to Taste Nibbāna," and "Nibbāna – Is It Difficult to Understand?."

Next, "Expanding Consciousness by Using Technology", …….

5.4.3 Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology

1. Focusing on the human world, we can expand our "awareness" or consciousness in two ways so that we can be more "aware" of the "world" around us.

- One is using the scientific approach and by developing new techniques that enable us to "see" or "be aware" of things that are not directly accessible to our senses.
- For example, we have infrared sensors that allow us to see in the dark; we have constructed particle accelerators that allow us to "see" elementary particles; we can even "see" supernova explosions that happen millions of light years away using our sophisticated instruments. In the latter two cases, we do not actually see with our eyes, but we are aware of the existence of these events.

2. However, it must be noted that we can "see" only about 6% of the "stuff" that our universe is made of. Scientists don't know what the rest of the "stuff" is made of and have labelled it as "dark matter" and "dark energy."

- This means we are "not aware" of 94% of our own universe! For those interested, you can also do a Google search on dark energy and dark matter and learn more.

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3. The scientific methods which have been developed over only the past few hundred years are still at a very early stage; even though science and technology has greatly expanded our "awareness" of the external world, according to Buddhism there is much more to be explored, i.e., our consciousness is still very limited.

- We have not been able to contact any life form outside the Earth, even though scientists now accept the existence of life outside the earth to be a certainty.
- Possible existence of life forms that exist in the "form-sphere" and the "form-less sphere" are not even contemplated at this time.

Next, "Expanding Consciousness by Purifying the Mind", ……

Also see, "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

5.4.4 Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind

Revised **December 18, 2020**

The other approach to expand our consciousness is by following Buddha Dhamma so that we can "see things as they really are."

1. Twenty-five hundred years ago, the Buddha achieved the ultimate state of mind and became "all-knowing" (or "perfectly conscious"). He came to know about the boundless universe, the endless cycle of rebirths, and the complex process of cause and effect (*Paṭicca Samuppāda*) which sustains everything in the universe.

2. By developing scientific instruments (starting with simple telescopes and microscopes, we have now developed very sophisticated instruments), we have been able to expand our "awareness."

- For example, within the past century, we have expanded our awareness of the vast space around us, and now we know not only that our universe is possibly infinite in extent, but there may be other parallel universes as well. Yet, what the science has achieved so far is nowhere close to the level achieved by the Buddha.

3. As humans, we may get close to the ultimate knowledge using the scientific approach some day well into the future (especially if we can take into account the consciousness, and mind in general, into science).

- **But we can get there in a lifetime by developing our minds following the path laid out by the Buddha.**
- For all their impressive "material achievements," today's science and technology are still at very early stages concerning the mental phenomena.

4. According to Buddha Dhamma, one is said to achieve full and clear consciousness (*anidassana viññāṇa*), i.e., that person will be able to "see the whole world as it is", when he/she achieves *Nibbāna*. See, #11 of "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."

- This does not mean that a person who achieves *Nibbāna* will be an expert on relativity or quantum mechanics. Relativity and quantum mechanics provide only partial explanations, and even then, just for materials aspects of the world.
- When one achieves the ultimate knowledge (*Nibbāna*), by definition, relativity or quantum mechanics become irrelevant, since they account for only some of the impermanent and transient behavior. The matter is secondary to the mind.

5. Furthermore, even for people with good meditative skills, it is possible to expand their consciousness by accessing higher planes of existence for brief times using meditative states (*jhāna*), i.e., controlling and focusing the mind.

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- Even before the Buddha, ancient Yogis could access such meditative states via concentration meditation (*Samatha Bhāvanā*). For example, when Prince Siddhāratha became an ascetic on the way to the Buddhahood, he first followed two well-known *yogis* at that time, Aḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta, who were able to achieve very high states of *jhāna* (that belong in the *rupa loka* and *arupa loka*) via concentration meditation.
- However, it will be explained in the future that these *jhānic* achievements of such *yogis* can be traced back to Buddha Kassapa, who lived before Buddha Gotama.

6. Even today, people from other religions also could experience such states when they get deeply absorbed in prayer or any type of deep mental concentration; this has nothing to do with a particular religion. However, like everything else, such states are transitory; none of these states is permanent other than *Nibbāna*.

- And *Nibbāna* is not possible to attain via concentration meditation alone. For that the unique Buddhist system of insight meditation (*vipassana Bhāvanā*) is needed whereby *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (Dependent Origination or "cause and effect") and the Four Noble Truths (that the existence in *saṃsāra* is *dukha*, attachment or craving as the origin of the *dukha, Nibbāna* is the cessation of *dukha*, and the Eightfold Path is the path to the cessation of *dukha*) are understood.

7. To recap, according to Buddha Dhamma, "beings" exist in different planes of existence with different levels of consciousness; different planes can exist in different dimensions as well as in different physical locations (such as planetary systems in this or other universes, for example). Beings are categorized according to their level of consciousness, and the humans lie somewhere in the middle (but still at a very unique place, as is discussed in "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma")

8. Being "aware" or having consciousness is only one aspect of a living being's mental composition; in Pāli, consciousness is *viññāṇa*. The other mental constituents that makes up a living being are feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), and mental volitions (*saṅkhāra*). Consciousness is nothing more than "being aware." Based on consciousness, the other three, collectively called mental factors (*cetasika*), arise.

- For example, when we "see" an object, that is pure visual consciousness. Based on the visual, we next recognize the object based on our familiarity with the object. This is perception (*saññā*). These are discussed more in, "The Five Aggregates (Panñakkhandha)."

9. The chief characteristic of perception is the cognition of an object by the way of a previous acquaintance. It is perception that enables one to recognize an object that has been perceived by the mind through the senses. According to Abhidhamma, "Its procedure is likened to the carpenter's recognition of certain kinds of wood by the mark he had made on each; to the treasurer's specifying certain articles of jewelry by the ticket on each...".

- It happens automatically since the mind compares the observed image with the stored images of people we know and quickly makes the "match." (I was happy to see that scientist Jeff Hawkins has described this very well in scientific terms in his book "On Intelligence"; this book is a worthwhile read to see how scientists are slowly making progress!). Of course, the more frequently the memory is refreshed of the image, the easier it is to recognize.
- Sometimes people, especially young children, can recognize people and material objects from their past lives.

10. Modern neuroscientists and philosophers are struggling with how even to define these "mental characteristics." They have come up with the term "qualia" to represent the subjective aspect of sense experience.

- In his book "Second Nature: Brain Science and Human Knowledge" (2006), Gerald M. Edelman, a neuroscientist, states (p. 14): ".The property most often described as particularly mysterious is the phenomenological aspect of consciousness, the experience of qualia. Qualia are, for example, the greenness of green and the warmness of warmth. But several students of the subject, myself included, go beyond these simple qualities and consider the whole ensemble of conscious senses or experiences to be

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qualia. Many consider explaining qualia to be the acid test of a consciousness theory. How can we explain not only qualia but all the other features of consciousness? The answer I propose is to look into how the brain works, formulating a global brain theory that can be extended to explain consciousness…"

- **In Buddha Dhamma, the qualia are the mental factors (*cetasika*), and they are built-in to a sentient being and are strictly individualistic. By definition, they cannot arise just from inert matter, but the scientists are trying to derive them from matter.**

11. An interesting read on various ideas of different philosophers' and scientists' reasoning on how to explain consciousness and associated mental aspects such as qualia is given in the book, "Conversations on Consciousness" by Susan Blackmore (2006).

12. Let us consider, for example, the visual recognition of a person, say Joe Smith. With the recognition of Joe Smith, "feelings" arise together with a whole host of mental volitions, which are fifty-two in number in total, and we immediately feel a certain way about Joe Smith based on our past experience.

- For example, if hatred, one of the possible 52 mental volitions, arise when we see Joe Smith then we could be acquiring bad *kamma* as well if we let our mind cultivate those feelings further.

13. It needs to be emphasized that pure consciousness does not entail the recognition of an object. It is only a sort of awareness– awareness of the presence of an object. When the eye comes in contact with a color, for instance, blue, visual consciousness arises which simply is awareness of the presence of a color. But it does not recognize that it is blue. There is no recognition at this stage. It is perception (*saññā*) that recognizes that it is blue. The term "visual consciousness" is a philosophical expression denoting the same idea as is conveyed by the ordinary word "seeing." Seeing does not mean recognizing. The same is true for other forms of consciousness.

- *Viññāṇa*, which incorporates all mental factors, including *saññā, vedanā*, etc., has all these mental factors in addition to the pure awareness.

14. Using a somewhat different nomenclature, a "being" in the sense sphere can also be represented by just five "heaps of things" or aggregates (*khandha*), i.e., *pañcakkhandha* (pronounced as "pañchakkhandha," *pañca* meaning five and *khandha* means a "heap"): consciousness (*viññāṇa*), feeling (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*), volitions (*saṅkhāra*), and form or materiality (*rūpa*); see, "The Five Aggregates (Panñakkhandha)."

- These five components co-exist; they are born together at conception. It is not possible to separate *nāma* from *rūpa* or the four mental aggregates from each other. Therefore, *nāma* does not arise from *rūpa* as scientists believe today; ***nāma* and *rūpa* arise together from the moment of conception in the mother's womb.**

15. The Buddha did tell his disciples that what he taught them was just a minute fraction of his knowledge about "this world," and what he has taught is sufficient to achieve *Nibbāna* and cut short the *saṃsāric* journey filled with *dukha* (unsatisfactoriness and suffering). He did not want people to spend their precious time in this human life studying things like the origin of the universe or the origin of life which would serve no purpose in achieving Nibbāna. The following passages are from the *Simsāpa Sutta*:

- Once the Buddha was staying at Kosambi in the Simsāpa forest. Then, picking up a few *simsāpa* leaves with his hand, he asked the monks, "What do you think, monks: Which are more numerous, the few *simsāpa* leaves in my hand or those overhead in the *simsāpa* forest?"
- "The leaves in the hand of the Blessed One are few in number, Lord. Those overhead in the *simsāpa* forest are much more numerous."
- "In the same way, monks, those things that I have known with direct knowledge but have not taught are far more numerous [than what I have taught]. And why haven't I taught them? Because they are not connected with the goal, do not relate to the rudiments of the holy life, and do not lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, to Unbinding. That is why I have not taught them."

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- "And what have I taught? 'This is *dukkha*… This is the origination of *dukkha*… This is the cessation of *dukkha*… This is the path of practice leading to *dukkha*'s cessation: This is what I have taught. And why have I taught these things? Because they are connected with the goal, relate to the basics of the holy life, and lead to disenchantment, to dispassion, to cessation, to calm, to direct knowledge, to self-awakening, and to Unbinding. This is why I have taught them."

16. But nowadays one may be justified to spend a little time to convince oneself that Buddha Dhamma is indeed compatible with the contemporary "scientific knowledge", because that will enable one to build faith in Buddha Dhamma.

- **However, when one probes deeper into Dhamma, one realizes that it is not a matter of science proving Buddha Dhamma to be correct. Rather, science is at a very early stage of discovering the world's true nature, as described by Dhamma.**

17. Let me close with an example of the difference between technological progress on expanding consciousness versus that by the mind's purification. The modern world was not aware of the existence of microscopic living beings' existence until the advent of the microscope by Leeuwenhoek in the late 17th century: WebLink: WIKI: Antonie van Leeuwenhoek.

- However, a person who has developed meditation and attained higher *jhānā* can "see" such microscopic beings. There is this story in the *Tipiṭaka* about a *bhikkhu* who had developed *abhiññā* powers, but not yet had attained *Arahanthood*. One day he was about to drink a glass of water, when he realized that there were numerous microscopic living beings in the water. He tried to filter them out in vain and got depressed. The Buddha saw this and told him that, "it is not possible to live "in this world" without hurting other beings; the only thing we can do is to attain Nibbāna as soon as possible and get out of this world."
- Thus one can attain much more "knowledge" about this world by developing the mind. We can probe deeper into the microscopic world by using the scientific knowledge achieved over hundreds of years, but we can "see" much more by just purifying the mind in a lifetime.

Also see, "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

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5.5 Consistencies with Science

- Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!

The following posts discuss cases where current theories of science are consistent with Buddha Dhamma.

- Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected
- Infinity – How Big Is It?
- Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem
- Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits
- How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View

5.5.1 Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!

Revised January 12, 2020

1. As we saw in the post, "Anicca – True Meaning," *anicca* describes one of the three basic characteristics of "this world," namely no matter how hard we try, "we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction in the long term."

2. What does the Second Law of Thermodynamics say? It basically says, "things in a closed system go from order to disorder unless energy is put into the system to keep the order." Thus we can maintain a sort of stability (or "keep things the way we like them to be") by striving or working hard.

- But as we get old, our ability to do this wanes, and ultimately we becomes too weak to do anything or die. It does not matter how much money we have accumulated. All sense pleasures lose their vigor as the body gets old, and money or will power cannot maintain them.

3. A successful business person could say, "look at all the wealth that I created. I have achieved what I wanted." It is actually a good accomplishment, but can he really enjoy all that in the long term? Even all that money cannot maintain a simple thing like the taste of food when he gets really old, not to mention the fact that all that wealth will be left behind at death.

- However, when we are young, it SEEMS that we CAN maintain things to our satisfaction. This is why it is hard to explain *anicca* to a young person. A young boy will say, "look at the muscles I built over the past year by working out at the gym! I am invincible." A young woman will say, "I look much more beautiful now than I was a year ago."
- Yet, blossoming at around twenty or so years is just the beginning of a slippery slope. In the end all those strong muscles will fade, and the beautiful figure will sag and decay. That is the reality.

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Done Got Old

4. We can see the effects of the Second Law of Thermodynamics at different levels. A nice hot cup of coffee will cool down with time, and we will have to re-heat to enjoy it again. An ice cream bowl will melt if not kept cold by putting it in the refrigerator which uses energy to run.

- Mom will come and clean a child's room, only to find the next day that it is back to the chaotic state; she will need to go through all that work again to get it back to presentable condition.
- We build a house with a beautiful garden, only to find that we will have to do repairs to the house and much work is needed to keep the weeds out of the garden and grass cut, etc.
- The Sun will power our planet for another few billion years, and then it will die. Long before the Sun dies, the Earth will get destroyed.

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- Even our universe will "run down" in 15 billion or so more years.

5. Thus, we can see that the concept of *anicca* is a universal characteristic of this world. Things can be maintained EVEN WITH EFFORT only up to a certain time, and NOT forever.

- The Second Law of Thermodynamics describes the impermanence or the "root cause" for *anicca*. Even though the scientists understand this impermanence, they do not necessarily PERCEIVE that in their minds with regards to themselves. That is the difference between "impermanence" and *anicca*.
- **Just like a scientist who has contemplated on the Second Law of Thermodynamics, anyone who is trying to cultivate "*anicca saññā*" by contemplating on impermanence is nowhere close to *Nibbāna;*** see, "Saññā – What It Really Means."
- Thus, like those young people mentioned above, we all have the wrong PERCEPTION that "we can maintain things to our satisfaction," i.e., we have the false perception of *nicca*, not the actual reality of *anicca*.

6. Even when our universe dies, many come into existence. This process has been going on for eternity, and so have we. We have been in the rebirth process forever.

- The problem is that most of those lives were not as good as this one; we have suffered unimaginably, and unless we get out of this predicament, such future suffering is not avoidable. That is the anicca nature; see, "Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like."

7. But the good news is that our minds can become free of this non-stop rebirth process by decoupling from this unstable material base. We are reborn in this "material world" because of our perception of "*nicca*," i.e., we believe that we CAN find some suitable place with permanent happiness in this world.

- Once we grasp the reality of "*anicca*," our minds will automatically start becoming free, and we will start feeling the *nirāmisa sukha* arising from this detachment from the material world; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- That is another way to look at the reality and our choices.

5.5.2 Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected

Revised January 21, 2016 (#6); March 13, 2018; September 22, 2019

1. When we get deep into Buddha Dhamma, we will see that the mind creates EVRYTHING in this world. That is why the Buddha said, "*mano pubbangama dhamma*……", i.e., the mind is the precursor to everything. But let us proceed at a slow pace.

- By the way, dhamma is "what we bear" in this world ("*darana deya*" in Sinhala); this means absolutely everything in this world. And all dhamma are *anatta*, i.e., fruitless, or there is nothing substantial in any dhamma (it does not mean "no-self" or "*anathma*"); see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations," and "Anicca – True Meanings."

2. Everything happens due to causes and conditions; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." Also, this world is not four dimensional (3 space dimensions and time) as we experience, but is multi-dimensional; see, "What Happens in Other Dimensions." This is why we see only two realms (human and animal) out of the 31 realms of existence; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Just because we cannot experience directly or is not proven by science YET is not reason to discard them. **But the current string theories do predict a 10 or 11-dimensional world.**

- What can be explained with Buddha Dhamma? Everything in this world. See, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"," for some examples.
- Also see, "Origin of Life." This series explains how the mind creates EVERYTHING in this world.

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3. Furthermore, science has been confirming many things that ordinary people rejected as "impossible" over the past few hundred years; and that activity started increasing over the past hundred years since the advent of quantum mechanics and relativity; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction." That should give us more confidence on Buddha Dhamma. That is *saddhā*, or faith-based on evidence.

4. Here we will discuss yet another recent finding in science that makes the process of rebirth more easily "explainable." **Please note that I am not trying to verify Buddha Dhamma by science. It is the other way around. I am saying that science is far behind Buddha Dhamma.** Science is now trying to catch up just the material aspects of how this world works amd has not made any significant progress on how the mind works.

- In the essay, "Evidence for Rebirth," we saw that a person who dies in one geographical location is reborn in another. The consciousness does NOT transmigrated as is believed in some other religions. However, some form of energy leaving one place must instantly appearing at another.
- What about the speed of light barrier for anything or any information to travel, based on Einstein's Special Theory of Relativity? It turns out that we are in a unique time in history. Buddha's teachings are beginning to be, even if not absolutely confirmed, at least elevated to the level of possibility by Western science. For millennia, numerous people had strong enough faith to believe Buddha's words and to commit their entire lives to pursue *Nibbāna.* (Actually it is not blind faith. If one studied the Dhamma / Abhidhamma carefully, one can verify that it must be true).

5. In 1935, Einstein, Podolsky, and Rosen published a paper that showed that if quantum mechanics is correct, then a particle can somehow "know" what another particle, even if separated from it by a large distance, is doing. Einstein derisively called this "spooky action at a distance" and dismissed the prediction. Even though his theories led to the foundation of quantum mechanics, Einstein was firmly opposed to quantum mechanics throughout his lifetime.

- However, in 1964, physicist John Bell proposed an experiment to test this concept. Those are experiments on "violation of Bell's inequality." Several experiments carried out since 1997 proved that Einstein was wrong. The experimenters created "entangled particles" which shared a wave function. In 1997 Nicholas Gisin did the first experiment with entangled photons, in which they were sent seven miles apart via optical fibers. When they reached the ends of these fibers, the two photons were forced to make random choices between alternative, equally possible pathways.
- There was no way for the photons to communicate with each other, "classical" physics would predict that their independent choices would bear no relationship to each other. But when the paths of the two photons were adjusted correctly and the results compared, the independent decisions by the paired photons always matched. There was no real way for them to communicate with each other. The responses were instantaneous, even though at the speed of light the two events were separated by about 26 milliseconds.

6. Since then, that same experiment has been repeated with electrons and ions as well. This effect is called the "quantum entanglement," It leads directly to other related concepts such as "holographic universe" and "interconnectedness." **The conclusion seems to be that entangled particles can be interconnected even if they are situated across the universe!**

- In late 2015, "nonlocality of nature" or the violation of Bell's inequality was confirmed in three "loophole-free" experiments; see the pdf, "WebLink: PDF File: Wiseman-Death by experiment for local realism-Nature-2015."
- And the first of those experiments is: "WebLink: Hensen-Loophole-free Bell Inequality-Nature-2015."
- Details at "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

7. The following fun video by Dr Quantum illustrates the basic idea of quantum entanglement:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Dr Quantum - Entanglement

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8. Quantum entanglement could be intimately connected (and can be "explained" easier) with a universe that is multi-dimensional (like the proposed 11-dimensional string theory). If you have read the post on "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions," it will be easier to follow my simple (and crude) illustration:

- Think about a two-dimensional "world", say, the kitchen floor and consider an ant on the floor as a "two-dimensional being"; which means we assume that the ant can see only those things that make direct contact with the floor. If a chair is there, the ant can see only four "impenetrable circles" where the legs of the chair touch the floor. For the ant, those four "circles" are not connected. They lie far apart from each other. However, if we lift that chair, all four "circles" will be removed simultaneously. For the ant, this means that the four "circles" were "entangled" or connected to each other. Of course we can see that there were connected via the rest of the chair in the third dimension, above the floor.
- Same way, things that appear to us as "far apart" (say New York and Houston) may be connected via a dimension that we cannot see. A person dying in New York may be born instantaneously in Houston, because those two "places" may have a direct path via a hidden dimension.
- Those "entangled particles" in #5 above may travel far apart from each other. But they could be connected via a hidden dimension. Just like the ant in the above example is not aware of the rest of chair, we are not aware of the existence of such hidden dimensions.

9. However, quantum mechanics is not restricted to working on "intellectual" problems such as above. Those are, what the man-on-the-street calls "abstract stuff." Most of the "things" that we grow accustomed to happen to be byproducts of quantum mechanics. Those vary from computers and cell phones to lasers and nuclear bombs.

- So, these new observations do indeed make more plausible the concept of a connection across the universe. But there is no point in wasting valuable time on trying to find answers to questions such as the end of the universe or beginning of life. That is what the Buddha advised.
- We are fortunate to be born in the human world, which is an infrequent event. See, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm.") Thus, one should diligently work towards achieving liberation (*Nibbāna*). In realms below the human world, life is too painful, and life in heavenly worlds is too blissful for one to focus on working toward *Nibbāna*.

Is the Universe Multi-Dimensional? – Another Emerging Possibility

It was Einstein's dream to work out such a Grand Unified Theory, but he was unable to do so. Many scientists are trying to accomplish this goal, and the newest theories are called string theories. No Grand Unified Theory exists yet, but the closest is a version of string theory called the M-theory. M-theory says that ours is a 11-dimensional universe, even though we can see only four dimensions (including time). So, could there be life existing in other dimensions that we cannot observe? That is another possibility. I briefly discuss this possibility under the heading, "What Happens in Other Dimensions?." [Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions]

Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics

March 13, 2018: I have started a new section "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma," where a new interpretation of quantum mechanics is presented. I explain why quantum theory cannot explain consciousness.

Next, "What is Mind? - How do we Experience the Outside World?", …….

5.5.3 Infinity – How Big Is It?

Revised June 3, 2018; January 19, 2020

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Introduction

1. What is the largest number you can think of? Well, just add one, and you have a larger number! There are some large numbers that we are aware of. With record budget deficits of the developed nations in trillions of dollars (and the total nominal value of all the derivatives traded around the world approaching a thousand trillion dollars, or a quadrillion dollars), trillion and quadrillions are indeed large numbers.

- Even though a trillion rolls off the tongue not very different from a billion, a trillion is much bigger than a billion. If you spend a billion dollars a day, it will take a thousand days to spend a trillion dollars.

How to Represent Large Numbers?

2. The number of molecules in a cubic centimeter of gas is 2.7 x 10^{18} or 2.7 x 10^18 (this a simple way to express big numbers; instead of writing 10000, we write 10^4 or 10^4). Since electrons are even smaller, you would think there would be a humongous number of electrons in the observable universe; the estimated number is around 10^{87}. This is of course a very large number, but is not infinity by any means.

- That should give you an idea of the power of an exponent. Each time the exponent goes up by one, the number becomes ten times bigger. So, even though 10^{87} may not look that big compared to 10^{18}, it is a humongous increase. Another large number should be the distance from the Earth to the edge of the observable universe, and it is estimated to be about 46 billion light-years or around 10^{23} miles. Even though such large numbers are hard to be contemplated in our minds, they are all finite.

What Is a Googol?

3. There are some famous large numbers. A Googol is 10^{100}, which is unimaginably vast compared to even the number of electrons in the universe (10^{87}). As an aside, the internet company Google was to be named Googol, but someone made a mistake, and Google was the name given. A Googolplex is a whopper; it is 10^{Googol} or $10^{(10^{100})}$. There are many such "famous large numbers."

- Yet, you can add one to any of these large numbers and always get a bigger number. Therefore, no number, however large, is still finite.

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Googol and Googolplex by Carl Sagan

Infinity – Beyond Any Conceivable Number

4. So, the mathematicians coined the term "infinity" to denote an indefinitely great number; The word comes from the Latin infinitas or "unboundedness." Since infinity is uncountable, it has some strange characteristics: whatever you add to (or multiply by) an infinity (even if it is another infinity), you still end up with infinity.

- The famous German mathematician David Hilbert illustrated the "abnormal" properties associated with infinity using the idea of a "infinity hotel," which has an infinite number of rooms. The "infinity hotel" always has a vacancy: the management can always ask the person occupying the Nth room to move to the $(N+1)^{th}$ room, $(N+1)^{th}$ room to move to the $(N+2)^{th}$ room, and so on, and thus give the Nth room to the new guest. Even if an infinite number of new guests arrive, the hotel can accommodate all of them!

Infinity Is Real

5. That is not to say that infinity is a useless or bogus concept. The arguments described above are valid. Mathematicians cannot do many integrations without infinity. Physicists use infinity all the time (but they try to end up with finite physical values).

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- The concept of infinity is real (and weird). For example, a line of any finite length has an infinite number of points, whether it is an inch or thousand miles. The invention of calculus by Newton and Leibniz helped handle some of the problems arising from such situations.

Space and Time – Infinite!

6. In the physical sense, infinity is a rather vague concept meaning "larger than anything that could in principle be encompassed by experience." For example, space is infinite, and as far as our sophisticated instruments allow us to "see", there is no end.

- Our universe is possibly infinite in extent, since the scientists can "see" only to a finite extent.
- What about time? If our universe started at the Big Bang, that inflationary theory says there are multiple, parallel universes.
- According to the "cyclic theory" model, which is an alternate theory, the same universe comes to a "Big Crunch" which leads to another Big Bang, and whole process keeps repeating. So, there is no beginning to time either; time is infinite.
- According to the "cyclic theory" model, which is an alternate theory, the same universe comes to a "Big Crunch" which leads to another Big Bang, and whole process keeps repeating. So, there is no beginning to time either; time is infinite.
- By the way, both those theories are not correct, according to Buddha Dhamma. It is individual star systems (called "*Cakkāvāta*") that undergo birth-destruction cyclic process.
- I will write more in the future, but see the discussion: "WebLink: Multiverse: Different Physical Laws and Different Dhamma?." It is the lifetime of a *Cakkāvāta (*like our Solar system) that is called a *Maha Kappa* (great eon) in Buddha Dhamma.

Saṃsāra (Rebirth Process) Goes Back Infinite Time!

7. The Buddha used a great eon as the measurement unit to help his followers visualize the enormous length of *saṃsāra*. A great eon (*mahā kalpa* or *mahā kappa*) is said by the Buddha to be longer than the time it would take a man to wear away a mountain of solid granite one *yojana* (about 7 miles) around and one *yojana* high, by stroking it once every hundred years with a silk cloth.

- These days scientists use the word "aeon" to denote the duration of a universe (from the "big bang" either to a "big crunch" or just fading away). But a *Maha Kappa* means the lifetime of our Solar system. Our universe has "no beginning." In the future it will be shown that the "Big Bang theory" is not correct (which says that our universe came to existence from nowhere in a "Big Bang.")See the discussion: "WebLink: Multiverse: Different Physical Laws and Different Dhamma?."

Buddha's Analogy Consistent With Modern Science

8. Just for fun, I estimated the mass of the material that needs to be removed by the silk cloth each time (this happens every 100 years). Using a 7-mile cube of stone with a density of 2515 kg per cubic meter, I calculate the mass of the mountain to be 3.5 x 10 ^6 kg.

- Assuming the lifetime of our Solar system to be 5 billion years, I calculate the mass removed by each stroke is about 36 grams or about 1.2 ounces. This appears to be a reasonable number!
- When we try to visualize the wearing off a mountain we can imagine how long a time that is. Yet, that is still nothing compared to the length of the *saṃsāra*. As I said, infinity is a concept that is hard to wrap one's mind around!

Another Analogy of the Buddha

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9. One day the *Bhikkhus* asked the Buddha how many "great eons" had already passed and gone by. The Buddha told them, "Suppose, *Bhikkhus*, there were four disciples here each with a lifespan of hundred years, and each day they were each to recollect a hundred thousand great eons. There would still be great eons not yet recollected by them when those four disciples pass away at the end of hundred years. Because, *Bhikkhus*, this *saṃsāra* is without discoverable beginning."

- An fascinating book that talks about such hard to grasp ideas (in science) involving infinity is "The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World" by David Deutsch.
- Infinity is a mind-boggling concept. For example, one question that comes up frequently is the following. We have had infinite time to attain *Nibbāna*. So, why have all living beings not attained *Nibbāna* yet?
- I have discussed that at, "The Infinity Problem in Buddhism."

Summary

10. Each of us (including all living beings today) has "lived" for an infinite time. There is no traceable beginning to life, per Buddha. See, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."

- During much of that time, each of us suffered much more than any brief stretches of pleasure. That is because births in "good realms" (like human, Deva, and Brahma realms) is rare. See, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- Most of our past births had been in the four lower realms (including the animal realm) where suffering dominates.
- That is why the Buddha admonished us to strive hard to attain *Nibbāna* to avoid such harsh suffering in future rebirths.

Detailed discussion at the subsection, "Origin of Life."

5.5.4 Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem

1. Mathematician Kurt Gödel, in his Incompleteness Theorem, proved that it is impossible to find complete "truth" or "complete explanations" of a system from WITHIN a system.

- No theory that any scientist discovers is, thus, cannot be proven to be the "ultimate truth." This is another way of saying that by examining the parts one cannot get the complete picture of the system, IF one is within the system.

2. The Buddha transcended "this world" by developing his mind; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" for a description of the 31 realms of existence.

- This is again something that cannot be proven by a human being. One accepts, as I have, of the truth of that by examining the evidence: that the Buddha was able to explain so much about "this world" 2500 years ago. By "this world" it is meant not only the Earth or even this universe, but total existence.

3. The only way to disprove what I stated above is to find inconsistencies within the Buddha Dhamma (this is the same method used by the scientists in assessing scientific theories). I have not found any.

- If you find anything inconsistent about the Buddha Dhamma, that is because there have been numerous "alterations" over the past 2500 years. But if you find any inconsistencies at this site, please let me know. If there are any, that is due to my possible carelessness or ignorance and I should be able to fix them.
- In fact, this is the only way to get rid of any inconsistent "bits and pieces." Just like if you have a piece of a puzzle at the wrong place that will only hinder the progress of solving the puzzle, having wrong information somewhere will only slow down our progress in "figuring out the pure version of the Buddha Dhamma."
- However, I do believe that the "big pieces of the puzzle" are in correct places here.

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4. Kurt Gödel would have really enjoyed Buddha Dhamma. It would have been tremendous if he was alive to go trough the material here and point out any inconsistencies. Many of the scientists that I admire, including Einstein, Feynman, Gödel, Heisenberg, de Broglie, Sagan, and many more would have been able to easily grasp the message of the Buddha, but unfortunately they never came across the pure Dhamma; David Bohm came close.

- I hope the current generation of scientists and philosophers will get an opportunity to examine the pure Dhamma.

5. I do not want wrong impressions to come out of this post. I love science and physics in particular. Before discovering the pure Dhamma, physics was my passion and I still try to keep up with new findings.

- Yet I have realized that discovering how inert matter behave is a minute fraction of the knowledge about the whole existence. We cannot even discover everything about matter, until we start finding out more about the mind. The Buddha said, "*mano pubbangama Dhamma*...," or "the mind precedes everything in this world…. ."

6. Let me give some examples. Albert Einstein introduced his Special Theory of Relativity in 1905 and his General Theory of Relativity in 1915. The first showed that Newton's Three Laws of Motion were only approximately correct, breaking down when velocities approached that of light. The second showed that Newton's Law of Gravitation was also only approximately correct, breaking down when gravitation became very strong.

- We could not see anything wrong with Newton's laws of motion until we developed technologies that transcended our "level of consciousness"; see, "Expanding 'Consciousness' by Using Technology." They worked well within our "probing sensitivities." Even today, scientists do not use relativity equations to map out rocket trajectories to the Moon; Newton's equations are good enough to that.
- In the same way, everything that science discovers just expands our horizons, but never will provide the "ultimate answers." We can find "everything about this world" just by purifying our minds; see, "Expanding 'Consciousness' by Purifying the Mind."
- The above statements may not mean much right now. However, I ask you to be patient and go through the material at the website, and gradually you may realize what I am trying to say.

7. A "good theory" is all about "testable predictions." As I stated on the home page, I try to present material on Buddha Dhamma as a "theory on how the nature works." As I pointed out in many essays, many of the "predictions" or "statements" about the nature of this world have proven to be correct by science over the years, especially during the past few hundred years.

- I can make another prediction just for the records. Darwin's theory of evolution will be proven to be only partly correct, and only for limited spans of time. The theory of evolution is correct only over the recent past of this planet, where we can trace the past events using techniques such as radiocarbon dating; the oldest dates that can be reliably measured by radiocarbon dating go back to around 50,000 years ago. Even if we put the limit at a million years, that is only a tiny fraction of over four billion year lifespan of the planet.
- What is correctly stated in the theory of evolution is that species arise when conditions become suitable for them to arise AND for them to survive.

8. However, it is dangerous to talk about concepts that are not amenable to our minds. That will lead only to "loss of faith." It would be impossible to explain to someone who time traveled to the present time from several hundred years ago, how a light bulb can light up just by flipping a switch. There is no way for that person to "grasp" the concept of an electric current; he/she would believe it to be a "magic trick."

- The Buddha never revealed any details of the nature that were not discernible to at least his top disciples at that time. Let me give an example from the *Tipiṭaka*. One time Ven. Moggallana, who was only second to the Buddha in *Abhiññā* (supernormal) powers, saw a large number of beings in the *peta* realm

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near the Gijjakuta mountain. Beings in the *peta* realm have very fine bodies that can be seen by those with *abhiññā* powers, and some varieties have such fine bodies that only a few people with highly-developed *abhiññā* powers can see them.

- So, none of the *Arahants* that were there who had *abhiññā* powers, could see them and they told Ven. Moggallana, "how come we cannot see them?." Ven. Moggallana told them to ask the Buddha. The Buddha told those *Arahants* that he had actually seen them previously. When the *bhikkhus* asked why the Buddha did not mention it to them, he told them that, "If I tell you something that you cannot verify by yourselves, that will only lead to doubts. That is why I did not mention it. But now that Moggallana has seen them, there is at least one person there to confirm it."

9. Even today there are people with *abhiññā* powers that can see some of these beings in other realms. My teacher *Theros* say they can see them and I have no reason to doubt them. Developing *abhiññā* powers requires being able to get to the fourth *jhāna* AND then working to develop those powers. So, it is not an easy task. If I ever get to that stage, I will mention that here.

- Developing *abhiññā* powers or even *jhānā* is not necessary to attain *Nibbāna*. One can even attain the *Arahanthood* without developing any *jhāna* ahead of the time.
- What is important is to experience the "cooling down" of *Nibbāna* even without getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage. That itself provide incentive to continue with the practice; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna."

References

For those who would like to read more on this subject, the following references could be useful. However, I do not encourage anyone to "go off the track." I included this section to make the point that all existing scientific theories are incomplete, because they all were generated within the system. The Buddha was able to transcend "this world" and thus was able to provide a complete world view.

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Next, "Consciousness – A Dhamma Perspective", ...

5.5.5 Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits

Revised December 20, 2016; September 21, 2020

The triune brain model of the brain is no longer widely discussed. However, it provides a simple way to look at three major functions of the brain, as we will see below.

Triune Brain – Three Major Components of the Brain

1. Triune means "consisting of three." The human brain, which is the most advanced for all animals, shows how different animals have "different levels" of consciousness.

- The brain has three distinctive regions (see the figure below): (1) brain stem (labeled "reptilian" in the figure), (2) limbic system, (3) cerebral cortex or just cortex (labeled "neo-cortex" in the figure).
- Details in Ref. 1. We will summarize very basic features of the "three parts" of the brain.

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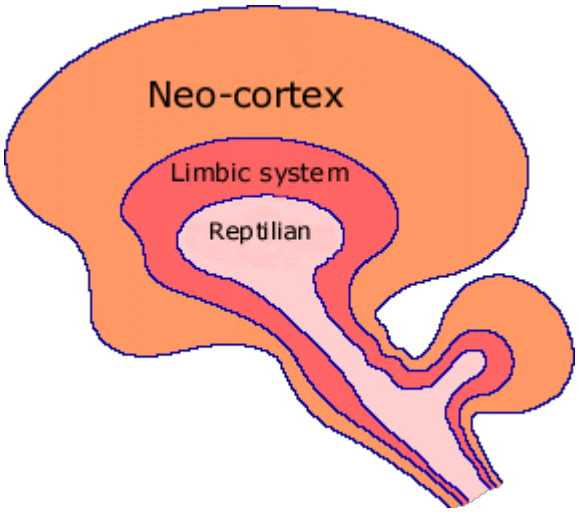

Reptilian Brain (Brain Stem and the Cerebellum)

2. The brain stem (reptilian brain maybe a misnomer, since reptiles have limbic systems) is the most primitive and all developed animals have it. It governs automatic physiological functions such as the heart rate, respiration, digestion, etc.

- And that is all lowest-ranked animals can do (automatically). They are almost like fully-automated robots.

The Limbic System

3. Animals with somewhat higher intelligence have a limbic system in addition to the brain stem. But still no triune brain.

- It coordinates sensory reception, memory, and unconscious emotional reactions. These animals with the limbic system — like snakes and lizards — just react spontaneously to external influences.
- Humans tend to do that too. In case of a threat, the limbic system instantaneously and automatically makes the "fight or flight" decision. We could say that automatic *mano saṅkhāra* arise via the limbic system. See, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."
- It is quite clear from the definition of an *Arahant* that even this instantaneous response can be completely tamed by cultivating wisdom *(paññā*,) i.e., by following the eightfold path.

The Cerebral Cortex (Neocortex)

4. The cerebral cortex (learning brain; neo-cortex in the figure) is the most advanced part of the brain; it can make "rational decisions" by contemplation but it is time delayed. Therefore, it is called the "thinking brain." The cortex is responsible for language capability, logic, reasoning, learning and critical thinking, the good stuff. All primates have it, but of course the humans have the largest.

- The cortex is responsible for language capability, logic, reasoning, learning and critical thinking, the good stuff. All primates have it, but of course the humans have the largest.
- The cortex is involved in generating *vacī* and *kaya saṅkhāra* that arise with a time delay. By controlling our *vacī* and *kaya saṅkhāra,* we have the ability to change our *gathi*. This is the "modern scientific rationale" behind the basis of Buddha Dhamma; see the "Living Dhamma" section.

5. All our sense inputs are processed in the cortex before they are sent to the *hadaya vatthu* or the "seat of the mind" that is located in the *gandhabba* close to our physical heart.

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- Since it takes time for our brains to analyze the "incoming data", normally there is about 100th of a second time delay between incoming sense inputs and our mind generating thoughts about that sense input.
- The brain can handle only one sense input at a time. This means it can handle only about 100 sense inputs in a second. So, even though our minds generate an initial response quickly, the follow-up "thoughts" are delayed due to this "processing delay" in the brain.
- I will discuss this in more detail (and it has been discussed in bits and pieces in the posts on the *gandhabba*, but the key point is that our actions and thoughts are "slowed down" by this pre-processing in the cortex.
- That pre-processing is minimal in even in "higher animals" with small cortexes, like dogs and apes. This is why humans are unique. We have a large cortex that not only slows down the response time, but also helps us "analyze the situation" rationally.

Ways to Improve Brain Functionality

6. Neural pathways in the brain strengthened by:

- Repeated application (meditation included). Repeated activity forms both good and bad habits as we discussed in several posts, and is the key in molding the character (*gati*); see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)", and other related posts.
- Good foods and regular exercise increase the production of Dopamine and other good chemicals.
- Exercise and meditate! It will keep you healthy and alert; see, ""Spark' by John Ratey" for information on the value of a good exercise program.

Brain Plasticity

7. Until about the late 1980s there was wide belief that one had just to live with the brain that one was born with. But since then the ability of the brain to change (neuroplasticity of the brain) has been demonstrated and studies on the effects of meditation on the brain have become an active research field.

- Of course, 2500 years ago the Buddha said that the mind is the precursor to everything. The mind does not arise from the brain. It controls all body parts, including the brain. See, "Brain and the Gandhabba."
- The key is that insight meditation should DRASTICALLY change neural wirings. However, there have not been any brain scans of someone who has cultivated the "correct versions" of *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpānasati* meditation.
- There are other posts at the site which describe this "re-wiring" of the cortex that leads to change in our *gati*. See, for example, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

Effects of Meditation on the Brain

8. As shown in the references below, there is compelling scientific evidence that even mundane versions of meditation improve both the cortex AND the limbic system.

- Those studies show that basic *Samatha* meditation helps, but *Mettā Bhāvanā* (compassion meditation) is particularly effective.
- It must be noted that Tibetan *Samatha* (breath meditation) or *Mettā Bhāvanā* (mundane version) are *anariya* versions. For the *Ariya* versions, see, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhävanä (Introduction)" and "5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)". I am quite positive that a brain scan of an *Ariya* (Noble person) will yield more interesting results.

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- For example, we also know that meditation affects breathing patterns (thus the brain stem). Therefore, meditation affects overall brain function. An *Arahant* can stop breathing for up to 7 days in *Nirodha Samapatthi*. It will be extremely interesting to see a brain scan of an *Arahant*.

The malleability of the Neocortex and the Limbic System

9. The following case illustrates the complex role played by the brain. A developed left brain (of the neocortex) indicates compassion for others and enhanced happiness for oneself, and a relatively larger right side indicates aggressive character.

- Here is the link to a video showing the results of brain scans of an advanced meditator who had done loving-kindness meditation for a long period of time compared to 150 non-meditators.

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Matthieu Ricard: The habits of happiness

The discussion on the brain scan data is from about 17:00 to about 18:20 minutes if you don't want to watch the full video.

- We must also keep in mind that Tibetan loving-kindness meditation is an *anariya* version of the *Mettā Bhāvanā*; see below.

Humans Have Control Over Their Lives

10. **Furthermore, we are not programmed by our genes, environment, or even our past *kamma.*** However, all of those can affect our destiny. The most powerful is our mind. In other words, *citta niyama* dominates *kamma niyama*.

- **As the saying goes, "you can do anything that you put your mind to". This is the true basis of free will.**

11. Even though the scientists are making some progress regarding the mind, the brain is not the mind, just as the physical eye is not the *cakkhu pasada rupa*; see, "Manomaya Kaya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body", and other related posts. Yet it is essential to keep the physical eye (and other physical sense faculties) as well as the brain in good condition for the whole body and the mind to work properly.

- Finally, the triune brain model is no longer widely discussed. However, it provides a simple way to look at three major functions of the brain.

Next, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View", ……

References

1. Wikipedia article on Triune Brain. More details in "The Triune Brain", by P. D. MacLean (1990).
2. "The emotional life of your brain" by Richard Davidson (2012).
3. "You are the Placebo – Making Your Mind Matter", by Joe Dispenza (2014).

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4. WebLink: Effects of meditation on Amygdala-G. Desbordes et al., – 2012
5. WebLink: Psychological effects of meditation-P. Sedlmeir et al., – 2012
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5.5.6 How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View

Revised November 26, 2018

1. We are lucky to be in an age when many of the Buddha's teachings are not only confirmed but also strongly supported with additional evidence that were not possible during the time of the Buddha.

- This is another instance where the evidence is coming from research on the workings of the brain.

2. The Buddha basically said to follow the following procedure to break a bad habit and to instill a good habit:

i. understand the reasons why a certain habit is bad,

ii. stop engaging in activities that enhances the habit,

iii. deviate the mind from such bad activities by focusing on opposing good activities,

iv. contemplate on the "release" or "cooling down" that has already resulted by following the above procedure,strengthen the resolve to stay on course, and keep doing (i) through (iii).

With time, the bad habit(s) will go away and the good habit(s) will take hold. There comes a time when one will automatically follow this procedure; it becomes a "way of life."

3. The reasoning behind is based on the key factors that we discussed in the previous posts; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)" and "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati or Gathi)":

- We do many things automatically (i.e., without being mindful or without deliberate thinking); these are done via our habits that we formed during this life or even coming from previous lives.
- There are both good and bad habits. We want to keep and cultivate good habits and discard bad habits.
- Changing (cultivating) habits first require some "external adjustments" like one's physical environment, friends, etc and, more importantly, the four steps listed above.

4. Beginning in the early 1990's or so, scientific investigations in several fields (effects of meditation on the brain, behavioral studies on animals and humans, neurology, etc) have come to similar conclusions.

- We will discuss these in detail in the future, but here I want to just point out the main similarities. Furthermore, discussing how the mechanism takes place in the brain provides an alternative way to visualize these changes.
- We are indeed fortunate to live at a time when we have evidence from science to provide additional evidence.

5. As I pointed out in the posts on the *manomaya kāya* and and physical body, our physical body is "prepared" by the *kamma* seed that was the cause for this life. But the manomaya kāya is constantly making "adjustments" to the physical body based on the current status of the mind.

- Many *kamma vipāka* are "built-in" even at the conception; some may be avoidable by taking care of the body (exercise, food, etc), and the mind (contemplation, meditation, etc), but some may not be avoidable because they are so strong: We will never know when a cancer, an accident, or even a natural calamity can drastically change our lives; this is *anicca*, "the inability to maintain our lives the way we would like to."
- Thus we need to spend at least sometime to work towards a meaningful solution to the "problem of existence."
- Another factor we need to remember is that our "*sansāric* habits" are built-in to our brain. We keep changing/adding such habits as we grow up, influenced by our family, friends, and the society in general.

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Thus one's "character" (*gati*; pronounced "*gathi*") are in constant flux, either by choice or influenced by the environment.

6. This is a key point: We need to make sure that we do not "go with the flow", i.e., let past *kamma* or our environment determine our future.

- As humans, we have the capability to change our destiny. We DO HAVE free will, unlike an animal. Since we do not know what our next existence is going to be, we need to make sure to to get on the "right path" as soon as possible.
- Even 100 years of this life is NOTHING compared to millions and billions of years life in "unknown territory" in the future; thus we need to make use of this opportunity.

7. As we discussed in the "Truine Brain – How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits", only the humans have a developed neocortex, that makes possible 'thinking, and decision making." The animals either do not have it, or have a primitive version of it.

- Therefore, the animals basically only use the "mid brain" or the "limbic system", where decisions are made FOR THEM according to their ingrained habits that have evolved over many, many lives (as we discussed, the physical body is formed based on the *manomaya kaya*). The response from the limbic system is instantaneous, and the animals can only REACT to external stimuli.
- All *sansāric* habits are built-in to the limbic system, and the animals react according to the way the limbic system is wired up; this may change some during growing up due to external environment, but the main "character qualities" (*gati*) do not change very much. That is why you see adorable dogs as well as vicious dogs. Even our pets have "a personality."
- We can change their personalities by teaching them things, but they are unable to do it on their own. It is easier to "teach" more evolved animals like monkeys because they have a bit of a neocortex.

8. But we humans have a neocortex that is well-developed and is capable of much more than we normally believe it to be capable of. **It is this neocortex that makes us, humans, different from animals (actually, it is more accurate to say that "our current *bhava*" is superior to an "animal *bhava*").**

- Even though we also REACT first, especially to a threatening stimuli, our "thinking brain" starts to kick in quickly, especially with training. Many people get into trouble because they are "REACTIVE", i.e., they do not try to develop the habit of using the "thinking brain."
- But we can be PROACTIVE. We can teach ourselves to "take corrective actions" even if we do some things on impulse. Even if the initial reaction to a sudden temptation is to "take it and enjoy it" or "hit him" or "kill that annoying dog", we can always take a breath, stop ourselves, and think about the consequences of such actions. This is what we call "mindfulness."
- Some people are more proactive than others even at birth (via *sansāric* habits). Some people change from being reactive to proactive or other way around even without knowing due to the particular environment they grow up in.
- The key point is that we can WILLFULLY change from being reactive to proactive; we all are reactive at least to some stimuli: the one's we have "*taṇhā*" for! In other words, we like to get attached to certain things and like to dislike other things with PASSION; see, "Taṇhā – How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

9. In terms of science the key is in the neurons in the brain, and how we can train our neocortex to fire the right sets of neurons more frequently. The "frontal lobes" of the neocortex is the command center for brain activities.

- The frontal lobes can be visualized as the boss. If it is a lazy boss, it will just assign duties to the limbic system to carry out things "as usual."

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- But if the boss is energetic and always looking for ways to "improve things", then it will start investigating new approaches. And once better approaches are found, it will get them "hard wired" and they will essentially become the "new limbic system."
- This is the key to "developing a new you" by discarding bad habits and developing good habits. Essentially you need to get the frontal lobes to be an active, energetic boss for the brain.

10. Dr. Jeffrey Schwartz is a psychiatrist specializing in treating Obsessive Compulsive Disorders (OCD), and has pioneered in using "habit makeovers" to treat OCD. He has written several books, but I highly recommend the two books, "The Mind and the Brain" and "You are not Your Brain."

He has developed a "Four Step" method to change one's habits that give rise to OCD:

1. Identify the problem area.
2. Recognize the need to change.
3. Deviate from automatically "going along" with old ways and re-direct attention to "new paths."
4. Re-assess the situation, and keep working on accelerating the process.

11. He has kept records of brain scans of his patients which clearly show the improvements in the brain with time, and of course most patients are able to get rid of their compulsive behavior.

- The key is to slow down the "firing of neurons" associated with a bad habit and to increase the firing of neurons associated with an opposing good habit.
- There is a rule called Hebb's rule that says, 'neurons that fire together, wire together." The more one keeps doing a certain activity, a set of neurons start to fire together and that neural connection gets stronger by the day. It is just like strengthening one's arm by "doing more liftings" with it.
- In the same way, when one is decreasing the use of a certain activity, the set of neurons allocated for that activity gets weaker, fewer neurons participate, and eventually it loses being a habitual act.

12. Here is a figure from Dr. Schwartz's book, "The Mind and the Brain" (p. 362), that illustrates the "re-wiring" of a new network in the brain and the concomitant weakening of a network for an undesirable habit :

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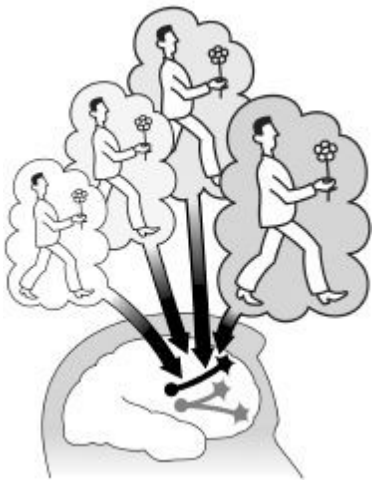
4 The quantum rules allow both states—"release" and "don't release"—to co-exist. Early in therapy, however, the wave representing "release neurotransmitter" in the OCD circuit has a higher probability than the wave representing "release neurotransmitter" in the garden circuit. The patient is much more likely to go to the sink.

5 By expending mental effort and thus unleashing mental force, however, the OCD patient is able, by virtue of the laws of quantum mechanics, to change the odds. Focusing attention on the "garden" thought increases the probability that neurotransmitter will be released in that circuit, not the "wash" circuit.



6 The OCD patient can now act on this thought and go to the garden. This increases the chance that, in the future, the "garden" circuit will prevail over the "wash" circuit.

7 If the patient regularly goes to the garden instead of the sink, neuroplasticity kicks in: brain metabolism changes in a way that strengthens the therapeutic circuit. As a result, future OCD urges are easier to overcome.

WebLink: PDF file: Habit Formation Figure

This figure explains how a patient who had an obsessive disorder to constantly wash his hand, got rid of that habit by WILLFULLY stepping outside to the garden when he got the urge to wash hands. As he kept doing it, the wiring to "wash hands" got weakened, and instead wiring for "stepping outside" got stronger, and eventually he lost the compulsive urge to wash his hands too often.

13. The same principle has been used to get rid of such annoying habits as well as serious disorders. We can use the same procedure to stay away from immoral habits and cultivating moral habits; this is the basis of "*ānāpāna*," see, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Character and Habits (Gathi)."

Next, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga", …….

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5.6 Inconsistencies with Science

Revised March 4, 2018; December 16, 2020

1. We all are impressed by the scientific advances made during the past 100 years or so making our lives easier and more productive. I am actually a cheerleader for scientific and technological advances.

- Physics had been my passion since high school days, and that changed when I started learning Buddha Dhamma several years ago.
- I still love and work on topics of interest in physics (and science in general). Fortunately, I am finding that those two interests are not mutually exclusive, and there is significant overlap. In fact, this section is the result of my two overlapping interests.

2. The following posts discuss cases where current theories of science are not consistent with Buddha Dhamma. I believe that science will recognize the primary nature of the mind in the future, and will discard the current notion that the mind (consciousness) arises out of inert matter.

- Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation!
- The Double Slit Experiment – Correlation between Mind and Matter?
- Vision (Cakkhu Viññāṇa) is Not Just Seeing
- Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?
- Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)

Many other issues relating to life discussed in the section: "Origin of Life"

3. Despite the advances in science and technology, there is much about the human mind that science does not understand, and has not even begun to understand. **Western science is based on the five physical senses, leaving out the most important one, the mind.**

- At the present time, in 2016, scientists have the wrong view that consciousness originates in the brain.
- All scientific theories relating to the mind are based on this wrong hypothesis. However, Buddha Dhamma says not only that the mind is a sense of its own, but it is the most powerful of all six senses.

Here is a post from the Abhidhamma section that has a deeper analysis of the brain-mind connection:

Brain – Interface between Mind and Body

5.6.1 Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation!

Revised April 22, 2016; revised November 15, 2019; September 6, 2020 (update at the end of the post)

Libet's Experiment

1. In 1983, Benjamin Libet conducted an experiment **apparently showing** that our brain makes decisions before we become aware of it. When a person moves a finger, the brain activity appears to start before the person actually makes that decision.

- There have been numerous follow-up experiments since then. All those experiments seemed to confirm this observation, even though the time delays vary.
- Scientists and philosophers are quite puzzled and some are very worried that we are just zombies run by a program in our brain.

2. Here is a video clip that illustrates the basic experiment:

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WebLink: VIMEO: Neuroscience and Free Will

Here is a recent youtube video on the same subject:

WebLink: Youtube: Do humans truly have Free Will?

Does Libet's Experiment Prove There is No Free-Will?

3. Since Libet published his results, scientists and philosophers have been debating whether these experiments show that man has no free will:

WebLink: WIKI: Neuroscience of free will

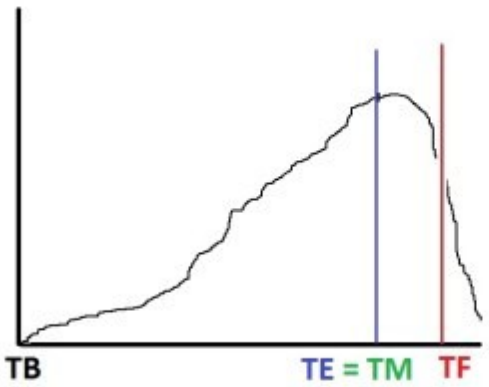
- Also, see the recent post, "Mind Is Not in the Brain" and follow-up posts at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach"

Refined Follow-Up Experiments

4. The second recent experiment is a bit more refined. Let us summarize that experiment:

- The person randomly decides (no pre-planning) to press a button at some time. Let us take this time to be TM (M for the mind) making the decision.
- He presses the button at TF, which is recorded electronically (F for using the finger to press the button).
- At the same time that he decides to press the button, he is watching the clock and makes a mental note of the "time" and after hitting the button, records that time too: TE (E for using the eye to see the time on the clock. It is important to note that TE is the time that the MIND says it saw the clock).
- Finally, his brain activity is recorded by the sensors attached to his head. Let us take the recorded start of brain activity to be TB.

Here is a summary from the researchers (you can click on the figure to expand and then hit the back button on the browser to get back):



So, the researchers conclude that since brain activity started at TB before, either (i) him pressing the button (at time TF) , or (ii) him recording the "clock" **at the time TE when he made the decision,** the brain activity started before he made the decision.

- The problem is that **they ASSUME that the time, TE, that one gets off the clock is the same as the time, TM, that the mind makes the decision to press the button.**

Explanation From Buddha Dhamma

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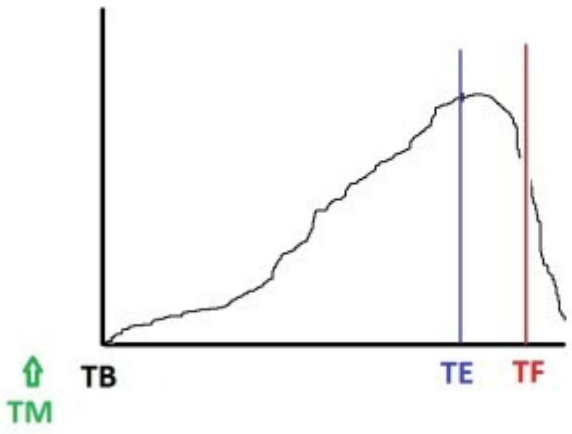
5. In Buddha Dhamma, the mind is the precursor to every action that we do with the body. The mind's decisions are implemented by the brain. The brain is just a very sophisticated computer.

- Buddha's explanation of the mind is very thorough. The basic ideas at "Moral Living and Fundamentals" and "Essential Abhidhamma – The Basics."
- More detailed analyses on how the mind and the brain work together at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach," and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and "Mental Body – Gandhabba,"
- Deeper aspects discussed in the "Abhidhamma" section.
- Some of the basic aspects are discussed below.

Brain Is The "Control Center"

6. The brain is the control center for the mechanical body to carry out both these tasks ASSIGNED BY THE MIND. The brain gets the finger to push the button and the physical eye to look at the watch.

- **Now the mind is in the *manomaya kāya* and is lined up with the heart of the physical body. The mind and the brain are connected by a signal system that is analogous to how television or radio signals are transmitted (very fast, possibly electromagnetic). The brain communicates with the five senses via the nervous system, and those communications are slower.**
- **Thus the brain gets the message from the mind to "press the button" and to "watch the clock." Thus TB is ALWAYS later than TM.**
- Modern science has shown that, "It normally takes 0.4 – 0.6 seconds for the nervous system to activate available muscle motor units to contract,……." (see, at the very end of the article: WebLink: WIKI: Motor control). The finger movement involves muscles in the arm, and the eye movement involves muscles in the head and the eye).
- Both actions of "watch the clock" and "press the button" are initiated by the brain (with the help of the central nervous system) per mind's instructions. The eye function circuitry can be logically thought to be a bit faster than the mechanical finger moving. Thus "watching clock" gets done first with the eye, and a little time later the finger has pushed the button. So, here is the time sequence per Buddha Dhamma (you can click on the figure to expand and then hit the back button on the browser to get back):



6. The mind initiates all movements of the body. Here, it is the mind that starts off the brain activity, i.e., TB is later than TM. The brain activity starts AFTER the mind decides to take action because the brain needs to get the signal from the mind. The seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) lies close to the physical heart, far away from the brain.

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- Now the brain needs to carry out those two functions of pressing the button and look at the clock. The vision circuitry is faster. The mechanical movement of the fingers is slower (it involves moving muscles), and thus pushing the button happens a bit later.

Back to Libet's Experiment

7. **Now, let us go back to the first experiment.** The only difference here is that the person is not recording the time. He just presses the left or right button. So, there are just two events recorded now instead of three events. All we have to do is to remove TE from the above two graphs.

- It is simpler: His mind decides to push the button. The mind directs the brain to push either the left or right finger, and it takes some time for the brain to mobilize the muscles to move the finger. The time sequence is the same as in the same figure. The mind decides (TM), the brain starts working on it (TB), and the sensors attached to his head record that brain activity (wiggly line). Finally, the finger pushes the button (TF).
- As in the other experiment, **the mistake is to assume that finger pushing happens SIMULTANEOUS with the mind's decision**. But the mind only gets the brain (the computer) to initiate the complex sequence of events to work the muscles in the arm and hand to move the finger, and that is the lag time.

An Analogy

8. The body is like a mechanical instrument, say, a sophisticated tank that is used to fire at the distant object. The operator is like the mind. He aims the gun barrel using sophisticated computer-controlled circuitry and then fires the gun. He can drive the tank where ever he wants. But things do not, **and cannot**, happen simultaneously with the operator's decision. The gun needs to be moved into position before it is fired.

- The mind is controlling the body just like that. The finger (and the eye) in the above case(s) are just two instruments helping with the two tasks of pressing the button (and reading the clock), and the brain is the "control center" that oversees both those activities on the command of the mind.
- The connection between the body and the mind is explained in the post, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body" and other posts on the *gandhabba*.

Thoughts Arise in Hadaya Vatthu, Not In The Brain

9. The "seat of the mind" (*hadaya vatthu*) is in the *manomaya kāya* (also called *gandhabba*). Thoughts arise there, not in the brain. The brain is a very sophisticated computer and controls the physical body per instructions given by the mind. At death, the *manomaya kāya* with the mind leaves the body and both the body and the brain become lifeless. See, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?," "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body," and "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body (OBE) Experience."

- Therefore, we are not robots controlled by a program running in our brain. The brain is just a sophisticated mechanical instrument that helps the mind with coordinating the tasks (like the computer in the tank in the above example that is helping the tank operator). But there are certain functions like breathing that the brain carries out without input from the mind. We will discuss those in an upcoming post soon.
- Any person has the POTENTIAL to do things in a scale that is unimaginable to us. We just do not realize the power of our minds; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Introduction," and the follow-up posts.

September 6, 2020 update:

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There have been a few recent experiments that reduce the delay between TE and TF in #4 above. The following is the most recent paper on the subject: "WebLink: sciencedirect.com: Sanford-Libet's Intention Reports are Invalid-2020"

- To quote from the abstract of the above paper: "..We argue that Libet's intention reports are invalid and explore the phenomenology of intention in the Libet's experiment."

5.6.2 The Double Slit Experiment – Correlation between Mind and Matter?

Revised March 13, 2018; November 15, 2019

Introduction

1. The failure of a materialistic approach to explain consciousness is becoming ever more apparent; see Refs. 1 and 2 below.

- The materialistic approach, of course, is to explain mental phenomena to arise in the brain that is composed of inert matter.

2. A number of scientists/philosophers are hoping that quantum mechanics can come to the rescue (Ref. 3,4).

- They say that even though deterministic Newtonian mechanics is unable to explain consciousness, quantum mechanics can (because quantum mechanics does not have such an apparent deterministic nature.)

Quantum Mechanics to the Rescue?

3. Quantum mechanics (QM) is different from other branches of physics where one can get the intuitive idea of what is taking place.

- What we are currently doing with QM can be called a "black box" approach. When we apply the correct equations, we get the right results. Einstein did not like this at all. Yet, to his frustration, all his predictions of the inadequacy of QM did not materialize AND the predictions of QM have been correct to amazing accuracy.

4. Those experiments, the results of which can only be explained by QM, **appear to be** non-deterministic in nature.

- This has compelled some scientists to investigate whether there is a connection between QM and the mind, which IS non-deterministic. Two experiments, in particular, have been at the forefront of these discussions. The "double-slit experiment" and the "Schrödinger's cat experiment."

5. My intent in this essay is to challenge the two prominent assumptions on this postulated relationship between QM and the mind:

i. Even if QM and the mind are non-deterministic in their own rights, there is no special reason to believe that there is an apparent connection between them.

ii. There is nothing really "non-deterministic" about QM, other than the indeterminacy depicted by the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. That is just on the accuracy of a given measurement.

Quantum Mechanics Is Not Intrinsically Psychophysical

6. Let us look into (i) first. Henry Stapp is a leading physicist who argues that quantum theory will ultimately provide an explanation for consciousness. In his book, "Mindful Universe" he says (p.2), "… quantum theory itself is intrinsically psychophysical as designed by its founders, and as used in actual scientific practice, it is

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ultimately a theory about the structure of our experience that is erected upon a radical mathematical generalization of the laws of classical physics."

- My basic point is that quantum theory is NOT psychophysical; there is no way to accommodate "subjectivity" in QM. Where is the "mind connection" in the theory of QM?
- There are others who work on theories that try to explain consciousness as arising from quantum effects in the brain; see, for example, "Conversations on Consciousness", by Susan Blackmore (2006). No one has clarified how these theories make the connection between "psyche" and "physical" in "psychophysical."

The "Observer Effect" in QM

7. Let us review one experiment that has become the main demonstration for the "observer effect" in QM, the "double-slit experiment." Here is a short video by Dr Quantum to illustrate the "paradox" of the double slit experiment:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Dr Quantum Double Slit Experiment

8. The two main points of this experiment are:

a. the particles behave like waves when both slits are open, and

b. this "wave nature" goes away when the path of the particle is "observed" or monitored.

Bohmian theory of Quantum Mechanics

9. There is a version of QM called the Bohmian theory or the Pilot Wave theory that was developed by the late David Bohm. It does use the Schrodinger's equation which is used to track the propagation of a "pilot wave." The theory is explicitly non-local, i.e., quantum entanglement is built-in.

- With this theory, each solution of the wave equation describes a DETERMINISTIC path for the particle, and statistical average agrees with the experiments and the results of the standard QM calculations.
- The actual trajectories have been harder to measure not because of a "mind effect," but because an observation can disturb the particle trajectory itself. Recent experiments have been conducted to "weakly" measure a system without appreciably disturbing the trajectories. Those experimental results are consistent with the predictions of Bohmian theory (Ref. 5).

Thus the role played by Bohmian mechanics in these "QM experiments" is just like role statistical mechanics played in thermodynamics.

- Here is a very short video of the INDIVIDUAL trajectories for a double-slit experiment calculated using the Bohmian theory. There is nothing "mysterious." **Each particle has a definite trajectory. There is no "observer effect."**

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Bohmian Trajectories in the Double-Slit Experiment

- When it is attempted to observe the path of an individual particle, the coherence of the system or the pilot wave is disturbed and the interference pattern goes away. Thus there is no "observer effect," in the sense of bringing "subjectivity" in.

"Schrödinger's Cat" Thought Experiment

10. Another famous experiment that has been the subject of much discussion is the "Schrödinger's cat" thought experiment. This experiment suggested by Schrödinger back in 1935, involves a cat in a closed chamber.

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- A radioactive sample in the chamber, if undergoes decay within a given period of time, triggers the release of a hammer that breaks a vial of a toxic gas that kills the cat. If conscious observation is required to collapse the wave function, then the fate of the cat is not known until the box is opened. Unfortunately, both the consciousness-based and consciousness-free interpretations of quantum measurement are indistinguishable to the observer outside the box.
- In 2006, an actual experiment was conducted to simulate this experiment. It was reported that, "… measurement alone, rather than conscious observation of a measurement, is sufficient"; see Ref. 6.

No Real "Observer Effect"

11. Thus there is no real "observer effect" in the double slit experiments or in the Schrödinger cat experiment.

- In the double-slit experiment, what an "observer" does is to disturb the coherence of the system, if the disturbance is strong. It does not matter whether the "observer" is human or a mechanical device (in most cases it is non-human); one ALWAYS gets the same result. This is in contrast to real subjective situations. For example, in the stock market, complex subjective decisions are made by millions of people.
- So, where does the "objectivity" or "intention" – in the sense of the mind affecting the experimental result – come from? "Intent to monitor" is not really a significant subjective decision; just a simple "yes" or "no."

12. Therefore, it is clear that there was no evidence for "subjectivity" in those experiments even before Bohmian mechanics or the Schrödinger's cat experiment. Those two pieces of evidence really make that point undeniable. There is no evidence of the mind affecting the outcomes of those experiments.

The Mind Creates Matter, Not the Other Way Around

13. The Buddha stated that the mind is at the forefront; "Manōpubbangamā Dhammā.." A deeper *Abhidhamma* analysis is available at "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

- Even though mind affects matter and even CREATES matter, science has not advanced enough yet to confirm that.

14. There has to be a paradigm change in science to explain consciousness. **Any theory based on matter and attempt to treat mental phenomena as a byproduct will not succeed.** The mind is the more fundamental entity and takes precedence over matter.

- Some philosophers are beginning to sense this reality. Even though he does not appear to know anything about Buddha Dhamma, philosopher Thomas Nagel says the following. "The great advances in the physical and biological sciences were made possible by excluding the mind from the physical world… ..But at some point it will be necessary to make a new start on a more comprehensive understanding that includes the mind." (Ref 1, p.8). Then on p. 15, "…The possibility opens up of a persuasive conception of the natural order very different from materialism – one that makes mind central, rather than a side effect of physical law."

Consciousness and Quantum Mechanics

March 13, 2018: I have started a new section "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma," where a new interpretation of quantum mechanics is presented, and it is discussed why a connection between quantum theory and consciousness **will not be** possible.

References

1. Thomas Nagel, "Mind and Cosmos" (2012).

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2. Colin McGinn, "WebLink: PDF File: All machine and no ghost- McGinn-2012", New Statesman p. 40, February 20, 2012. (click on the link to open the pdf file)

3. Henry P. Stapp, "Mindful Universe" (2011).

4. B. Rosenblum and F. Kuttner, "Quantum Enigma – Physics Encounters Consciousness", (2006); there are many other recent books.

5. S. Kocsis et al., "WebLink: Observing the Average Trajectories of Single Photons in a Two-Slit Interferometer," Science, vol. 332, 1170 (2011). (click on the link to open)

6. R. H. S. Carpenter and A. J. Anderson, "WebLink: The Death of Schrodinger's Cat and of Consciousness-based Quantum Wavefunction Collapse," Annales de la Fondation Louis de Broglie, vol. 31, 45 (2006). (click on the link to open)

5.6.3 Vision (Cakkhu Viññāṇa) is Not Just Seeing

July 15, 2016; revised October 19, 2020

Introduction

1. In 1988, Dee Fletcher almost died due to carbon monoxide poisoning. Her husband found her unconscious just in time to save her life. However, when she recovered, she had lost "sight" in the normal sense of the word.

- She could not see and recognize someone standing right in front or read a book.

2. But soon she realized that she had some peculiar abilities. She could grab a pencil from the hand of a person who held it in front of her, even though she could not actually "see" the pencil or the person.

- Her vision is good enough for picking something up, but not good enough for seeing it!

Dee Fletcher's Case Provided Many Clues on Vision

Since then researchers have done numerous experiments on her, which have led to some astonishing findings of how vision works.

- For example, they tested her with a mailbox with a narrow slit for inserting letters. Even though she could not see the mailbox — let alone the slit or the envelope — she could insert the letter in the slot without any effort. Even when they tilted the slit, she did not have a problem at all! It was as if a phantom inside her was doing that task for her.

3. Another ability of Dee was to be able to walk around the house without bumping into furniture or walls. Since that ability could be due to her familiarity with the house, they took her to an unfamiliar trail and she did not have any problem walking there without tripping over rocks or bumping into trees.

- This disorder is known as visual agnosia.
- It turns out that there are two relatively independent visual systems in the brain: One for conscious perception (visual cortex), which was severely damaged in Dee. The other was for unconscious control of action (superior colliculus), which is largely preserved.

Two Ways of Visual Processing

4. The following figure shows the optical nerve splitting and connecting to those two areas in the brain.

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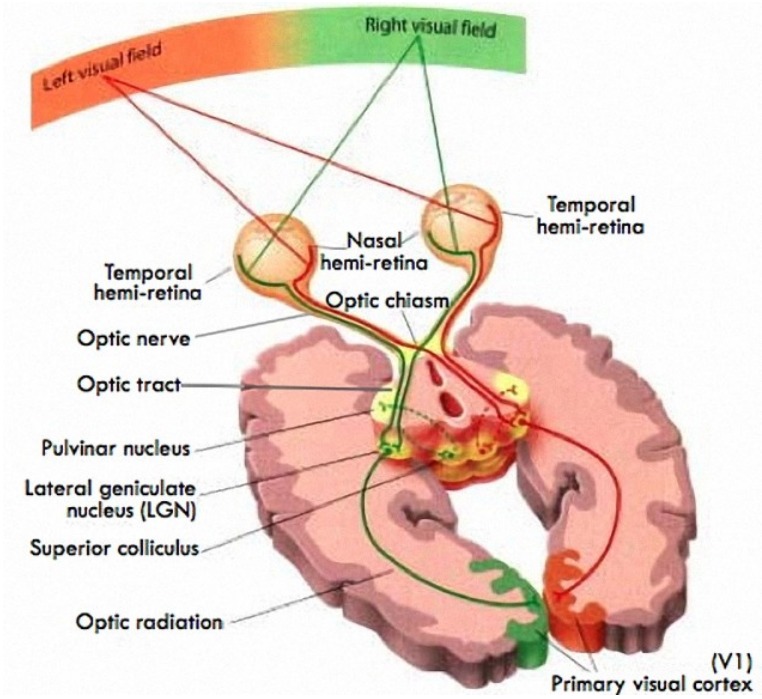

You can download the figure here.

5. The presence of two streams of visual processing in the brain had been known only since 1982. Even though the role of the visual cortex in the brain (in producing a "picture in the mind") had been known before that, the role of a second processing area in the brain (superior colliculus) that helps with figuring out the "depth of vision" or how far a given object was proposed in 1982 by Leslie Ungerleider and Mort Mishkin.

- Of course, their model helped explain the symptoms experienced by Dee Fletcher. She had parts of her visual cortex damaged by the carbon monoxide poisoning, while her superior colliculus was left mostly intact. Her eyes were sending the signals to the visual cortex, but the damaged visual cortex could not process that signal.
- By the way, you do not need to know the details of the visual cortex, superior colliculus, or any other technical term to get the idea that I plan to convey. I do not know details about them either.

How Vision Happens – Still a Mystery for Science

6. Of course, scientists are only aware that those two areas in the brain **contribute** to those two functions. They do not know exactly how the visual cortex gleans information about what the object is (i.e., its visual characteristics.) Also, it is not known how the superior colliculus figures out the dimensions of the object and how far it is at (in order to correctly grab an item both types of information are needed).

- We need to realize that there is "no light" going to the visual cortex and there is no screen at the back of the head that displays the object in question. The optical nerve only transmits a chemical (and electrical) signal. **The visual cortex somehow generates a "picture" for our minds to see**.
- Even more mysterious is how the **superior colliculus figures out the depth of vision** just from that chemical signal coming through the optical nerve.
- We will come back to these issues in upcoming posts, but first, let us continue with our discussion on what the scientists know at this time and how they found them.

Further Details of Dee Fletcher's Case

7. There are many research papers that describe experiments involving Dee Fletcher, and the two principal researchers have written a book on this research: "Sight Unseen – An Exploration of Conscious and Unconscious Vision" by M. A. Goodale and A. D. Milner (2004).

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- The above book is a bit expensive. Chapter 4 of V. S. Ramachandran's popular book, "Phantoms in the Brain" (1998) provides a less technical description. That book also describes some other interesting findings of the brain. I hope to discuss a couple of those observations (particularly his and others' work on "phantom limbs") in future posts.
- There is also a Wikipedia article on the WebLink: WIKI: Two-streams hypothesis on vision.

8. The book by Goodale and Milner also describes a visual problem that is the opposite of that of Ms. Fletcher. This syndrome is called the "optic ataxia," and those who have it can "see" and recognize objects very well, but they have difficulty in actions involving objects.

- Those who suffer from optic ataxia, for example, can see the mail box and the slit described in #2 above. However, they have much difficulty in putting a letter through the slit.
- It turns out that these people have their superior colliculus damaged, but the visual cortex works fine.

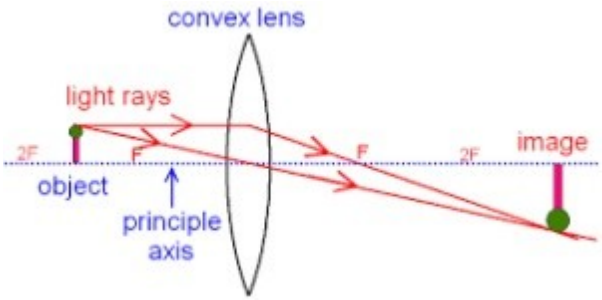
How Does the Mind Figure out the Distances to Objects Around Us?

9. Have you thought about how we can move around without bumping into each other and other objects like trees on the ground and cars on the road? The presence of the two processing streams can BEGIN TO explain how the brain figures out not only "what is in front of us (a human, tree, or a car)" but also "how far is it at and how big it is."

- As mentioned above, part of the signal going through the optical nerve to the visual cortex deals with the first task, and the other part going to the superior colliculus deals with the "haw far and how big" issue.

10. Even though scientists have figured out that those two areas in the brain (visual cortex and the superior colliculus) somehow extract the two kinds of information, **they have absolutely no idea how those areas extract that information from the chemical signal that comes through the optical nerve.**

- Scientists do know that the lens in an eye projects an image of the object to the back of the eye (retina); see the figure above. It is pretty much the same as an image you can see with a lens:



This is pretty much how a camera captures an image:

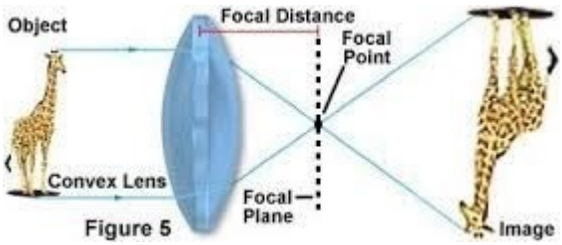


Figure 5

How Can a Chemical Signal Provide the Perception of Sight (and Light)?

11. Of course, the film in an old camera undergoes some chemical changes when the image falls on it. Then that film is chemically processed to reveal the picture.

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- In the same way, when the image of an object falls on the retina of an eye, the cells on the retina generate a chemical (and electrical) signal. The optical nerve transmits this signal to the visual cortex and the superior colliculus in the brain. There is no "picture" transmitted to the brain.
- So, how does the visual cortex generates a visual of the object starting with the chemical signal that comes from the eye?
- Even more puzzling is how the superior colliculus figures out the distance to the object (and the dimensions of the object), solely based on that same signal.

12. Even within the visual cortex itself, there are 30 different areas specialized to carry out different tasks. They all help provide a "comprehensive picture" of the object.

- For example, the area called V4 deals with the color of the object, but does not care about the direction of motion.
- On the other hand, area MT (also called V5) responds to targets in the visual field based on their direction of motion, but does not care about the color of the object. Specialized sub-areas in the visual cortex carry out multiple tasks.

The brain is Not a Computer – It Can Change

13. Brain is indeed a very sophisticated machine! However, as we will find out in upcoming posts, it is not a typical machine like a computer. **It can change on its own!**

- While a computer cannot get rid of parts that go bad, the brain can indeed replace or repair bad parts and even make new parts in some cases (however, when a whole section is damaged, like in the case of the visual cortex or superior colliculus such a rejuvenation is not possible). This is what is puzzling the neuroscientists right now. **They have confirmed that these things happen (I will discuss examples in future posts), but have no idea HOW the brain does that.**
- The key to this puzzle is the following. Our "mental body" or the *gandhabba* controls the physical body. The *gandhabba* has three components: *kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya*, and the *utuja kāya*. It is actually the *cittaja kāya* that plays the dominant role in CHANGING brain functions. In other words, it is OUR THOUGHTS that can change the brain!
- Ultimately, one attains *Nibbāna* by gradually transforming one's own brain. In other words, getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance can change one's brain! However, even a Buddha can only show the way, and one has to make the effort.
- The four types of bodies that we have and the *gandhabba* are discussed in the section "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)." The key functions of the *cittaja kāya* are also discussed in the post, "Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Importance of the Cittaja Kāya."

Buddha Dhamma and Science – a Symbiotic Relationship

14. We live in a truly opportune time to comprehend the value of Buddha Dhamma. Modern science provides clues that can be used with Buddha Dhamma to clarify many issues and vice versa. See, "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" and "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

- In this series of posts, I hope to suggest some such avenues for scientists to explore, based on Buddha Dhamma, which can also explain many of these "new findings."
- As I have mentioned many times, attaining *Nibbāna* does not require such details. However, for most people, future confirmation of such "predictions" hopefully will help build confidence in Buddha Dhamma, and to appreciate its value.

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- Of course, the real value of Buddha Dhamma is not in exposing such mundane things, but showing the path to liberation from suffering (*Nibbāna*). But it is good to have faith in Buddha Dhamma, so that one can feel confident that one is not wasting one's precious time in learning Buddha Dhamma.

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VI Three Levels of Practice

It is a good idea for anybody to read the first section, because the basic ideas and fundamentals are described in that section.

- **First Section:** Moral Living and Fundamentals
  - **Subsection:** The Basics
    - "The Pale Blue Dot……."
    - "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)"
    - "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)"
    - "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) – A Simpler Analysis"
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    - "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances"
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    - "Right Speech – How to avoid Accumulating Bad Kamma"
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    - "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand It?"
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    - "A Buddhist or a Bhouddhaya?"
    - "Where to Start on the Path?"
    - "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream"
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    - "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
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    - "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them"
    - "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma"
    - "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"
    - "Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma"
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  - **Subsection:** Buddha Dhamma and Morality
    - "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism"
    - "Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?"

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- "Do Things Just Happen? – The Hidden Causes"

- **Second Section:** Working Towards Good Rebirths
  - "Sansāric Habits and āsavas"
  - "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths"
  - "How to Avoid Birth in the Apayas"
  - "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm"
  - "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation"
  - "Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)"
  - "How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Diṭṭhi)?"
  - "Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi"
  - "Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society"
  - "What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?"
  - "Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi"

- **Third Section:** Seeking Nibbāna
  - "Attha Purisa Puggalā – Eight Noble Persons"
  - "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)"
  - "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of āsavas"
  - "Kaṇha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya"
  - "Dasa Samyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process"
  - "The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How the Root Causes are Removed"
  - "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?"
  - "How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path Starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta"
  - "Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless"
  -

- **Fourth Section:** Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna
  - "The Sotāpanna Stage"
  - "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire"
  - "Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage"
  - "Anuloma Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Sotāpanna Stage"
  - "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna"
  - "Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyās"
  - "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala"
  - "Sotāpatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna"
  - "Sammā Diṭṭhi – Realization, Not Memorization"

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- "Sakkāya Ditthi is Personality (Me) View?"
- "How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?"
- **Subsection:** "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana"
  - "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana – Introduction"
  - "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha"
  - "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha"
  - "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways"
  - "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa"
  - "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex"
  - "Kāma Āsvada Start with Phassa Paccaya Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā"
- "Akusala Citta – How Does a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta"
- "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?"
- **Subsection:** "Udayavaya Ñāṇa"
  - "Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Introduction"
  - "Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāṇa"
  - "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa"
  - "Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Importance of the Cittaja Kaya"

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6.1 Moral Living and Fundamentals

Basic core concepts in Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) are discussed. Many misconceptions that persist in both Mahayana and Theravada are discussed.

- The Basics
  - "The Pale Blue Dot……."
  - "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)"
  - "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)"
  - "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis"
  - "Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving"
  - "First Noble Truth – A Simple Explanation of One Aspect"
  - "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)"
- Calming the Mind
  - "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances"
  - "Solution to a Wandering Mind – Abandon Everything?"
  - "Right Speech – How to avoid Accumulating Bad Kamma"
  - "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"
  - "Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha"
  - "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand It?"
  - "Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?"
- Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism
  - "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?"
  - "A Buddhist or a Bhouddhaya?"
  - "Where to Start on the Path?"
  - "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream"
  - "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)"
  - "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?"
- Dhamma Concepts
  - "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)"
  - "The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)"
  - "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
  - "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"
  - "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā"
  - "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them"

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- "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"
- "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma"
- "Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma"
- "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada)"
- "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"

○ Buddha Dhamma and Morality

- "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism"
- "Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?"
- "Do Things Just Happen? – The Hidden Causes"

6.1.1 The Basics

"The Pale Blue Dot……."
"The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)"
"Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)"
"Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis"
"Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving"
"First Noble Truth – A Simple Explanation of One Aspect"
"Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)"

6.1.1.1 The Pale Blue Dot…….

Revised March 2, 2020

Even if some of us are not thinking about a "wider world view" or "what happens after death", all of us want a better world for all of us.

I thought of sharing this marvelous video from the late Dr. Carl Sagan:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Carl Sagan - Pale Blue Dot

When I read the writings of all those past scientists like Sagan, Feynman, Einstein, Bohm, Heisenberg, etc., I wonder how much more they could have accomplished spiritually if they were exposed to pure Buddha Dhamma. Yet, I am still impressed by their pure reasoning and compassion for the humanity; they were not just scientists with a narrow focus. They thought deeply about the "purpose of existence."

Even though science has revealed the unimaginable vastness of space, scientists think our universe is only 15 billion years old. However, each of us has an uncountable number of lives in the past. See, "Origin of Life -- There is No Traceable Origin." Not only is our place in the vast cosmos insignificantly small, but our individual existence of about 100 years (in this life) is insignificantly small too.

- Yet, out of countless beings that live on this Earth, we are the only species that is capable of forging our own destiny.
- We need to be mindful not only of the welfare of family and friends but for all other people and beings (seen and unseen).

Do you know why some actions are good and others bad? We may quote some ethical maxims or juggle with philosophical abstractions, but there is a very simple explanation that is called nature: "Good is good

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because it leads to happiness and freedom of the heart. Bad is bad because it leads to suffering, and it feels bad." The Buddha said a moral deed (*puñña kamma*) is one that makes one's heart "pulsating with joy"; an immoral deed leads to a burdened heart.

Nature encourages morality and punishes immorality via its built-in reward-punishment system, which is none other than the laws of *kamma*. But the punishment is not immediate, and that is why it is hard for people to make the connection. Even if the punishment in question comes to a few lives later, this "time lag" is really not that long since *saṃsāra* is "beginning-less" and "endless."

Humans innately know what is right and what wrong. Most bad actions are committed with a mind that is not calm but is agitated. Therefore, we need to learn how to calm our minds: "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

By the way, Dr. Sagan's books like "Pale Blue Dot: A Vision of the Human Future in Space," "The Varieties of Scientific Experience," and "Billions & Billions: Thoughts on Life and Death at the Brink of the Millennium" are very informative. These are likely to be available in local public libraries.

Next, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsava)", ……..

6.1.1.2 The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)

Revised October 24, 2018; March 2, 2020; November 1, 2020

The Law of Attraction

1. The saying, "Birds of a feather flock together," is true, and we can see that all around us.

- We can put people into various categories: sportsmen/sportswomen, thieves, politicians, murderers, churchgoers, environmentalists, liberals, conservatives, etc.
- In a school, kids tend to get into different groups too: those who play sports, like partying, nerds, geeks, etc.
- Of course, there may be some overlaps, but we can clearly see people tend to socialize with those who have common interests, likings, etc.

Those With Similar Character/Habits (Gati) Tend To Stay Together

2. This is a universal principle. A basic rule in chemistry is that "like molecules" stay together.

- We all know that oil and water do not mix. Those two molecules have very different properties (analogous to *gati* in people.) On the other hand, water molecules stay together happily since they all have the same properties. Same with oil.
- In people, there are "good *gati*" as well as "bad *gati*."
- Just as with water and oil, those with similar *gati* tend to "stick together." This is why it essential to stay away from those with "bad *gati*" and to make an effort to associate with those with "good *gati*."

3. Buddha Dhamma describes the laws of nature. So it is not surprising that the law of attraction comes naturally out of Dhamma. There are three keywords in Dhamma that are relevant. (1) Habits/character (*gati with the "t"*; pronounced "th", like in "three" or in Thailand), (2) cravings (*āsavā*,) and (3) Hidden cravings (anusaya.) see, "Habits and Goals, and Character (Gathi)."

- **One's *gati* are closely related to one's hidden cravings (*anusaya.*) Such *gati* or *anusaya* "come to the surface" as cravings (*āsava*) when triggered by sensory input (*ārammana.*)** For example, an alcoholic does not crave drinking all the time. That "drunkard *gati*" remains hidden as anusaya until he sees an alcohol bottle or is invited to a drink by a friend.

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- Some of these habits we take from life-to-life, see, **"Saṃsāric Habits, Character (Gati) and Cravings (Āsava)."**
- However, it is possible to change even those deeply-ingrained bad *gati*. The key is to realize the bad consequences of "bad *gati*" and cultivate "good *gati*."

Paṭicca Samuppāda Explains the Law of Attraction

4. The law of attraction can be explained with Paṭicca Samuppāda, the principle of cause and effect in Dhamma; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction."

- "Pati + iccha" means associate or bind with something one likes. "*sama* + *uppāda*" means what results (*uppāda*) from that is something similar (*sama*) in kind. That association leads to an outcome of the same kind.
- If a child hangs out willingly and enthusiastically with others who like to work hard and enjoy getting good grades, they will continue on that path to success. The more a child willingly hangs out with a criminal gang, his mind becomes more attuned to criminal behavior and becomes a criminal capable of doing atrocious crimes.
- **Thus, in Buddha Dhamma, it says, "*gati* (character) attracts a similar *gati*."** We will see this developed into profound meaning.

Environment Plays a Key Role in Changing *Gati*

5. However, Dhamma says this law of attraction does not need to be fatalistic, i.e., one with a set of bad habits/cravings does not have to go down a slippery slope. One CAN change those habits/cravings GRADUALLY and thus change one's character (*gati*).

However, a child is not capable of doing this on his/her own. That is why it is the parents' responsibility to direct the child:

- Parents can make a HUGE contribution in setting up good habits/cravings in a child starting from conception. The fetus felts the love and cares the parent feel towards each other. That is as important, perhaps more important than the food consumed by the mother. A child born into an environment of abuse or violence may develop life-long problems.
- As the child grows, the child's behavior and habits are influenced HUGELY by the parents, friends, and the school environment. It is the responsibility of the parents and teachers to guide the child.

6. When one becomes an adult, one has full control of one's life (in a mundane sense). Even if the child years were not good, and even if one has acquired a set of bad habits (or even *saṃsāric* habits that have molded one's character in fundamental ways), it is POSSIBLE to change them.

- One can use the same *Paṭicca Samuppāda* principle to change direction.
- All one needs to do is change the "*pati+ichcha*" part, i.e., change one's likings or habits. Then "*sama+uppāda*" will happen automatically. That is nature's law. See, "Paṭicca Samuppāda."

One Needs to See the Consequences of Bad *Gati*

7. First, though, one needs to convince one's own mind that the current path will lead to a bad destiny. That is getting rid of avijjā in the "avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra" step in Paṭicca Samuppāda. One needs to contemplate the bad consequences of staying on the same wrong path. AND one also needs to contemplate the benefits of cultivating good habits.

- For example, a smoker cannot just make a New Year resolution and stop smoking (a few can, but most cannot). Instead, it is better first to look at all the medical evidence out there.

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- There is strong evidence that one could die early, and also may be burdened in old age with lung problems if one continues smoking. One could talk to someone who has given up smoking and listen to that person's "success story," or think about not seeing to see the annoyance of those who are around when one lights a cigarette, etc.

Cultivating Good *Gati*

8. When one acquires "good habits" (initially slowly and with effort), one is attracted to people, settings, workplaces, environments that further nurture and grow those habits, which in turn change one's character. **Thus, the process becomes self-feeding once started.**

- This is the law of attraction embedded in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*: "*pati+ichcha*," leading to "*sama+uppāda*." Thus it is critical to developing a liking (*chanda*) and desire (*citta*) for what one wants to accomplish, and to critically analyze the situation (*vimaṃsā*), and make an effort (*viriya*); see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada)." [***vimaṃsā*** : 'investigation, inquiry, pondering', is one of the 4 roads to power (*iddhi-pāda*)]
- When one embraces certain ways and activities (good or bad), those become habits. In Sinhala, it is said that "නිතර කරන දෙයෙ ගති වෙනවා (*ganna deya gathi venava*)." When one keeps doing this repeatedly and possibly over numerous rebirths, they get deeply embedded as deep-seated cravings (*āsavā*). Those *gati* (character) also become "*bhava*" as well. Whatever that is liked becomes one's existence (*bhava*) or reality (in Sinhala, "තිබෙන බව (*thibena bhava*)").
- When one has a certain character (*gati*), it becomes easy to get into the corresponding "state" or existence; this is one meaning of *bhava*. For example, one with a "drinking habit" is easy to be "born" in that state, i.e., just the sight of a bar may cause that person to get drunk. **This is the concept extended in Buddha Dhamma.** It is easy to be "born" with those characteristics in the new birth (*uppatti bhava*) or even in the present life (*pavutti bhava*). This a bit deeper concept discussed in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* section. See, for example, "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."

Need to Have Patience

9. The problem many people run into is that they would like to change quickly, which does not normally happen. Initial progress could be slow. However, when one gets traction, the process speeds up. It is like trying to reverse the direction of a moving car. One needs to stop going in the wrong direction first. Even when one starts the car facing the right direction, it takes a little while to accelerate and ramp up the speed. See, "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)," and the links there. Let us consider two examples:

- If one wants to be a successful businessman, then one should try to "build up" habits that business people have: knowledge of the particular business, learning relevant skills, hard work, etc. THEN the law of attraction starts working and will pull one to others with similar interests and environments or conditions automatically.
- If a high-school kid wants to go to college, then he/she should make an effort to get into that mindset. Spending more time deciding what kinds of subjects to study and then get "immersed" in it. The parent and teachers can make a big difference by encouraging and guiding in the correct path.
- If someone wants to attain "*nirāmisa sukha*" (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"), one needs to spend some time and first learn the true Dhamma. **As one learns, one gets motivated to learn more because one will start feeling the character's change (*gati*).**

Managing *Gati* is the First Step to *Nibbāna*

10. Finally, the law of attraction works in the *saṃsāric* rebirth process too.

- Many are reborn to the same families, same geographic locations, etc. (within the same "*bhava*.") See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein".

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- At the moment of death, one's mind automatically grasps a "matching birth" according to one's *kamma vipāka*, and also one's habits and tendencies. One who has lived an immoral life is likely to get a similar outcome in the next life. Someone who "lives like an animal" is likely to be born an animal. One who lives like a "Deva" (a being devoid of hate) or a "*Brahma*" (a being devoid of greed and hate), is likely to reborn a *Deva, Brahma*.
- Thus by cultivating good habits and getting rid of bad habits, one CAN change the direction of one's current life (character) AND future lives too.
- The best way to do this is to be mindful all the time. See the bad consequences of bad actions and bad habits, avoid them; see the good consequences of good actions and good habits, and embrace them. At the fundamental level, this is the basis of the *Ānāpānasati* and *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā* (taking in what is good and getting rid of what is bad.) See, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

11. Currently, several books are available on the law of attraction and how one can use certain procedures to attain goals, build relationships, etc. The Buddha described those and more 2500 years ago.

Next, "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)," …

6.1.1.3 Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati or Gathi)

Revised November 26, 2018; revised June 6, 2020

1. As I mentioned before, Buddha Dhamma can be interpreted at three levels; see, "Foundation of Dhamma." But the key to making progress at ANY LEVEL is to get rid of bad habits and instill good habits **because they mold one's character (*gati*) even though the rebirth process.**

- The Pāli (and Sinhala) word for "character" is "*gati*" (ගති) One's character can be changed (for good or bad) via changing one's habits. These habits take deep roots when practiced over many lives, and become deep-seated cravings ("*āsavas*") that form one's character.
- Some habits are harmless. For example, some people have the habit of shaking their legs while sitting. It could be annoying to some, but it is not "morally wrong", i.e., it is not one of the ten defilements; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- But there are other habits, such as drinking, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc that are morally wrong. They belong to the ten defilements of *dasa akusala*. Generating greedy or hateful thoughts can be a bad habit too. Some have a tendency to easily "flare-up."
- Then there could some, like gambling, that could lead to immoral actions.
- There are good habits too. Giving, helping others, teaching, and being compassionate in general.

2. For someone at the highest level, the *Sabbāsava Sutta* explains how one can work towards *Nibbāna* in a systematic way by developing good habits ("*gati*") and removing *āsavas*; see "Key Points from the *Sabbāsava Sutta*" under "The Sotāpanna Stage."

3. Here we are going to look at it to see how those recommended steps can be used in the day-to-day life, i.e., to live a moral life. Those steps can be used to remove any bad habits. Some example are alcohol or drug use, smoking, and eating too much.

- They can also be used in achieving goals, say lose weight, getting rid of depression, or starting a new business. Achieving goals require building good habits.

4. A habit is something one gets used to by repeating it over and over. Good habits make a life easier to live with, and bad habits lead to bad results. Scientific studies have confirmed that our brains "can rewire its connections" (plasticity of the brain), thus getting rid of bad habits and instilling good ones. The trick is to

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"stick to a set procedure." Many people give up before giving their brains enough time to "rewire"; this is why many "New Year resolutions" go unfulfilled.

- One way to remove bad habits is to look at the bad consequences of such habits; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- In-depth analysis at, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View."

5. The seven steps in the *Sabbāsava Sutta* can be helpful for developing good habits for a moral life. These steps basically convince the mind of the benefits of good habits/downside of bad habits and set up a conducive environment.

The 7 steps in the *Sabbāsava Sutta* (interpreted conventionally or mundane or "*padaparama*" interpretation):

1. Cultivate an understanding. Learn all about the direct and indirect benefits, what is involved, the best way to go about achieving the goal, etc.
2. Be discipline. Avoid getting distracted by things that provide "temporary pleasures", like a drug addict thinking it is OK to "take a small puff" while working to be free of drugs.
3. Association are important. Associate with knowledgeable people who can help and get to know other helpful resources.
4. Patience and tolerance. (Maintain focus and not get "shaken off" by small inconveniences. Perseverance is critical.
5. Avoidance are important as associations. Dissociating with people who have negative attitudes and avoiding unsafe places, practices, etc.
6. Removal of hindrances. Suppress discouraging thoughts by contemplating on the long-term benefits of the project.
7. Bhāvanā or "immersing in the project." That means constantly thinking about the main objective and the ways to get there.

6. A good idea of the goal is needed first. One should not undertake a journey without learning about the destination and how to get there. It is a good idea to explore how it can be beneficial to oneself and others (family, friends, and even to society) too.

- Once the overview is done and the decision to undertake the project is made, all steps should be used as appropriate. For example, the first and last items on the above list (understanding and meditating) go hand-in-hand.

7. Those steps can be used by anyone to enhance the quality of life in general, a moral life with a "peace-of-mind." They are the sensible things to do.

- For example, an important decision for anyone should be to live in a good area not prone to crime, floods, etc.
- Going out at inappropriate times, in inappropriate places, is just 'asking for trouble."
- It is critical to avoid associating with immoral and also those with negative attitudes.
- If one carefully goes through the list, it will be clear why all those steps make common sense.

If you would like to read about how these habits develop into deep-seated *sansāric* habits or *āsavas*, see, "Sansāric Habits, Character (Gathi) and Cravings (Āsava)." Also, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada)," can be helpful in achieving goals.

Next, "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis", …….

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6.1.1.4 Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis

Revised November 27, 2017; revised May 12, 2020 (#6)

Micchā means wrong or incorrect and *diṭṭhi* means views. Pronunciation:

WebLink: Listen to the pronunciation of diṭṭhi

Here it is about the wrong views about our world or our existence. It is the most basic reason why people cannot grasp the message of the Buddha, and that is unfortunate. We all are looking at the world through "colored glasses"; each one has his/her own set of beliefs or "*diṭṭhis*," so we cannot see the real nature.

- Some facts about nature are hard to believe, and it took the efforts of many scientists to change two common wrong views (*diṭṭhis*) that had been with the humans up to recently: that the Earth is flat and it is at the center of the universe.

1. These days, most of us believe that the Earth moves around the Sun. But it is quite clear that it goes against our experience, and the accepted views were the opposites even a few hundred years ago. We do not have any direct experience of the motion of the Earth, either its rotation around its own axis or in its orbit around the Sun. And we see ample evidence to the contrary, i.e., for the Sun rotating around the Earth, because we experience a sunrise and a sunset everyday!

- If one looks at the speeds involved it becomes even more harder to believe that the Earth is moving: The Earth moves around its axis at a speed of about 1,040.4 miles/hour (1,674.4 kilometer/hour or 465.1 meter/second) at the equator (and zero at the North and South Poles) and it moves along its orbit around the Sun at an average speed of about 67,062 miles/hour (107,300 kilometer/hour). Thus it is surprising that we have no direct perception of such movements.
- Of course, we do not feel it because everything around us is also doing exactly the same thing. When we travel in a car, we "feel the ride" because we can see the scenery passing by (and because the ride may not be smooth; luckily, the Earth is very smooth in its motions). It is the "relative motion" that we perceive. If two cars are moving in parallel with the same speed, passengers in each car see the other car to be stationary.
- However, after Galileo invented the telescope, people made more precision measurements of the planets and the heliocentric model was needed to explain all those new findings.

2. But there are many people who still believe that the Sun goes around the Earth! To quote a passage from the Wikipedia article, WebLink: WIKI: Geocentric model

- "..Morris Berman quotes survey results that show currently some 20% of the U.S. population believes that the sun goes around the Earth (geocentricism) rather than the Earth goes around the sun (heliocentricism), while a further 9% claimed not to know. Polls conducted by Gallup in the 1990s found that 16% of Germans, 18% of Americans and 19% of Britons hold that the Sun revolves around the Earth. A study conducted in 2005 by Jon D. Miller of Northwestern University, an expert in the public understanding of science and technology, found that about 20%, or one in five, of American adults believe that the Sun orbits the Earth. According to 2011 VTSIOM poll, 32% of Russians believe that the Sun orbits the Earth."
- And, there are even some who believe that the Earth is flat: WebLink: WIKI: Modern flat Earth societies

3. Thus sometimes it is very hard to get rid of certain "wrong views" because of our "experiences" and "gut feelings." Yet, if one hangs onto such wrong views (in the face of contrary evidence) one cannot get a correct world view. This is why we always need to "look at the big picture"; the "bigger the picture", the better it is. It is hard to see much details while walking on the ground, but one see a whole lot better looking down from a helicopter.

- Luckily, nowadays, we have the advantage of technology to confirm that the Earth is not flat and that it moves around the Sun.

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4. Similarly, it is very hard for many people to believe that humans could be reborn as animals. One argument that was given in a book that refuted rebirth was that "..in that case, the human population should not be changing, but we see an increase of the human population over the past centuries." Apparently, the author did not even consider that a human could be born an animal. Again, it is matter of a very narrow world view. There are innumerable beings in this world and they can be born in not only in the animal and human realms, but 29 other realms that we cannot see!

- When Darwin presented his theory of evolution, it made a huge psychological impact on the society, which was not ready to accept that humans evolved from animals. It is said that Darwin did not publish his now-famous volume, *On the Origin of Species by Means of Natural Selection*, until 1859, more than 20 years after he had first formulated his theory because he knew that it would create an uproar.

5. The theory of evolution is only partially correct according to Buddha Dhamma; we will discuss this in detail in the future. When conditions for a birth in certain realm are satisfied, the nature has come up with many ways to make that birth take place.

- Accepting the fact that human can be BORN in the animal realm is an even more shocking thing to contemplate for many people. But we should not just go by our instincts, because the world is much more complex than we perceive with our limited senses.
- Even though we consider the life of an animal as "useless", life is the most important thing in the world even for the lowest worm. All living beings have craving to continue the life they have, regardless of how pathetic it appears to us. Our "smelly bodies" are said to be repulsive to the *devas* who have fine bodies that are free of diseases as well.

6. The Buddha said, "*..bhikkhus,* sentient beings reborn as humans are few as this bit of sand on my fingernail. But those not reborn as humans are many as the sand on this great Earth. Therefore, you should strive diligently and without delay to end this suffering in the rebirth process". That statement appears to most people as an exaggeration. That quote is from the post, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

- But as described in that post, modern science is slowly proving that indeed the number of living beings, just in the animal realm, is unimaginably large. Comparatively, the human population of about 7 billion is negligibly small.
- There are more living beings in your backyard soil than the entire human population on Earth!

7. Of course we cannot see the beings in the other three lower realms. But, just because they are not amenable to our senses, we cannot say they do not exist.

- Human vision is restricted to an almost infinitesimal sliver of 400 to 700 nanometers in the wavelength spectrum. Our ears can detect only 20 to 20,000 Hertz audio frequencies. Other animals use their own "bands" above and below that. Human beings have one of the poorest senses of smell of all the organisms on Earth., etc; see the book, "The Meaning of Human Existence" by Edward O. Wilson, who is a leading biologist.
- Another way to think about this is to contemplate on the fact that there are hundreds of TV or radios broadcasts that can be "tapped into" by having a TV or a radio set to the right channel. Just because we cannot "see" those electromagnetic waves with our eyes, we cannot say they are not all around us. There are other living beings all around us with such fine bodies, we just cannot see them.
- We have only begun "see" other hidden parts of "our world" with the aid of science; see, "Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology."

8. Even though scientific progress has been impressive, it takes generations to move the "knowledge base" forward; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction."

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- On the other hand, by PURIFYING the mind, one can discern EVERYTHING that is of importance **within a lifetime**; see, "Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind," and the power of the mind in the posts starting with, "Power of the Human Mind – Introduction."
- That is how the Buddha knew about not only the existence of innumerable planetary systems in the universe (many other examples are discussed in other posts), but also about the fact that this life of about 100 years in insignificant in the rebirth process.
- And there is compelling evidence for rebirth; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

9. Without the "correct view" of this world, we will be simply "groping in the dark." When one has only a narrow and blurred vision, one cannot move forward. If one believes that this is the only life we have, then one could be making bad decisions, that could affect one's future for billions of years to come.

- That is why it is worthwhile at least to examine the evidence of the "wider world view" of the Buddha, where both space and time are infinite. While modern science has confirmed the infinite extent of space, it has not yet "discovered" the fact that life does not end at physical death; it is just the end of one insignificantly small sliver of the time span of a sentient being.

10. Most people think the First Noble Truth is about suffering in the sense of just physical or mental suffering IN THIS LIFE; that is wrong. Those are RESULTS of past actions (*kamma*). **But that suffering is NOT what the First Noble Truth is about**; it is about the FUTURE suffering that CAN BE stopped.

- **The First Noble Truth is about the suffering that is hidden.** It is the unavoidable suffering for anyone in this cycle of rebirths, until one grasps the "correct world view."
- This is why the Buddha said, "my Dhamma has never been heard before." It is hard to grasp until one is willing to spend some time and examine the "bigger picture." One should not just go by one's instincts, but rather by the facts.

11. **This is also why** "*sammā diṭṭhi*" or "correct view" comes first in both versions of the Eightfold Path. Yes. There are two versions of the path: One is mundane (*lokiya*) and is easier to grasp. The other is transcendental (*lokuttara*) and requires the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* or the Three Characteristics of this world, i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

- Before trying to comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa*, it is imperative that one follows the mundane eightfold path and removes all ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*; they are discussed in "Mahā Chattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- When one starts understanding the validity of laws of *kamma* (i.e., deeds have consequences), rebirth must be true, and there are other realms that we cannot see, one begins to embrace the mundane version of *sammā diṭṭhi*.

12. With that *sammā diṭṭhi*, one realizes that it is not fruitful to: think immoral thoughts (*micchā saṅkappa*), utter inappropriate speech (*micchā vācā*), do inappropriate things (*micchā kammanta*), live an immoral life (*micchā ājīva*), to strive to achieve unfruitful things (*micchā vāyāma*), have an immoral mindfulness (*micchā sati*), and thus get into an immoral state (*micchā samādhi*).

- **Even if we can "get away" from paying for misdeeds in this life, we will have to pay with interest in the future lives. Similarly, any good deeds will be rewarded in future lives, if not within this life itself.**
- Thus, with correct views or *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, one will be automatically following the mundane eightfold path: *sammā saṅkappa, sammā vācā, sammā kammanta, sammā ājīva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati,* and thus get to *sammā samādhi*. It all starts with *sammā diṭṭhi*, or the "correct views."

13. It is not a world view that is amenable to our "experience", because our sense faculties are limited as we discussed above. But as we make progress, our minds will become clear and we WILL be able to see for ourselves the true nature of this world.

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- There is a lot of evidence that what the Buddha said about "the wider world" 2500 years ago are indeed true. We are lucky to be born at the time when efforts of many generations of scientists have confirmed many of his world views, and that should give us confidence (*saddhā*) to take those views serious enough to spend some time examining the evidence. My goal is to present evidence from many aspects, because different people comprehend different aspects.

14. Such a critical evaluation itself could be enough to dispel any wrong views. It is like lifting of a fog and being able to see clearly. When the mind becomes pure, one does not need "evidence from science" to confirm the worldview of the Buddha.

- The *lokuttara* version of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (which requires the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent) and the corresponding Noble Eightfold Path is discussed in other posts in the "Seeking Nibbāna" section. Also, see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and the post referred to in that chart: "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

Next, "Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving", …

6.1.1.5 Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving

1. When solving any problem, there are four steps:

- One needs to know what the problem is, or even realize there is a problem.
- The reason or the cause for that problem (some may be superficial causes but there are **root causes**).
- Knowing what kind of end result can be expected by solving the problem (there may be many possible outcomes depending on the approach).
- A procedure to systematically solve the problem based on the superficial or root causes.

2. Let us discuss several examples. If a car would not start, the cause may not be clear to someone who does not have a technical background in automobiles, but a qualified technician will be able to find the cause quickly.

- He may find that it is a simple problem of some wires becoming loose in the ignition circuit, or it could be as bad as a problem with the engine itself.
- The solution of the problem will lead to being able to start the car.
- And the way to get there depends on the actual problem and going through the standard procedures to solve the problem. If the problem is with a loose wire, one could re-connect the loose wires or just replace that circuit box. If it is a failed engine, one could either replace the engine or if it is a minor problem with the engine, just fix that.

3. Sometimes figuring out the cause or **even figuring out that there is a problem**, may not be obvious. If we get a headache, in most cases we would just take an aspirin or Tylenol and that would "fix it."

- But if the headache keeps coming back, then we may realize that there could be a more serious **root cause**. Now we need to figure out why we are getting headaches frequently. First, we look at easy solutions. For example, if we can tie up the timing of the headaches to eating some kind of specific food, we can stop eating that and see whether it goes away.
- If we cannot figure it out, and if the problem persists, then we go to a specialist again, in this case, a physician. The physician will ask a series of questions and may do a series of tests. The goal is to figure out what causes the headaches, the root cause.
- The end result of solving the problem again is simple: to be free of headaches. But in the case of recurring headaches, taking an aspirin is not a permanent solution.

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- Depending on results, of the diagnostic tests, the physician may find the root cause to be a cancer. Then that cancer needs to be treated, etc. He will prescribe a method of treatment. If that root cause is removed, then we would have removed the recurring headaches.
- Thus the correct way to solve a problem has four steps. Correctly identifying the problem, find its root causes, determine the outcome if the root causes are removed, and finding the best procedure to handle the root causes.

4. But sometimes, when a problem arises we tend to do the most expedient thing to get it out of the way and just move on. If the headache goes away until one gets through the day, then one may decide to just take an aspirin and handle it day to day like that.

- Even when the wife (or husband) says, "You have been taking aspirins almost every day for this many days. Why don't you see a doctor and see whether there is something else going on?", we may just continue with the "temporary fix" especially if we are busy.
- If that person was starting to develop a cancer, then postponing the diagnosis of the "root cause" could be a grave mistake. A cancer cell multiplies very rapidly and could spread to other areas of the body.
- Even though one could get temporary relief by taking an aspirin daily (may be with gradually increasing the dose too), that is NOT the solution. **The end result in the short term could be temporary relief, but one is moving into a much more dangerous outcome.**
- The ideal solution to the problem is not to be free from the headache temporarily, but to free from the cancer!

5. We can solve many problems by ourselves by following the four-step process. We may need a qualified technician to find root causes of car problems or may need the help of a physician to diagnose the root causes for the recurring headaches to be cancer.

6. The Four Noble Truths handle the most critical problem of all: the suffering associated with existence.

- First, most of us are not even aware that there is a problem. Some people do not realize that there is a rebirth process and that most of these rebirths are filled with unimaginable suffering. They are not even know aware that there is a problem.
- This problem of existence can be seen only by the highly-purified mind of a Buddha.
- And he found the root causes, that permanent happiness (*Nibbāna*) results from removing the root causes, and the procedure to do that.
- However, one can find temporary solutions but just fixing the superficial causes. Just like fixing the headache by taking an aspirin, one could find temporary happiness in this life by "trouble-shooting" each problem as it arises. One could even find a bit longer-term solution by working towards a better rebirth. But those are temporary solutions.

7. Thus there is an important difference between **superficial causes and root causes**.

- It is interesting to note that root causes give the exact meaning as the Pāli term "*mūlika hetu*"; "*mūla*" is the root of a tree. If a tree is cut down but if the roots remain intact, the tree may not be killed. It may still sprout new limbs and finally grow to a full-fledged tree.
- However, removing the deep roots of a tree will permanently kill the tree. Similarly, removing root causes will eradicate the problem completely.

8. In complex situations, the root causes of a given problem may not be obvious. **And that means the ideal solution may not be obvious.**

- When that happens, the problem leads to ever-increasing severity, and may not be solvable after some point, as in the above case of ignoring the headaches for a longer time will only lead to the spread of the cancer and after some point, the cancer may not be treatable.

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9. In the case of some possible problems that we can foresee, we do not need to wait until they materialize. For example, all parents tell their kids to get a good education and then a good job, so that those kids will not fall into hardships when they grow up. In that case, the solution is to get a good job and the way to get there is to get a good education.

- But getting a good job does not solve all possible problems: a young person getting a job knows that one could come down with a deadly disease or lose the job in an unpredictable situation. Here again, in terms of mundane reality, there are no perfect solutions. One could eat healthy foods, engage in an exercise program, etc and also purchase health insurance and life insurance, etc.

10. We should play out these scenarios in our heads. We can easily see that the four-step process can solve any problem with varying degrees of success.

- In all these situations, our goal is to "maintain things to our satisfaction." We want our bodies, and the bodies of our spouses and children, to function well and avoid any ailments or discomfort. And we want our physical belongings (houses, cars, clothes, etc) to function well.
- By following the above four-step process we can fulfill our desires to some extent. We can evade certain problems by eating healthy, exercising, etc. We can get a car to last a long time by doing the required maintenance. Still, all these activities require effort with associated suffering. That is not apparent (these are associated with *saṅkhāra dukkha* and *vipariṇāma dukkha*; see, "Introduction – What is Suffering? ."
- This is because all we can do in those cases is to try to address some superficial causes.
- But eventually, we WILL NOT be able to maintain our bodies to our satisfaction. No matter how well we plan, there comes a time when our bodies start to degrade, even if we do not encounter any major issues like cancer or Alzheimer's disease; this is part of the *dukkha dukkha*; see, "Introduction -2 – The Three Characteristics of Nature."
- Yet, if we do not follow the four-step process in those mundane tasks, we will have many more problems. Therefore, the first thing to do is to make sure one analyzes one's day-to-day activities and make sure to carefully analyze the problems one encounters (or even better to anticipate future problems) and take necessary precautions.

11. However, tackling superficial causes that we can readily see or discern is what we have been doing since the beginning-less time. Life after-life, we just strive to "maintain things to our satisfaction", and at ALL TIMES fail at least at the end.

- Most times we suffer trying to "**get things going** in the way we want", and by the time we achieve at least some success, our bodies start falling apart, so that we will not be enjoying what we have gained with so much effort.
- **Think carefully about any famous personality, whom we believe had achieved their life goals.** They all had to leave behind their achievements in many instances with tragic death, and in their new life those things would not mean anything anyway; they have to start all over. The only things that are carried over to the new life are any good/bad habits or deeds they had cultivated, and not any material gains.

12. The key point that the Buddha was trying to make was that we do not realize that there is a "problem of existence", the first-step in the four step process involving our existence. But since we cannot readily see the rebirth process most of us focus on just this life.

- All we have been doing is to "take aspirins" as headaches resurfaced, instead of finding a permanent solution to the "problem of never-ending headaches."
- In each and every life so far, what we have done has been to "take aspirins" to try to solve problems temporarily as they inevitably come our way.

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- This is the First Noble Truth of "*dukkha sacca*" (pronounced "dukkha sachcha.") That "existence in this world of 31 realms is filled with suffering, and it is a never-ending process. But that can be overcome permanently."

13. If we understand how this never-ending process gets the required fuel from (or the root cause for rebirths), then by ELIMINATING those causes we can solve the problem of perpetual suffering permanently.

- This cause of suffering is the Second Noble Truth: "*dukkha samudaya* (where "*samudaya*" is "*san*" + "*udaya*" where "udaya" means "to arise") or how rebirth-fuelling "*san*" is the cause for *dukha*. The Buddha analyzed this cause in detail and found that it is our attachment (*taṇhā*) to "things in this world" due to our ignorance of the fact that "anything in this world cannot be maintained to our satisfaction" or *anicca*. **Thus stated succinctly, the root cause for our suffering is not realizing *anicca*.**
- *Anicca* leads to *dukha* (suffering), and thus one becomes *anatta* (helpless). Since this *dukha* can be overcome, it is called *dukkha*, and thus we have the Three Characteristics of "this world of 31 realms"; see, "Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings."
- Not understanding these three characteristics is called *avijjā* or ignorance.

14. Now the third step is to see that the successful solution to this problem is the attainment of *Nibbāna* or stopping of the rebirth process. This is probably the hardest step to latch on to.

- Our minds are not set up to "see" the suffering one is undergoing, but to contemplate on "possible future happiness." The Buddha likened this to the case of a cow dragging a fully-loaded cart eagerly when its owner is holding a stack of hay on a pole in front of it. The cow has its mind set on reaching the stack of hay and does not even realize the heavy load it is pulling.
- Even the lowest worm wants to live. It does not see the suffering that it goes through. This is where one needs to spend a lot time trying to comprehend the message of the Buddha.
- It is only when one truly comprehends that "it is fruitless to struggle to find happiness in this world of 31 realms" that one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage. This is when one sees the truth in the Third Noble Truth, the *nirodha sacca*. *Nirodha* means "*nir*" + "*uda*" or to stop the arising.

15. The Buddha said that when one sees one Noble Truth, one sees all four. Thus at the attainment of the *Sotāpanna* stage, the way to *Nibbāna* also becomes clear.

- The process to remove the root causes of *avijjā* and *taṇhā* is the Fourth Noble Truth, the *magga sacca*, or the Truth of the Path, where "*magga*" is a path. And this path is eightfold and it is the Noble Eightfold Path.
- The Path has to be followed systematically. The first step is to the "correct vision" of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or the vision to eliminate "*san.*" A *Sotāpanna* has achieved this to a significant extent by comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* to a certain extent.

16. Therefore, the four-step process stated in #1 above is a basic principle that can be used to solve any problem. That means to solve a mundane problem temporarily and to provide a permanently to the ultimate problem of existence. That approach is based on the principle of cause and effect that Nature is based on.

17. ***Nibbāna* does not have a cause. Eliminating all causes lead to *Nibbāna*.** There are six root causes that maintain this world for anyone: greed, hate, ignorance, non-greed, non-hate, non-ignorance. All these are removed via *paññā* or wisdom. It is important to realize that wisdom is NOT non-ignorance. Explanation of that requires another essay.

- But for now, it is suffices to say that the four lowest realms of this world are "maintained" via the "bad roots" of greed, hate, and ignorance. The rest of the 31 realms are "supported" by non-greed, non-hate, and non-ignorance, the so-called "good roots." It is critical to realize that ALL roots lead to attachment to "this material world." But until one develops wisdom to a certain extent by first removing the "bad roots", it is not possible even to grasp the meaning of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

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- This is why the Noble Eightfold Path is two-fold: the mundane (*lokiya*) Noble Eightfold Path is to be followed first to avoid birth in the lowest four realms and to cleanse the mind to a certain extent.
- Then one follows the transcendental (*lokuttara*) Noble Eightfold Path to attain *Nibbāna* by fully cleansing the mind of all six roots; see, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

Next, "First Noble Truth – A Simple Explanation of One Aspect", ...

6.1.1.6 First Noble Truth – A Simple Explanation of One Aspect

1. One does not need to be a Buddhist or even heard about the Buddha to know what conventional "suffering" is. Anyone knows that getting sick, getting old, and dying is cause for suffering.

- But then the Buddha said, "these four Noble Truths are not known to the world until a Buddha describes them."
- Thus the Buddha was talking about a kind of suffering that ANYONE in this world is destined to have either now or in the future. He was mainly concerned with the LONG TERM suffering, in the future rebirth, and how to STOP that from taking place.

2. However, there are some sufferings in this very life that arise due to our current way of life, or what we do or think right now. In this post, I want to address such "SHORT TERM" sufferings that also can be AVOIDED.

- A significant part of our suffering comes from the mind. Whether one lives in a grand mansion or in a hut, this part of suffering is common to us all.
- And even some famous and rich people that we know could not bear this mental pain to such an extent that they committed suicide. From Elvis Presley and Marilyn Monroe to Whitney Houston and Robin Williams, there are many well-known cases; see, WebLink: WIKI: List of suicides for a long list that extends to the past.
- Suicide Prevention, see : WebLink: HELPGUIDE: Suicide Prevention

3. Obviously, one can have mostly everything that any one of us can only wish for (health, wealth, beauty, fame, etc), but still, suffer. One could get a glimpse of what the Buddha meant by suffering if one could contemplate on this issue, and that revelation itself could lead to the avoidance of *that kind of suffering*.

- We can get rid of a big part of suffering in the near future by controlling hate or displeasure towards other people. Even though the other party may have done something wrong to us, most of the suffering is inflicted by ourselves. This needs some contemplation to clarify.

4. Suppose I come to know that someone said a bad (and untrue) thing about me to others. The moment I hear this my mind gets agitated. And I could be spending the next hour or two or even the next day or two saying to myself and friends, "I cannot believe that so and so said this about me. Why would he do that?", and may be even be thinking about how to retaliate. All this time spent on such activity was a burden to the mind. I caused more suffering to myself by just dwelling on it, and by generating more hateful thoughts.

- I could have handled the situation better as following: If I know from past experience that he would not have said it without a reason, I need to talk to him and clarify the situation. If that failed or if I knew that he was "just that type of a person" I just need to stay away from him. We cannot control the behavior of other people. The best thing is to stay away from such people.
- Staying away from "bad company" is critical especially for children. It is imperative for the parents to make sure that their children stay away from bad friends.

5. Another thing that is related is not to try to spend too much of your time and energy to convince other people to see "things your way." For valid or invalid reasons, each person has a set of beliefs and convictions. I have realized that it causes unnecessary mental suffering to myself and others if I try hard to

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convince the other party of my own views. I have no right to say my views are better than the views of the others; I just explain things the way I see them.

- Even the Buddha did not try to even advice certain people, because they could have caused long-term harm for themselves by generating hateful thoughts of the Buddha.
- One has to realize that getting rid of *diṭṭhi* or wrong views is the first step in getting some "cooling down." It is true that palpable "cooling down" can be attained by getting rid of the worst wrong views; see, "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis."

6. Then there is extreme greed, that could also lead to unnecessary suffering. Here one needs to make a distinction between two extremes: It is really necessary to avoid physical discomfort on one extreme. But trying to "acquire fancy things" for the sake of pride is the other extreme.

- We do need food, clothes, shelter, and medicine to avoid living a miserable life. Therefore, we need to make a decent living to provide such necessities for ourselves and our families.
- However, if we try to acquire, for example, a "bigger and fancy house", that could cause anxiety and even suffering especially one is stretching one's resources to achieve that "extra bit of happiness." That "extra bit of happiness" could become a nightmare in some cases, for example, if one loses employment or encounters an unexpected expense.

7. One does not need to feel bad about the wealth one has acquired legitimately and to use that wealth for one's comfort. One has already paid for that in the past (a good *kamma vipāka*). In the same way, if one is poor, one needs to understand two things per Buddha Dhamma: First, one is in that situation because of a past cause (bad *kamma vipāka*). Second, and more importantly, one can work oneself out of that situation, because *kamma vipāka* are not deterministic; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

8. The key is to live within one's means and strive for a better living condition if one actually does not have enough for a comfortable living. There is so much of "peace of mind" in a simple life, even if one has a lot of wealth. Most people ruin their lives by trying to seek sense pleasures using money. That only gets one on a track that leads to seeking more and more such pleasures and eventually running out options.

- The sad thing is that they do not know there is so much "peace of mind" to be had just by living a simple life with less greed and less hate.

9. It is hard to fathom, but it is true that craving for valuable material things makes one's mind temporarily happy at times but perpetually burdened. This statement needs a lot of thought for clarification.

- The perceived happiness comes from the perceived "value" of the item by one's mind, and if that item is lost or damaged that can lead to much more suffering. Here is a hypothetical situation: A mother dies and her two daughters inherit a supposedly highly valued necklace. Each daughter wants it, and they get into arguments and both come to much mental suffering. Eventually, a wise elder suggests to sell the item and share the money. When they try to sell it, they find that it is of low quality and is really worthless. They had each inflicted so much suffering because of a "perceived value" for that necklace.

10. The real happiness is not having anything to worry about. That does not mean one needs to give away everything one has.

- Using things that are available to oneself and having a greedy mindset are two different things.
- One could be living in a mansion with a peace of mind knowing that all his/her wealth is not forever, and another could be living with a burdened mind in a hut with so much attachment to whatever little he/she has or with jealousy/hatred for what others have.
- On the other hand, one could be living in a mansion with a burdened mind and could even commit suicide, while a poor person who has learned Dhamma could be living in a hut with a peace of mind content with what he/she has and knowing that any hardship is just for a short time (in this life).

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- The bottom line is that things happen due to causes, and by controlling our minds we have the power to initiate good causes (moral deeds) and to suppress bad causes (immoral deeds). Some will be effective for the short term and all will be effective for the long term.

Also see, "First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering."

Next, "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)", ……

6.1.1.7 Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Parāmitā)

1. It is easy to just wish for things, but a real determination has a firm commitment attached to it. A determination is a wish accompanied by a plan to make the wish come true.

- One can drop a stone in water and can wish for it to come back up. That is NOT going to happen.
- Some goals (wishes) can be attained in this life: quitting smoking, passing an exam, getting a good job, etc. But still one has to make an effort, i.e., one has to act with determination to achieve the wish.

2. Other goals can take many lifetimes to attain. These are called "*pāramitā*" (pronounced "pāramithā"). Depending on the goal, a *parāmitā* can take many, many lifetimes. It is said that to become a Buddha, one needs to have a firm commitment carried over billions of lives; that is a *parāmitā*. And it is not like that someone just makes a wish to become a Buddha; that "*gati*" or the 'tendency" has to develop first over many lifetimes, initially starting with the habit of helping others and generally living a moral life.

- Buddha Dhamma is all about causes and effects. If one can understand the causes for something to happen, and then work to make such cause to materialize, the effects WILL follow.

3. We can see that there are many people — some even may not have heard about Buddha Dhamma — making great efforts to help others even at the risk of their own lives. Those people have such *sansāric* habits and they do have goals, even if it may not be clear to them at all times. They are just driven by that *sansāric* habit. If they come across pure Dhamma by any chance, they may be able to focus their efforts accordingly.

- To become an *Arahant* one needs to make a commitment and maintain it over many, many lives. We all are likely to have made that commitment in one or more lives; of course, we do not know. And if we had made such a commitment and have worked on it over many lives, it may be possible to fulfill it in this very life. Even otherwise, we can make a real effort to maintain that "*paramita*" and strengthen it.
- Some make firm determinations to become a *deva*, a *Brahma*, an emperor, or just to be rich; there are millions of things that people wish for, and sometimes make firm determinations on. Some of them can come true in this lifetime itself, especially if that is a firm commitment coming from previous lives. Normally the word "*parāmitā*" is reserved for those commitments that target *Nibbāna*.

4. In physics, there is a simple law that says, "every action has a reaction." In Buddha Dhamma, there is an even more generalized law: when one keeps doing something, an invisible energy buildup occurs that will result in a *kamma bhava* (potential energy) that will bring about a result (even a birth) of a similar kind.

- During a lifetime, the brain will help achieve goals by rewiring neural connections in the brain when someone keeps trying to develop habits; see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View."
- And such habits may be carried over future lives by embedding in one's kamma seeds (bīja); see, "Sansāric Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsava)."

5. For example, if one keeps drinking heavily, it WILL become a habit; the brain's neural connections will get wired-up for it. If done long enough, it will get embedded in one's psyche (i.e., in *kamma* seeds), and one is likely to be matched up with a mother who has similar drinking habits, and then it is likely that habit to continue in that life too. It takes a determined effort to "unwire" those neural connections, more than just a wish.

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- If one keeps doing activities that are suitable for a dog, one will increasingly act like a dog with such habits, and if that is kept up, eventually will be born a dog. It does not matter whether that person wished to be rich or powerful, what matters is what one habitually does. In his/her mind, one made that determination indirectly by acting accordingly.

6. In the same way, when one makes a determination to be "good", and starts helping out others, and start learning and living by Dhamma, one will be heading to "good births" whether one wishes or not. Then they become deeply-ingrained habits that are taken from birth to birth, and become "*paramitas*."

- Such dominant *paramitas* may manifest as one's character ("*gathi*"). As I mentioned previously, we can see such visible "*gathi*" in many people, regardless of their official religion or culture.

7. **Thus habits cultivate character ("*gathi*"), and persistence of such strong character qualities or "*gathi*" through many rebirths develop into "*paramitas*."**

- Especially in young children such "*gathi*" may manifest and then it will be easier to cultivate them. For example, in the post on "Evidence for Rebirth" there is a video of a child reciting complex *suttā*; if he was encouraged to follow that path, he could be able to attain a stage of *Nibbāna* in this very life. Similarly, a child with any kind of natural talent can be encouraged to cultivate it easily, because those are *sansāric* habits.

8. Breaking a bad habit takes time too. It is best to cultivate an opposing good habit, or at least a neutral one so that one has the option of doing something when the urge comes. For example, if one wants to quit smoking, one could start chewing gum instead.

- Both in developing a good habit or breaking a bad habit, one is bound to break the trend once in a while. A child learning to walk will fall many times. That is why one needs to have the perseverance to get back up with a renewed determination.

Whether one is making a determination on a mundane goal or to attain a stage of *Nibbāna*, the posts "The Four Bases of Mental Power," "The Law Attraction," and "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)" could provide helpful information.

Next, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances", …

6.1.2 Calming the Mind

"Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances"

"Solution to a Wandering Mind – Abandon Everything?"

"Right Speech – How to avoid Accumulating Bad Kamma"

"Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"

"Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha"

"Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand It?"

"Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?"

6.1.2.1 Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances

Revised August 2, 2016; November 25, 2018; September 9, 2019

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Buddha`s Thoughts

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A wandering mind is an unhappy mind! The conclusion of an article in the prestigious journal "Science" which, using real-time input from 5000 people all over the world, confirmed what the Buddha said 2500 years ago; see, WebLink: A wandering mind is an unhappy mind-Science-Killingsworth-2010.

1. Let us think about a few practical examples that we all have experienced.

- When a child is crying, the mother uses a variety of "tricks" to soothe the child. If the child has a fever or headache, simply hugging the child and stroking the child's head makes the child fall asleep.
- If the child is throwing a tantrum just because he is unhappy with something, by giving his favorite toy could calm him down.

2. The easiest way to calm the mind is to focus it on a neutral object. **There is only one thought arising at a time.** So if one can keep the mind focused on something neutral, then those unwanted thoughts cannot come back. Several techniques are available. Let us discuss a few below.

- Especially when one gets angry, just by stopping and counting to ten at least slows down the *javana* (or the impulse) from running wildly. Do not let unwanted thoughts take over. They multiply very quickly, and then things get out-of-control; for a more in-depth discussion, see, "Javana of a Citta – Root of Mental Power."
- Taking a few deep breaths helps too. Or, in an angry situation, visualizing a Buddha statue and thinking about its serenity helps also.

3. A popular meditation technique to calm the mind is the "breath meditation." Go to a quiet place (less bright and less noisy place), sit in a chair comfortably, and concentrate on the in-and-out breath. Most people can feel the breath at the tip of nose or on the lips. If not, one can be aware of the falling of the chest or abdomen. Just fix the mind on any of these and do not let it move to some other thought. Initially, it may be hard, but with practice, it becomes easy. That is called *Samatha* meditation, and some people can even get to meditative *jhānic* states with a lot of practice.

- However, just like with the child's examples mentioned above, these are just "tricks" to get a temporary solution. Just like the child is bound to throw a tantrum again, any relief from "breath meditation" is only fleeting.

3. Even *Samatha* meditation becomes easier if one lives a moral life. One must at least obey the conventional five precepts of not killing other beings, stealing, lying, engaging in sexual misconduct, or using excessive amounts of alcohol. If one can further abstain from harsh speech slandering, and vain talk, that makes it even better; see, "Ten Immoral Actions – Dasa Akusala," and "Punna Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

- **One must be aware of those precepts 24 hours a day. They are not rituals to be obeyed. One follows them to purify one's mind. Don't worry if a precept gets broken once-in-a while. Such occurrences will become less and less with time.**

4. The reason that the mind becomes agitated easily is because of the "gunk" that we have in our minds (they are called *kilesa* or *keles* or mental impurities). All these "gunk" is there due to greed, hate, and ignorance.

- If a mind is free from greed, hate, and ignorance (that is easily said than done), then the mind will be very calm, and nothing in the outside world can perturb that mind; see "2. The Basics in Meditation" and "3. The Second Level - Key to Purify the Mind" for details.

5. In a simile, the Buddha compared a calm mind to a clear, calm lake that made the surroundings serene. That lake could become undesirable, an eyesore, if one or more of the following happens. (i) A dark-colored dye is in water, (ii) The lake has boiling water, (iii) Water is covered with moss, (iv) Lake is perturbed by wind, (v) Water is turbid and muddy.

6. Similarly, a peaceful mind will become polluted due to five hindrances (*pañca nīvarana*). They are called "*nīvarana*" because they cover the mind from seeing the right from wrong.

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- One cannot see the bottom of a lake if any of the above five factors are present. In the same way, "see things clearly" if those hindrances are there.
- They are *kāmacchanda, vyāpāda, tina middha, uddhacca kukkucca,* and *vicikiccā.*

7. Extreme sense desire (*kāmacchanda*) is like a dark dye. *Kāmaccandha* ("*kāma*" + "*ichcha*" + "*andha*" means blinded by sense desires).

- Here "*kāma*" means the five sense faculties that belong to the *kāma loka*: eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body; "*ichcha*" is desire, and "*andha*" is for blind.
- The attraction for something becomes so strong that one's complete attention is on that object. The mind can lose any control over what is sensible and what is not rational (or immoral).

8. Extreme hate (*vayāpāda* or *vyāpāda*) is like boiling water. We all have seen people who are so enraged that they are out-of-control.

- One could become "animal-like," and actually one who develops such character ("*gati*") could end up in the hells (*apāyā*).
- *Vayapada* ("vayā"+"pāda") means traveling downward (in the 31 realms): "*vaya*" is destruction and "*pāda*" means "(walking) towards."

9. Thina middha ("frozen mind") is like moss covering the water. Sleepiness is just a symptom of it. It is a dull mind that has not been exposed to Dhamma.

- When one learns Dhamma, one's mind gets energized. Those meditators who fall asleep during meditation can get rid of that problem by learning pure Dhamma.

10. Uddacca-kukkucca (customarily translated as restlessness and brooding), arise because of high-mindedness (*uddhacca*) and low-mindedness (*kukkucca*); in most cases, because of the high-mindedness, one tends to DO lowly things.

- When one has *uddhacca*, one is "drunk" with power, money, etc. When one has *kukkucca*, one is willing to do "lowly things" suitable even for an animal. These are TWO mental factors (*cetasika*).
- Both these characteristics lead to a scattered mind that is incapable of seeing right from wrong; **as a *nīvarana*, they arise together.** After the *Sotāpanna* stage, only *uddhacca* remains as a *cetasika*. It goes away only at the *Arahant* stage.

11. Vicikicchā is the tendency to do stupid things because of the ignorance of the true nature of this world. It comes from "*vi*" is twisted, "*ca*" (pronounced "cha") is thoughts, and "*kiccā*" is an action done with "*iccā*" or cravings.

- For example, the tendency to do immoral actions to get one wants comes from *vicikicchā*. One does not know, or does not care, about the bad consequences of such activities. Thus *vicikicchā* is compared to muddy water. [***kicca*** : [nt.] duty; work; service; that which should be done.]
- One must get rid of both the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* and comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa* to some extent. That means having a good idea about the real nature of this world. That helps REMOVE the *vicikiccā nīvarana*. But suppressing that is enough to attain *jhānā*.

12. In another simile, the Buddha compared the five hindrances (*pañca nīvarana*) to the darkness that keeps one from seeing the true nature. For example, one who is extremely angry is not aware of the damage done to the other person and for oneself. At least at that moment, hate and anger blind that person.

- A mind "blinded" by the five hindrances can keep on adding "more bad stuff" even without realizing it. If you take a glass of muddy water and add more mud to it, you cannot see much difference. On the other hand, if you take a glass of clean water, you can see the presence of even a bit of dirt.
- Thus when the mind is free of the five hindrances, one can easily see if any evil thoughts come to the mind. Then it is easy to contemplate the possible adverse consequences of such ideas and to remove

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them. That will keep the mind from becoming perturbed. A mind free of the five hindrances is calm and peaceful.

- That is why one should listen to discourses or read Dhamma posts preferably at a time when the mind is calm. Then one can absorb more.

13. **It is important to practice *Samatha* meditation for a short times. That allow one to have a peaceful state of mind during that time. But it does not remove any defilements (ie., the underlying root causes).** *Ariya* meditation leads to the gradual removal of evils; see, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)."

- The reason for these hindrances to be present is the bad habits ("*gati*") we have developed over many lives. They have become deep-seated cravings ("*āsavas*") which remain with us as mental impurities (*kilesa*). When one starts on *Ariya* meditation, such bad habits, desires, and mental impurities will decrease. In the simile we talked about in the beginning, the water in that lake will become pure by removing the dye, boiling water, moss, wind, and the mud. In the same way, the lake becomes calm and serene again in the absence of those ROOT CAUSES.
- The hindrances of *thina middha* and *vicikicchā* go away at the *Sotāpanna* stage. Those of *kāmachanda*, *vyāpāda*, and *uddhacca-kukkucca* reduce to *kāma rāga*, *paṭigha*, and *uddhacca*. At this stage, the remaining three are no longer *nīvarana. Kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are lessened at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and disappear at the *Anāgāmī stage*. *Uddacca* goes away only at the *Arahant stage.*
- Progressive lessening of five hindrances can bring the mind to a stable, peaceful state over time. That happens even before the *Sotāpanna* stage. Then one could feel the increase of the *nirāmisa sukha* that it brings; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

Next, "Solution to a Wandering Mind – Abandon Everything?", ……..

6.1.2.2 Solution to a Wandering Mind – Abandon Everything?

Our minds become agitated when we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or just think about something that we really like or really dislike. Those are called thought objects (*ārammaṇa* in Pāli or *aramuna* in Sinhala). If the thought object is to our liking, our mind starts the "wheeling process" on how to own it or at least to enjoy it for a while; if the thought object is something we dislike, the same "wheeling process" takes off on trying to figure out how to get rid of it; see, "Nibbāna – Is It Difficult to Understand?."

Living in a busy society, we are bombarded with multiple thought objects continuously. Of course, it can be reduced by going to a quiet place, where there are fewer EXTERNAL objects that could give rise to multiple thoughts; many people do that to find a "bit of peace." Better yet, we can go to a meditation retreat where we focus the mind on the breath for example, and get a wonderful calmness.

But the problem is that peacefulness, the calmness of the mind goes away when we get back to the "normal life" with normal distractions (multiple thought objects). Is it possible to have a "peace of mind" without going to seclusion?

To understand what actually happens in our minds, let us think about the following case:

1. If you go to a stream, disturb the sediment at the bottom until the water gets dirty, you can fill a glass with that dirty water. It looks brown when stirred well.

2. Now if you set the glass on a table and let it sit there undisturbed, in a little while the dirt will drop to the bottom and the water will become clear.

3. If you stir it again with a stick, the water will be brown again; this is analogous to a thought object that is of great interest to us. BUT if you try to stir it with a thread, it will not get stirred; the thread is too weak to stir it. Similarly, we are not disturbed by a thought object that is of no interest to us.

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4. If you now take a fine strainer, remove the dirt from that water, and put it back in the same glass, it will now be clear. Now, if you stir it as much as you want even with a stick, the water will never become brown.

5. We all have "sediments" (or deep-seated cravings or "*āsavas*") in our minds that have been brewing/accumulating due to *sansāric* habits ("*gathī*"); see, "Habits and Goals." Each one has a set of different "sediments" or different habits, i.e., one tends to like certain things AND also dislikes certain other things.

6. So, what happens is when we see something that we like OR dislike, our "sediments" get disturbed. How much it gets disturbed depends on how strongly we like OR dislike it.

- A strong disturbance may be the sight of a person you really like OR really dislike. But if it is something that does not interest you, it will be like stirring with a thread.

7. During the day, we have innumerable "inputs" coming in through the six senses; these stir up the sediments ("*āsavas*") inside us and bring out the five hindrances.

- Our minds are constantly agitated, but we may not even realize it because this is the "baseline state" that we have been used to. But we can at least suppress these five hindrances and make the mind calm; see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

8. What you are doing in *Samatha* meditation (focusing the mind on the breath) is to let those sediments settle down. You feel peaceful. This is why you don't get the same results consistently. Some days your mind may be especially perturbed by something.

9. This is why people feel great at the end of a long meditation retreat. All the sediments are well-settled.

- But after coming back and getting back to regular routine, all external disturbances are back and the quality of that experience slowly wears out. It may be not completely if one keeps practicing at home.

10. However, an Arahant has removed all the sediments. Even if an Arahant is exposed to any type of sensual/hateful situation, his/her mind will not be disturbed:

- A male Arahant will not be seduced by the most beautiful woman in the world; he will not have any hateful feelings towards a person who just cut off his arm.
- So, an Arahant is like a pure glass of water that does not have any sediments at the bottom.

11. We don't have to become Arahants to improve the quality of our lives. What we can do is to try to get rid of some of the bad habits that are not good in the long term anyway:

- For example, if we really dislike someone, we can start cultivating *Metta* (loving-kindness) for that person in our mind first. Whenever angry thoughts about the person come to the mind, try to counter that; think about something wonderful or peaceful instead.
- If we have a craving for alcohol, tasty but unhealthy food, etc, think about the possible bad results, and again try to steer the mind to something else, some other activity.

Of course, this needs to be done gradually. People who make New Year's resolutions sometimes abandon them because they try to just "give up" something in one big step. The mind does not like that; it likes to change only when it actually experiences the benefits of changing the habit.

12. Finally, living a simple, moral life (following the five precepts), goes a long way to reduce such bad habits, and to have a peaceful mind in the midst of all "possible distractions."

- Simple yet powerful guidelines to achieve a peaceful state of mind are discussed in a step-by-step process in "Living Dhamma."

Thus it is all about cleaning up one's defilements (bad habits) INSIDE, i.e., in one's mind; see, "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation." Once that is done for all defilements, no outside influence

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can affect one's composure (see #10 above). One CAN even attain that ultimate stage while staying in the real world.

Next, "Right Speech – How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma"..

6.1.2.3 Right Speech – How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma

Revised May 27, 2018; January 2, 2020

1. The fourth precept of the five precepts for a moral life is right speech. Most people literally take it to mean "not lying."

- But since we know that intention (*cetanā*) is at the root of deciding whether an action is right or wrong, we always need to be careful about what we intend to achieve by what we say.
- The correct meaning of "lying" is not to utter speech with "bad intentions" to hurt others or to deceive others.

2. If one does a wrong deed, one may be able to deny it in a statement worded in such way as to conform to legality.

- Yet it is registered as false speech in one's own mind, and thus one is not able to escape the *kammic* consequences.

3. Ven. Ayya Khema, in her book, "Visible Here and Now" (p. 53), has nicely summarized what right speech is NOT:

- If you know something that is not helpful and is untrue, then do not say it
- If you know something that might be helpful, but is untrue, do not say it
- If you know something that is not helpful and is true, do not speak about it
- If you know something that is helpful and is true, then find the right time to say it

4. If you carefully examine the above four statements, they say to prevent from lying, gossiping, and hate or vain speech; these are the four ways one can accumulate immoral *kamma* with speech (see, "Ten Immoral Actions – Dasa Akusala").

- Let us look at some of the examples from the *Tipiṭaka* on how the Buddha himself handled some situations.

5. When the Buddha was at the Jetavanārāmaya for many years, there lived a butcher Cunda "pig killer" right next door. When some *bhikkhus* suggested to the Buddha that he should preach the Dhamma to Cunda, and get him to understand the consequences of his actions.

- But the Buddha explained that if he were to go there and try to do that, Cunda would only generate hateful thoughts (*paṭigha*) Cunda's mind about the Buddha. Thus Cunda will commit an even worse *kamma*.
- So, we need to be tactful about our speech.

6. On the other hand, the Buddha walked a long distance to get to Aṅgulimāla just before he was to kill his own mother.

- Aṅgulimāla had killed almost thousand people, but that was on the prompting of his teacher, who was trying to get Aṅgulimāla into trouble. That morning, the Buddha saw what was about to happen and knew that he would be able to convince Aṅgulimāla of the bad consequences of his actions. Aṅgulimāla became an Arahant in a few weeks. See, "Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."

7. In the case of the wanderer Vacchagotta asking the Buddha about whether there is a "self" or "no-self", the Buddha just remained silent.

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- After Vacchagotta left, Buddha's personal attendant, Ven. Ānanda asked him why Buddha did not explain the concept that it is not correct to say "there is no soul" or "there is a soul" (because there is only an ever-changing life-stream) to Vacchagotta. The Buddha told Ānanda that he did not think Vacchagotta was mentally capable at that time to understand the concept, and that he did not want to confuse him. See the post, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream" for the correct explanation.

8. The Buddha was endowed with that capability to see other people's mental status. We do not have that capability. So, we need to use our own judgment.

9. Lying to another human being (with "bad intentions") may have even worse consequences (depending on the particular case) than killing a being of a lower realm. In some cases, lying may lead to physical harm or even death for others.

- The *kammic* effects of such offenses depends on the status of the being in question and the consequences of the particular action. For example, killing an *Arahant* or one's own parents is a much worse crime than killing a normal human, and killing any human is much worse than killing any animal; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kammas."

10. During the Nazi terror in Germany, many Germans "lied" to the Nazis that they were not hiding Jews in their houses; of course the intention was to save human lives, and thus it was the right thing to do. They acquired good *kamma* for protecting lives.

- We need to realize that "lying" — as meant in as "*musāvāda*" in the five precepts — really means the "intention" involved: "*Musā*" means "wrong or incompatible with morals" and "*vāda*" means "speech"; see, "What is Intention in Kamma?."
- Therefore, even though they were literally lying, their intention was not a "*musāvāda*," but actually a "good deed."

Next, "Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha", ...

6.1.2.4 Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?

Revised October 29, 2019

Introduction

1. There are three kinds of happiness:

- Sense pleasures (*āmisa sukha*)
- Mundane meditative (*jhānic*) pleasures
- *Nibbānic* (*nirāmisa*) *sukha*

What is *Āmisa*?

2. *Āmisa* means material; "*āmisa dāna*" is offering of material things. Thus *āmisa sukha* is the pleasures that arise from material things. We are familiar with sensory delights. Indulging in sensory pleasures is all we know to be providing happiness. We want to see beautiful pictures or people; hear soothing music; taste good food, etc.

- The drawback of sensory pleasures is that the experience lasts only during that particular sensory event. As soon as we finish eating, for example, the satisfaction goes away. Also, even if we wanted to, cannot keep eating either. We will get sick of it soon enough no matter how good the food is.
- The same is true for any other sensory pleasure. One cannot keep listening to music or watch movies for too long at a stretch.
- However, the craving for any sense pleasure comes back after a while. It is never permanently satisfying.

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Jhānic Pleasures

3. People who have been doing *Samatha* meditation (for example, breath or *kasina*) know that it gives a pleasure that is different from any sensory pleasure.

- One could meditate for hours (especially if one gets into a *jhānic* state) and can enjoy it as long as one wants. Furthermore, even after the session, the calming effect is there for a while. It gives a sense of peacefulness that can last for hours.
- If one dies while in a *jhānic* state, then one will be born in the corresponding *Brahma* world (either in the *rūpa loka* or in the *arūpa loka* depending on the *jhānic* state). However, a birth in one of the lowest four realms is not ruled out in the future.
- The ability to get into *jhānic* states could be lost even in this lifetime if one commits an evil *kamma*, or start indulging heavily in sense pleasures.
- *Jhānic* states are attained via TEMPORARY blocking of the evils of greed and hate from the mind by focusing the mind on a neutral object such as breath, rising and falling of stomach, or a *kasina* object, for example.

Nirāmisa Sukha

4. The *nirāmisa sukha* is more permanent even compared to *jhānic* pleasures. That is especially true if one has attained at least the first stage of *Nibbāna*, the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- *Nirāmisa* is the opposite of *āmisa* that we mentioned earlier. Thus *nirāmisa sukha* does not arise due to material things. *Nirāmisa sukha* is purely mental and arises due to dissociation from the stressful material world. It is a relief sensation rather than an enjoyment. Imagine the feeling when a pulsating headache goes away. It is a sense of calm and peacefulness.
- In other words, *nirāmisa sukha* is present in the absence of worldly stresses.
- The *nirāmisa sukha* of a *Sotāpanna* (or above) is permanent. One can get into an *Ariya jhānā* at any time. The *Sotāpanna* status is never lost even through future lives.

Permanent Happiness

5. Upon attaining *Nibbāna* (i.e.,Arahanthood), there is nothing else to do. An *Arahant* who has developed higher *jhānā* can even experience the full *Nibbānic* pleasure (*saññā vedayita nirodha sammapatti*) at will (up to seven days at a time.) The death of Arahant results is permanent *Nibbāna*.

- The four *Nibbānic* states result via PERMANENT removal of greed, hate, and ignorance in four stages. That involves insight (*vipassanā*) meditation, most importantly, on the three characteristics of existence: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- Even before the *Sotāpanna* stage, one can start feeling the *nirāmisa sukha* by systematically removing greed, hate, and ignorance; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna."

More information on *nirāmisa sukha* at "Nirāmisa Sukha."

Also see: Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha

More in-depth analysis at: "Nibbana."

6.1.2.5 Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha

Revised April 26, 2020

1. It is good to hear from those who have been able to "get to a peaceful state of mind" by reading posts at this site. This is nothing but early stages of *Nibbāna* or "*niveema*" or "cooling down", and is also called the

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"*nirāmisa sukha*." That is a characteristic of "pure Dhamma" and I cannot take any credit for it. This post explains how it happens.

- In other posts, I have discussed why "formal meditation" is not required to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage; see, for example, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?." Here would like to discuss how this "*nirāmisa sukha*" arises when one reads (or listens) to the true Dhamma, and how that can take one all the way to the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Before that, I need to point out that the "Search" box on the top right can be very useful in navigating the site when one is looking for specific information. Avoid writing sentences or even phrases, but just enter keywords. One could narrow down the number of posts that come up by adding more relevant keywords.
- By the way, the "Search" box on the top right is very good for finding relevant posts on keywords.
- If you have questions or comments, it is best to make a comment at the discussion forum: "Forums."

2. Our minds are under stress constantly due to its tendency to know everything that is going on not only at the physical vicinity, but also things that happened in the past or one's hopes for the future.

- That tendency intensifies when we have excessively greedy or hateful thoughts; these two are called *kamachanda* (strong greed) and *vyāpāda* (strong hate), the two key elements of the five hindrances that "cover our minds." The other three hindrances are basically due to those and also due to our ignorance of how nature operates.
- Think about how "you were on fire" when you got either excessively angry or excessively greedy or lustful.
- When one reads (or listens) attentively to anything of interest, all those hindrances are REDUCED. However, depending on what type of material it is, this suppression may not be very effective. For example, if one is reading a scientific or geography paper, they may be reduced, but if one reading a pornographic novel or listening to rap music, they may actually increase.
- If one is reading Dhamma that is not true Dhamma (or for that matter, any type of religious material), it will still reduce those five hindrances because that material will not induce any greedy or hateful thoughts.

3. However, there is a big difference in reading (or listening to) true Buddha Dhamma. This is, of course, something one can verify for oneself (as many have).

- Listening or reading true Dhamma elevates the "*preethi*" (or "*pīti*") *cetasika* making one joyful, which in turn makes the body "light", causes physical calmness, and lead to *samādhi*: "*pīti manassa kayo passadati, passadi kayo sukhantiyati, sukhino samadhiyati.*"
- We will discuss this at a deeper level, in *Abhidhamma*, where we will discuss how various "mind made *rūpa*" like *lahutā* (lightness), *Mudutā* (Elasticity), and *Kammaññatā* (weildiness) can make one's body "light" or "heavy" depending on the mental status; see, "Rūpa (Material Form) – Table." For example, they are related to the *cetasika* like *kāyapassaddhi* (tranquility of mental body); *cittapassaddhi* (tranquility of consciousness); see, #6 of "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."
- And this *samādhi* is attained via the suppression of ALL FIVE hindrances; **it is commonly called "*Samatha*."** One does not need to do a special "*Samatha Bhāvanā*" (like the breath meditation) to calm the mind. If one pays enough attention and gets absorbed in the subject matter while listening to a *desanā* or reading Dhamma, one could even attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.

4. This is the *samādhi* (or feeling of well-being) one feels when reading (or listening) to true Dhamma. It is also called the early stages of "*nirāmisa sukha*"; see the chart, "Nirāmisa Sukha – In a Chart." It can be printed for reference while reading this post.

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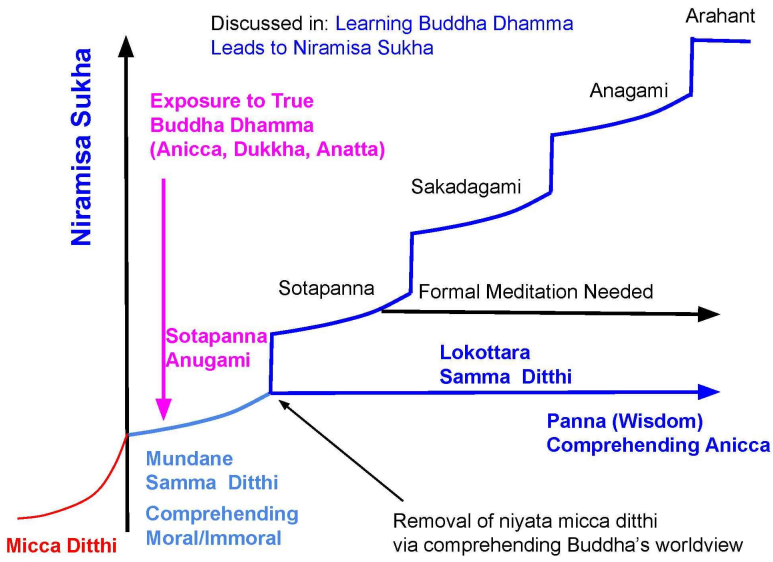

- "*Nirāmisa sukha*," by definition, can be experienced only after one hears the true message of the Buddha: *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* even though some sense of calm can also be experienced when focusing on any religious activity in general where the difference between what is moral and what is immoral is taught.
- True *nirāmisa sukha* can be experienced only when one starts seeing a glimpse of the "true nature of this world" and becomes a "*Sotāpanna Anugami*," i.e., one on the way to become a *Sotāpanna*. This means one is exposed to the true meaning of existence in this world of 31 realms: *anicca, dukkha, anatta.* **Now, one has the POTENTIAL to become a *Sotāpanna*.**
- When one strives and comprehends the key message of the Buddha that seeking lasting happiness cannot be realized by staying in this beginningless rebirth process, one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage. Then one can "see" the path to *Nibbāna* and proceed on one's own. One has removed an "Earth-equivalent of defilements" through *Sammā Diṭṭhi*; this is called "*dassanena pahathabba*," i.e., "removing defilements via true vision or wisdom"; see, "What is the Only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."
- Higher stages of *Nibbāna* normally need formal meditation techniques. The most comprehensive is given in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. However, the early parts of the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*, especially the *Kayanupassana* section, is geared towards help attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage.

5. The key difference between a person following the mundane Eightfold Path and the Noble Eightfold Path is the following: One on the mundane path avoids immoral activities because one is afraid of their consequences. However, a *Sotāpanna* avoids *dasa akusala* because he/she has seen the FRUITLESSNESS of such immoral activities.

- For example, "What is the point of lying to make money, if that cannot provide one with lasting happiness?" That can be applied to any of the 7 immoral activities done by speech and the body. And that is due to the cleansing of the mind and reduction of the 3 *akusala* done by the mind, where the one of them (*niyata micchā diṭṭhi*) has now been permanently REMOVED; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Thus the moral behavior ("*sīla*" or "*seela*") of a *Sotāpanna* comes from within, and it is called the "*Ariyakāntha Seela*." It is unshakeable and remains in future lives.
- Just like someone who has really learned algebra instinctively knows how to solve a previously-unsolved algebra problem, a *Sotāpanna* instinctively avoids doing *dasa akusala* of "*apāyagāmī* strength", i.e., those actions that lead to birth in the *apāyā*. (On the other hand, a person who has only memorized how to solve a few algebra problems can only solve those; he/she is likely to make mistakes in dealing with previously un-encountered problems).

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- Once one sees a glimpse of *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, one can cultivate it further; also the other seven components of the Noble Eightfold Path (*Sammā Saṅkappa*, *Sammā Vaca*, etc) automatically follow.

6. During the time of the Buddha, many people attained the *Sotāpanna* stage during the first discourse they listened to. Attaining higher stages of *Nibbāna* could take more formal meditation by cultivating the basics that one has just grasped.

- Visaka attained the *Sotāpanna* stage at 7 years of age, and could not attain any higher stages until death. King Bimbisara also died as a *Sotāpanna*. Yet they are guaranteed to attain full *Nibbāna* within 7 *bhava*.
- Upatissa and Kolita attained the *Sotāpanna* stage while listening to a single verse; it took them a few days to attain the *Arahant* stage. They, of course, became the two chief disciples of the Buddha, Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggallana.
- Thus, formal meditation is normally needed to attain the higher stages of *Nibbāna* above the *Sotāpanna* stage. Of course, there are exceptions, like Bahiya Daruchiriya, who attained the *Arahantship* straightaway while listening to a verse uttered by the Buddha.

7. Whenever one become restless (the *uddhacca kukkucca* hindrance becoming strong) and get the urge to "go watch a movie" or "stop by a friend's house", one could try reading (listening to) Dhamma. Similarly, if one gets bored and lethargic (*thina middha* hindrance becoming strong), try the same; ditto for when one is struggling to figure out "how to proceed on a key decision" due to the *vicikicchā* hindrance.

- The "*preethi*" or joyfulness that arises with *samādhi* WILL keep all those hindrances down, especially the *thina middha*. This is the real test of one's ability to get to *samādhi*. If the state of *samādhi* is at a significant level, one should be able to follow the procedure in #7 above and "not fall asleep" even right after a good meal when one usually gets sleepy.

8. Even though learning Dhamma, in general, will lead to the above-discussed effects, comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* WILL make a big difference. However, that may take more reading and comprehension of the wider world view of the Buddha: how *kamma* operates, 31 realms of existence, the rebirth process, *paṭicca samuppāda*, etc.

- It is not possible even to suggest which order of topics to choose, because each person is different. And it is imperative that one should not rush through them. **Gradual, steady progress is better than getting the hopes high and feeling depressed if things do not proceed fast enough.**
- What I would suggest, in general, is to first focus on the concepts that one starts understanding easily and slowly expand the "knowledge base" by reading on other relevant links.
- Also, it is a good idea to go back and read some key posts that one has not read for a while. One may grasp more content from the same post when reading at a later time because what is learned in the meantime could expose deeper meanings. I know this by experience. This is the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma; the learning never ends, rather it just intensifies with added evidence.
- It will stop being a "chore" and will become joyful as one learns more and more. The more one learns the more energized one will become.

9. Even though it may not seem to be a "big deal", understanding *anicca* (or cultivating the *anicca saññā*) will make a huge change in one's progress, after one gains some understanding of the basic concepts like rebirth and *kamma*.

- I had struggled intensely for 3-4 years and made an enormous advance in listening to one discourse on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. But of course, I had learned a lot of background material by that time and had given a lot of thought to various concepts.
- Still, by knowing what things are really important could make things easier for someone just starting out, or has been "on the wrong path."

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- My hope is that many will be able to attain at least the first stage of *Nibbāna* much more quickly than I did.

6.1.2.6 Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it?

Revised August 18, 2016; Revised February 4, 2017; April 26, 2020

1. It is a common misconception that one needs to experience **harsh suffering** in order to understand what the Buddha meant by the First Noble Truth, that there is "suffering in this world."

- Thus, especially in the days of the Buddha, some people deliberately lived a miserable life, thinking that it will help understand suffering. They subjected their bodies to various forms of discomfort and even torture.
- This is actually one extreme that the Buddha said NOT to follow: "*atta kilamathānu yoga*," or subjecting oneself to unnecessary suffering. Closest English translations would be "an ascetic life", where one forcefully abstains from any comforts.

2. The Buddha never encouraged anyone to deliberately undergo suffering. The suffering that the Buddha talked about is hidden and is about future suffering in this life and in future lives. There are two kinds of "hidden suffering" that the Buddha revealed to the world:

- One is the very harsh suffering in the rebirth process (when one is born in the lowest four realms or the *apāyā*).
- The other is the "incessant distress" that we all undergo even without realizing it: "The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca."
- Anyone, rich or poor, undergoes this latter type of suffering in this life. The Buddha pointed out that one could discover this type of hidden suffering and remove it too: "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth"and other posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.

3. If one needs to suffer more to attain *Nibbāna*, then those who are in the *apāyā* would be the first attain *Nibbāna*! Most of the suffering is experienced when one is born in the *apāyā* or the lower four realms, see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- In order to actually realize the true suffering, whether in this life or in the lower four realms, one needs to contemplate (*bhāvanā*) with a healthy body and a clear mind.
- If one is hungry, one CANNOT understand the causes of suffering; rather one will be generating hateful thoughts. The same is true for all four necessities of life: food, shelter, clothing, and medicine. We NEED those things to survive.
- What we should NOT do is to over-indulge in any of the above four necessities of life. That is the other extreme that the Buddha said to avoid: "*kāma sukallikānu yoga*," or to over-indulge in sense pleasures, i.e., to live a hedonistic life.

4. It is commonly said that the Buddha advocated the "middle ground", i.e., to avoid both an ascetic life (with self-induced suffering) or a hedonistic (over-indulgent) life. That is true, but there is more to it.

There is a deeper meaning to "*majjima paṭipadā*." The way to a peaceful existence (or to *Nibbāna*) is to get rid of greed, hate, AND ignorance. The two extremes that we talked about above do involve hate or at least *paṭigha* or "friction" (when subjecting oneself to suffering) and greed (indulging in excessive sense pleasures).

- Just because one stays away from those two extremes does not necessarily mean one is on the "correct path." The Path is not just a "middle ground" between those two extremes.
- The key is to learn Dhamma and to systematically reduce greed, hate, and ignorance.

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- Of course, living a life away from the two extremes is conducive — even necessary — to learn Dhamma and to gradually remove defilements from the mind.

5. In between those two extremes, one needs to avoid being influenced by an "intoxicated mind." In between the above two extremes, people also act in improper ways intoxicated by power, beauty, position, (book) knowledge, lineage, etc as well as by alcohol and drugs. This is due to *avijjā* or ignorance.

- Thus, "*majjihma patipada*" really means to follow a simple lifestyle without veering to the extremes.
- Thus *majjhima paṭipadā* is to follow a lifestyle that avoids the corruption of the mind by excess attachments to sense pleasures. On the hand, there is no need to subject one's body to unnecessary hardships either.

6. In summary, the Buddha recommended a "common sense" comfortable, but simple, life that is conducive to meditation. Here meditation (*Bhāvanā*) is not necessarily "formal meditation." The Buddha said, "*bhāvanāya bahulīkataya*," or "contemplate as often as possible." [***bahulīkata*** :[pp. of bahulīkaroti] took up seriously; increased. (adj.), practised frequently.]

- One also needs to be avoiding immoral actions, speech, or thoughts as much as possible, and actually cultivate moral actions, speech, and thoughts. That helps suppress the five hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa*) and have a peaceful state of mind, i.e., one could start experiencing the *nirāmisa sukha* that arises due to a "more pure state of mind."

7. One can be contemplating the nature of the world as one goes through daily chores. Another aspect of this is the ability to calm the mind; see, "Key to Calming the Mind."

- A bigger picture implied here is that we need to educate our children so that they can find good employment and thus be able to live without having to worry about those four necessities of life. As they grow up, we need to educate them in Dhamma (how to live a moral life) too, but not at the expense of them getting a good education.

8. **Suffering is NOT the Noble truth on Suffering**, i.e., ***Dukha* (feeling of suffering) is NOT *dukkha sacca* (the Noble Truth that suffering can be stopped from arising)**; *sacca* pronounced "sachcha" and means "truth."

- The Noble Truth of ***dukkha*** *sacca* is about comprehending how suffering ARISES due to greed, hate, and ignorance (of this fact). One can understand that –and take steps to avoid future suffering — by learning Dhamma: *anicca, dukkha, anatta, paṭicca samuppāda*, etc.

- The Buddha said, "This Dhamma is unlike anything that the world has ever seen." The actual suffering is hidden WITHIN the apparent enjoyments. Also see, "The Incessant Distress (Peleema") – Key to Dukkha Sacca."
- For another description of *majjhima paṭipadā,* see, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."

Next, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?", ……

6.1.2.7 Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?

Revised April 26, 2020; June 7, 2020

The following INCORRECT statements are in frequent use in most books in both Mahāyāna and current texts on Theravāda:

1. "We suffer because our bodies are impermanent; they are subject to decay and death."
2. "We suffer because those things we get attached to are impermanent."
3. "If something is impermanent, that leads to suffering."
4. "Since everything in this world is impermanent, everything is suffering", etc.

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Is there a direct correlation between impermanence and suffering? Let us examine those statements.

1. **"We suffer because our bodies are impermanent and are subject to decay and death."**

- We indeed suffer because OUR bodies are impermanent and are subject to decay and death. But if it is an enemy, do we suffer when that enemy gets sick or die? We suffer if someone we LIKE gets ill or dies, but it is cause for celebration for most people when someone they dislike gets ill or dies.
- The suffering/happiness is directly proportional to the attachment/dislike we have for that person. Suffering due to a loss of one's child is more compared to the loss of a distant relative. Happiness due to Bin Laden's death was higher compared to the death of an unknown terrorist. (For a follower of Bin Laden, his death would have led to suffering).

Suffering arises only when things do not proceed as we like. It is the human nature to want the loved ones to be unharmed, and the enemies to come to harm. When either does not happen, that leads to suffering. That is what *anicca* means: the inability to maintain things to our liking.

2. **"We suffer because those things we get attached to are impermanent."**

- Many things in this world that cause us suffering because they will not stay in the same condition or are destroyed. That is true.
- BUT there are many other "permanent" things in this world (at least relative to our lifetime of 100 years), that are associated with suffering. If one has an illness and that becomes "permanent" would that not be suffering?
- A gold necklace it is not impermanent, i.e, it will last for thousands of years. But the woman who owns one may be robbed of it, and in the process could get hurt too. She could not "maintain that necklace as she desired."

If ANYTHING causes US suffering, that is because we cannot maintain it to OUR satisfaction, OUR liking.

3. **"If something is impermanent, that leads to suffering."**

The following is the conventional (incorrect) translation of Buddha's words: "*yad* ***aniccaṃ*** *taṃ dukkhaṃ*," i.e., "if something is **not permanent**, that leads to suffering." But the correct translation is, "if something **cannot be maintained to our liking**, that leads to suffering." Let us consider some examples:

- If we have a headache, and if it is not permanent (i.e., it goes away), does that cause suffering? No. However, if the headache becomes permanent, that will lead to suffering.
- If we come down with cancer, wouldn't it cause happiness if it becomes impermanent?, i.e., if it goes away?
- If a relative (that we do not like) comes to stay with us, would it lead to happiness if the stay becomes permanent or impermanent? Of course, it will cause us happiness if the stay is not permanent and the person leaves.

4. **"Since everything in this world is impermanent, everything is suffering."**

The Buddha never said everything in this world leads to suffering. If everything is suffering then everyone will be looking to attain *Nibbāna* as soon as possible. **The reality is that there are sensory pleasures to be had in this world.** Most people do not understand why one should go to all this trouble to "give up all these sense pleasures and seek *Nibbāna*."

- Taking the "big picture", out of the 31 realms in this world, there are many realms where suffering is much less. See, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- But there is unimaginable suffering in the lowest four realms, AND that is what we need to avoid. Even though there are 31 realms, MOST LIVING BEINGS (99.99%+) are in the lowest four realms.

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- Thus what is true is that this *saṃsāric* journey is filled with UNIMAGINABLE suffering. However, one cannot see that unless one learns true Dhamma.
- Even in this life. there is much suffering, especially as one gets old. The suffering is highest close to death if the death is due to an ailment. If one enjoys sex, that ability to enjoy sex will fade away as one gets old. It does not matter how much money one has. Even our taste buds will not give us the same enjoyment from foods as we get old. All our sense faculties will start performing less and less as we get old. That is *anicca*. We cannot maintain things to our satisfaction in the long run.
- Even if we are born in a higher realm where there is much happiness, that existence cannot be maintained. One day, that life will be over, and one WILL end up in a lower realm at some point, and then it will be very hard to get out of there. That is *anicca*.
- Furthermore, if the cause of suffering is impermanence, then it cannot be eliminated, see, "Would Nibbāna be Possible if Impermanence is the Cause of Suffering?."

In Pāli (or in Sinhala), the word "*icca*" (pronounced "ichcha") means liking. Thus *anicca* (pronounced "anichcha") means not to like.

Therefore, the correct translation of "*yad* ***aniccaṃ*** *taṃ* ***dukkhaṃ***" is "if something **cannot be maintained to our satisfaction**, that leads to **suffering**." **You can take any example you like and verify for yourself that it is a universal principle, an unchanging characteristic of this world, as the Buddha stated.**

Without understanding the three characteristics of "this world," it is not possible to grasp the message of the Buddha. Those three characteristics are *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Here *anatta* is pronounced "anaththa." These are the words in the *Tipiṭaka*, that was written down more than 2000 years ago, in 29 BCE.

- The problem started when these words were translated to Sanskrit as *anitya, dukha, anātma*; this started probably as far back as in the first or second century CE.
- Then those Sanskrit words were translated to English as impermanence, suffering, and "no-self." **The two worst translations are impermanence and "no-self."** See, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- Those two Sanskrit words, *anitya* and *anātma*, are being used by many in Sri Lanka today as Sinhala words representing the translations of the "Pāli words", *anicca* and *anatta*. Furthermore, the Pāli word *nicca* (pronounced "nichcha") was translated to Sanskrit as "*nitya*" (pronounced "nithya") which means "permanent." **The Pāli word *nicca* means "something can be maintained to one's satisfaction and, thus, is fruitful [*subha*]."**
- However, *nicca*, *anicca*, and *anatta* are "old Sinhala" words with entirely different meanings than *nitya*, *anitya*, and *anātma*. Those words are not in common use today, but when explained, a Sinhala-speaking person can understand the real meaning. Indeed old ladies in villages in Sri Lanka still say "*ane aniccan*" (අනේ අනිච්චං) to express the futility of something.

The Buddha stated that those three characteristics, *anicca, dukkha*, and *anatta*, are related:

"*yad* ***aniccaṃ*** *taṃ dukkhaṃ, taṃ dukkhaṃ tad anattā*", or,

"if something **is not *nicca*, *dukha* arises**, and because of that, **one becomes helpless [*anatta*]."**

As mentioned above, as one gets old or gets disabled, these three characteristics will be easier to see for oneself; but then it would be too late because the mind gets weaker as we get old. One needs to learn Dhamma BEFORE the mind (and the body) become weak. Here is a video that shows this clearly:

WebLink: RANKER: Celebrities Who Have Aged the Worst

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Also, see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations," and "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?" for more details.

Next, "What is Mind – How do we Experience the Outside World?", …….

6.1.3 Buddha Dhamma and Buddhism

"What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?"

"A Buddhist or a Bhouddhaya?"

"Where to Start on the Path?"

"What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream"

"Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)"

"Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?"

6.1.3.1 What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?

Revised November 16, 2019

All Religions Are The Same?

1. When I hear the common statement, "all religions are the same, they teach you how to live a MORAL LIFE", I cringe. That is because I think about all those people who are unaware of the actual message of the Buddha. In particular, this is the mindset of those who follow "secular Buddhism."

- It is true that most religions teach how to live a moral life. And there is also evidence that atheists may be as moral as religious people are; see, "WebLink: Morality in everyday life-Science-2014-Hofmann."
- However, Buddha Dhamma goes beyond that. The Buddha said, no matter how well we live this life that will not help one in the LONG TERM.
- Yet, even to understand that message of the Buddha, one needs to live a moral life first.

Two Paths Described by the Buddha

2. I have made a one-pager, which should be referenced here.

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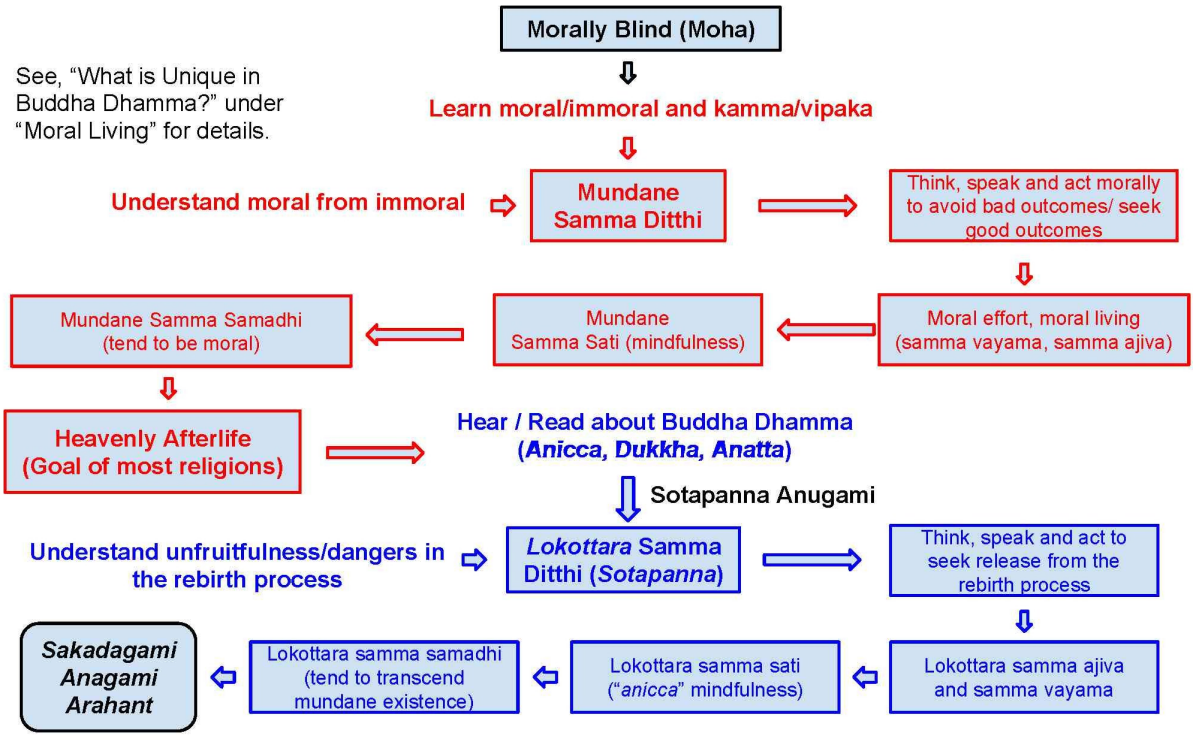

This chart can be viewed in a separate panel by clicking on "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and printed for reference. There are a few key things that need explanation first:

- The "mundane Eightfold Path" is depicted by the set of boxes in red starting with "mundane *sammā diṭṭhi*." The next box depicts mundane versions of *sammā saṅkappa*, *sammā, vaca,* and *sammā kammanta*." That means "think, speak, and act morally to avoid bad outcomes/seek good outcomes" and so on until "mundane *sammā samādhi*."
- Most of these steps (not all) are in other religions as well as in conventional or secular "Buddhism." They describe how to live a moral life. The goal of most other religions is to gain a (permanent) heavenly life at death. In the current versions of distorted "Buddhism" also, the joys of heavenly lives are highlighted. Sometimes one is even encouraged to "enjoy such heavenly lives" before attaining *Nibbāna*.

What Is "Good Birth"?

3. This misconception in "Buddhism" arises because the rarity of a "good rebirth" has not been comprehended; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm." This is why the Buddha said, "no happiness can be found anywhere in the 31 realms" (which is the true meaning of *anicca*).

- **Even if a heavenly rebirth is attained in the next life, a future rebirth in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*) cannot be avoided without attaining the Sotāpanna stage of *Nibbāna*.** A phrase used by some *bhikkhus* in Sri Lanka goes as, "May you attain *Nibbāna* at the time of the Buddha Maithree (next Buddha)." Why not attain *Nibbāna* in this life? *Who is going to give guarantees that one will be born human during the time of the Buddha Maithree?* Everyone should make use of this rare opportunity to be human, *to strive now!*
- Until one comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, one always values future happiness in permanent heaven (most religions) OR temporary happiness in heavenly worlds (traditional "Buddhists"). The difference between a traditional "Buddhist" and a *Bhauddhaya* is discussed in "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?."
- One actually starts on the transcendental (*lokuttara*) or the Noble Eightfold Path when one comprehends the dangers of the rebirth process and BECOMES a *Sotāpanna*.

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- When one is trying to attain that understanding, one is called a *Sotāpanna magga anugāmi*; see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

Two Eightfold Paths

In the "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)," the Buddha discussed that one must first follow the **mundane eightfold path**. That will remove the ten types of wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*) that are listed in #3 of that post. After that one needs to comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) to some extent to start on the **Noble Eightfold Path**.

4. Thus one starts on the Noble Eightfold Path starting with *lokuttara* (transcendental) *sammā diṭṭhi* of a *Sotāpanna* (set of blue boxes). One has seen a "glimpse of *Nibbāna*", i.e., one KNOWS that permanent happiness is not possible anywhere in the 31 realms and that whatever effort one makes to achieve such a happiness is like chasing a mirage.

- Note the difference in the box next to "*sammā diṭṭhi*" in the two cases. In the mundane path, "*sammā saṅkappa, sammā vaca, sammā kammanta*" are "moral thoughts, speech, and actions" intended to avoid bad outcomes and to seek good outcomes.
- In the Noble path, "*sammā saṅkappa, sammā vaca, sammā kammanta*" are "thoughts, speech, and actions" intended to stop the rebirth process. **One does not do immoral things because there is "no point" in doing such things.** One knows that such things are not only unfruitful but also dangerous, in the long run.
- And one becomes more compassionate towards all living beings (not just humans) because one can see that each living being is suffering because of ignorance of the Buddha's key message. One also realizes that one needs to fulfill obligations to others in order to "pay back old debts"; one is bound to the rebirth process not only via cravings for worldly things but also via unpaid debts from previous lives.

Noble Eightfold Path

5. The decision to become a *Sotāpanna magga anugami* (the path to the *Sotāpanna* stage) can be made anytime after getting to the "red boxes", i.e., while one is on the mundane Eightfold Path.

- In a way, a *Sotāpanna magga anugami* is a *Bhauddhaya* in the real sense. See, "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?" Even though not in the *Tipiṭaka*, sometimes the word "*Cūla Sotāpanna*" (pronounced "chūla Sotāpanna") is also used to describe the same person.
- The key is to comprehend the "true nature of this world of 31 realms" that the Buddha described. That says it is not possible to achieve/maintain anything that can be kept to one's satisfaction (*anicca*). Thus one gets to suffer (*dukkha*), and thus, one is truly helpless in the rebirth process (*anatta*). This realization itself is like lifting a heavy load that one has been carrying, the first true taste of *Nibbāna*.

6. This "change of mindset" for a Sotāpanna is PERMANENT, i.e., it will not change even in future rebirths. One has attained an "unbreakable" level of confidence (*saddhā*) in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha.

- And a *Sotāpanna* can follow the rest of the 7 steps in the Noble Eightfold Path even without help from others. Thus one will attain the next three stages of *Nibbāna* (*Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant*) successively by following those steps.

Mundane Eightfold Path

7. In the *Mahā Chattarisaka Sutta*, the Buddha outlined how one needs to first follow the mundane ("*lokiya*") Eightfold Path; see, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)." This is a first NECESSARY step in order to get rid of the worse kinds of "gunk" that has been built up over countless lives.

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- The unique message of the Buddha that has been hidden for hundreds of years. What is conventionally practised today is just this mundane Eightfold Path. This is what we call "Buddhism" today.
- That superficial or "secular" Buddhism is not that different from what is advised by most other religions. Thus, it is easier for people to resonate with the mundane concepts in "Buddhism." *Sammā Diṭṭhi,* for example, is considered to be the "correct vision" of "how to live a moral life."
- Of course, that is a first necessary step. That will help one to be able to experience the benefits of moral behavior (even in this life as a "*nirāmisa sukha*"; see "How to Taste Nibbāna") and then to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and to embark on the Noble Eightfold Path to seek permanent happiness or *Nibbāna*.

Next, "Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?", …….

6.1.3.2 A Buddhist or a Bhauddhayā?

Revised August 18, 2016; revised April 25, 2019

1. The terms "Buddhism" and "Buddhist" were invented by the English, French, and German historians in the nineteenth century when they first came across Buddha Dhamma in India and Sri Lanka.

- The discovery of the "Asoka pillars" in India was followed by the discovery of the Pāli literature on Buddha Dhamma in Sri Lanka and other countries such as Burma and Thailand (together with translated Chinese scripts); of course there were no practicing "Buddhists" or any Buddhist literature in India.

2. Here are two key points that should be the basis of defining the terms:

- Up to that time it was "Buddha Dhamma" or the "Dhamma or Teachings of the Buddha."
- The word Buddha comes from "*bhava*" + "*uddha*"; here, "*bhava*" means "existence (in the 31 realms)" and "*uddha*" means "removal." Therefore, Buddha is one who figured out how to stop the rebirth process and thus end future suffering.
- And a person who diligently followed the Path advised by the Buddha was called a "*Bhauddhayā*" (= *bhava* + *uddha* + *yā* = one who strives to stop the rebirth process, i.e., to stop suffering).

3. However, many people today have been exposed to bits and pieces of Buddha Dhamma.

- They are just happy to follow the precepts of moral conduct, do some *samatha* meditation (breath meditation) to relieve the stresses of modern life, and to see where that leads them; see, "Goenka´s Vipassana."
- That is a perfectly good approach, at least to start off. But Buddha Dhamma is much deeper, and can lead to a state where there is absolutely no suffering, i.e., *Nibbāna*; see, "Nibbāna."

4. Each person understands Buddha Dhamma differently, mainly based on the level of exposure to "correct Dhamma."

- Thus most people have the following misconceptions: (1) that Buddha Dhamma will help alleviate suffering from physical ailments, (2) that it provides only temporary relief (also called *nirāmisa sukha*) from mental stress (as in breath meditation).

5. However, the Buddha pointed out two forms of hidden suffering that humans are not aware of:

- That incessant distress or agitation that we all feel (but mostly are unaware of)arises due to greed, hate, and ignorance.
- Immoral deeds that we commit due to these greedy, hateful, or ignorant mindset will lead to much higher forms of suffering in future rebirths (especially in animal and other lower realms).

6. Some do not believe in the rebirth process, so they cannot really "get traction" with the second type suffering associated with the rebirth process.

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- Many have experienced the *nirāmisa sukha* while participating in meditation retreats or regular meditation programs at home. However, they do not realize that such *nirāmisa sukha* can be made permanent, by learning pure Dhamma and by comprehending the *anicca* nature of this world; see, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" and "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."
- It is only when one starts realizing the *anicca* nature, that one becomes a true *Bhauddhayā* in the sense of its meaning in #2 above.

7. A *Bhauddhayā* starts to realize the futility of staying anywhere in the 31 realms, and at some point will attain the first stage of *Nibbāna*, i.e., become a *Sotāpanna*.

- At that stage one would have made that *nirāmisa sukha* permanent, i.e., if one did not do any meditation for the rest of the life, he/she will retain that *nirāmisa sukha*.
- A *Sotāpanna* would also be automatically be released from future births in the apāyā or the four lowest realms.
- How that happens is described in other sections of the site, especially in the section, "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."

8. Many people initially become Buddhists because of either a desire to learn more about the "wider world", contemplate on the "long-term existence", i.e., the never ending rebirth process, or because they are interested in living a moral life that provides a sense of happiness.

- But in the very strict sense, if one really wants to follow the Path prescribed by the Buddha and become a "*Bhauddhayā*," one needs to first understand what the rebirth process is, and why it is important to stop the rebirth process, i.e., they need to understand *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*

9. There are no rituals to become either a Buddhist or a *Bhauddhayā*. As one becomes convinced of the Buddha's world view and starts seeing that it is fruitless to HARM ONESELF OR OTHERS to gain anything "in this world", he/she starts becoming a better Budhist or a *Bhauddhayā*.

- As one becomes a Buddhist/*Bhauddhayā*, his/her personality may start changing without forcefully changing it. That is because one starts seeing the world differently and reacting to outside events differently. It is all about changing perceptions about "this world", i.e., it is all mental.
- Because of this, one cannot become a *Bhauddhayā* or even a good Buddhist by just following rituals. One becomes a good Buddhist/*Bhauddhayā* by attempting to comprehend the message of the Buddha, and by experiencing the benefits as one progresses.

"*Dhammo ha ve rakkhati Dhammacari*," i.e., "Dhamma will guide and protect one who lives by Dhamma." If one really starts becoming a Buddhist/*Bhauddhayā*, one will be able to see the changes in oneself as time goes by (others will start noticing after a bit longer). One's likings and associations are the first to change.

Next, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream", …….

6.1.3.3 Where to Start on the Path?

This is a very important post. Please read the post through without clicking on any link first, in order to get the main idea that I am trying to convey. You may want to re-read the post several times, clicking on the links to find out more as you digest the key points. **Actually, this is true of all the posts: It is better to read through a given post first to get the main idea, and then to look into the details provided by the links as needed.**

- Anyone reading this website has been exposed to Buddha Dhamma in the past; by "past" I mean beginning-less time. Each of us have been "living" and "dying" innumerable times, in most of the 31 realms of existence; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Even though a Buddha appears in the

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world after very long times, there have been innumerable Buddhas too. Some of you may not believe this, and that is fine. It may make sense later on.

Each of us has listened to a Buddha delivering a discourse, attained the highest *jhānā*, and also been born in the animal and *niraya* (the lowest realm) too. Our character and habits may have changed from "good" to "bad" many times over. Infinite time is very hard to grasp with the mind; see, "Sansāric Time Scale," and "Infinity – How Big is it?." Also, you may want to read the excellent book, "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011) IF you are interested in a "scientific opinion"; actually, the descriptions are very similar in both cases in the sense that many things that sound implausible are not scientifically implausible, and in fact are necessary to explain the scientific data.

- As in this life, it is easy to remember relatively recent events in the *sansāric* journey. Those who can remember past lives, remember only the past one or few lives; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." The 'habits" and "tendencies" that we have are the ones that we have had in the recent rebirths.
- Therefore, for some people, it may be easier to get into a *jhāna* (or to have a good meditative experience) just because they have had that experience in more recent lives; for another person, it may be harder just because that person may not have had that experience for very many births in the recent past.

One should not be discouraged if one's understanding of Dhamma or "meditation experience" seems to be different from what one hears from others. The important thing is to first determine where one is in the relative scale of things and start at the right place. Most times there is no correlation between this evaluation and one's "book knowledge" either.

One could use the basic guidelines provided by the Buddha. There are five stages starting with *dana* and ending with *nekkhamma*:

- *Dana* (giving, generosity, caring for others' well being).
- *Sīla* (moral conduct).
- *Sagga* (literally heaven, but meaning calm and peaceful mind).
- *Ädeenava* (seeing the fruitlessness and the danger of the 31 realms or the rebirth process).
- *Nekkhamma* (losing attachment to "things" in the 31 realms, and working diligently towards *Nibbāna*), which in turn leads to *nissarana* (stop this suffering-filled rebirth process) and thus *Nibbāna.*

These are not clear-cut steps, but are guidelines.

1. Most people, irrespective of the religion, are generous and enjoy giving. Just like *sīla* below, *dana* induces happiness in oneself.

2. In Pāli it is *sīla* (pronounced "seela"); in Sinhala it is "*seelaya*" ("*sisil*" means cooling down and "*laya*" means heart, so cooled heart), and thus is a bit more explanatory.

- Any act that makes one's heart to cool down is an act of *sīla*, i.e., it is moral conduct.
- When we act with compassion, say give a meal to someone hungry or help out an elderly person to cross the street, it makes our heart cool down. On the other hand, when we do something immoral or inappropriate, our heart gets agitated and the heart rate goes up, and the whole body heats up; also see, "How to Taste Nibbāna."
- It is the same compassion, extended to other living beings as well, that makes up the basis of the five precepts: avoiding any act that is harmful to any living being; see, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them."
- The humans are at a much higher "consciousness level" compared to animals, so we need to pay special attention not to even hurt the feelings of another human being; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different

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Kamma." It is a good habit also to cultivate *metta* (loving kindness) to all beings; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

3. When one gets to the *Sagga* stage, it is relatively easy to calm the mind. One starts feeling the *nirāmisa sukha* (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?") or the happiness of "cooling down" by voluntarily "giving up" (and sharing with others) things that one used to be quite possessive of. It is very subtle. One cannot just start giving everything that one owns; that will only lead to *paṭigha* or internal friction. In addition, one has responsibilities and debts to pay; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

- Different people get "agitated" due to different "triggers." This is because we have very different *sansāric* habits: things we really like and things we really dislike; there are several posts on these habits and "*āsavas*." It is a good idea to make a self-assessment, figure out the "bad triggers" and make an effort to remove them.
- For example, if one has an "explosive temper" it is a good idea to make an effort to restraint oneself and also to do *metta bhāvanā*. It is important to realize that the anger is within oneself; it is not in an outside person or thing. I could get mad by thinking about person A, but there are many other people who have loving thoughts about the same person A. Same with greed, it is inside of us, not outside. These all originate from our *sansāric* likes and dislikes.

4. While it is hard for some to even start thinking about the 'bigger picture" of the 31 realms, and the possible suffering in future rebirths, some others may have thought about this "in the recent past in the *sansāric* rebirths", and thus may be motivated to explore more.

5. The last stage is for those who have "seen the big picture" and the dangers of staying "in this world of 31 realms", or at least have some inkling of it. When one starts feeling the *nirāmisa sukha* strongly, and also start seeing the suffering to come in the lower realms, giving up the rebirth process becomes an urgent need, instead of being anxious about "giving up rebirth." Again, this cannot be forced. One will feel it when one's mind is ready.

- This website has posts that could be helpful in any of the above categories. One needs to look around and find the suitable topics; even though I have tried to put posts into different categories, there may be posts suitable for anyone in any category.
- My intention is to add material at all different levels, mainly up to the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. I hope that will help a wide spectrum of people and also illustrate that Buddha Dhamma describes the ultimate natural laws not only about our human world, but of all existence. Buddha Dhamma is not just a philosophical theory; one can actually experience the improvement in one's quality of life as one follows the Path.

September 13, 2016: I recently started a new section, "Living Dhamma" detailing a step-by-step process on how to get started on the Path. One could get started even without belief in rebirth or the existence of 31 realms. There we start by looking at the (hidden) suffering experienced in this life and how to eliminate it.

6.1.3.4 What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream

Revised August 3, 2016; revised March 27, 2018; September 6, 2019; November 12, 2019; August 22, 2020

Reincarnation Versus Rebirth

Reincarnation is a Hindu concept, where the "*ātma*" or the soul remains the same but takes a different form. The *Rigveda* compares it to a person discarding an old suit and wearing a new outfit.

- In Buddha Dhamma, it is a rebirth, since there is no soul to reincarnate. We have accumulated many "*kamma* seeds" *(kamma bīja*) which contain various "habits" and "character" (called "*gati*") in our long

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journey through *saṃsāra*. Those lead to different types of rebirths; see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

- At the end of this human existence, the *kammic* energy of the *kamma* seed for the present life is exhausted. At that moment, a new life starts with a new potent *kamma* seed. The selection of a new seed itself is a complicated process and depends on the potency of the available kamma seeds, but it happens within a thought-moment.

Panñakkhandha – Not The Physical Physical Body

1. The *pañcakkhandha* or the five heaps (*khandhas*) that makes a being and "its world" are two inter-dependent entities. One is *rūpa* (form), and the other is *citta* (pronounced chiththa). See, "The Five Aggregates (Panñakkhandha)" for details.

- *Citta* can be crudely called a thoughts, but a thought that we experience has billions of *cittā* in it; see, "What is a Thought?."
- *Rūpa* is divided into two main categories of internal and external. The external *rūpa* constitutes one's outer world. The **internal *rūpa*** includes the physical body, as well as the very fine *pasāda rūpa* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā*, and *kāya*) which do the actual "sensing." *Pasāda rūpa* cannot function without physical eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the physical body.
- The very fine *pasāda rūpa* are in the "mental body" or the gandhabba: "Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body." The physical eye, ear, etc. are like physical instruments that help gather data from outside; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)" section for details.

Concept of a "Life-stream"

2. The combination of the two streams of *citta* and **internal *rūpa*** can be called a "life-stream." A life-stream is in constant regeneration, moment-to-moment. The *cittā* regenerate very fast (billions in a second), and each *citta* has the other four heaps (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) associated with it. So *rūpa* and *citta* represent the *pañcakkhandha* (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*). I am simplifying this a bit to make it not too complicated.

- In simpler terms, both internal *rūpa* and *citta* are re-generated billion times a second.
- All ***rūpa*** arise and decay according to their nature, and not at a fast rate like *citta*. See, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- A *citta* arises and disappears in less than a billionth of a second, but there is a mental factor in each *citta* called *manasikāra* that "remembers the contents in the previous *citta*." The two psychological factors of *manasikāra* and *cetanā* are responsible for providing a sense of a "person" who remembers the past; see, "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka."
- Our memories have been kept intact from the beginning-less time. Recently, evidence has started emerging that some people can remember astoundingly detailed accounts of their memories from many years back. See, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- It is not possible to "store" all that information in the brain.

3. *Cittā* flow like a river (many billions a second), and are in discrete packets (like quanta in quantum theory; in fact, these are the smallest quanta anywhere in this world). Our internal *rūpa* also changes rapidly; this is why we change even moment-to-moment.

- But the **external *rūpa*** change at different rates, some lasting very long times (a gold bar, for example), while some change very fast.

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- But NOTHING in the world remains the same over long times, even our universe came into existence some 14 billion years ago and will fade away in billions of years. Our Solar system has a lifetime of about five billion years.

A New Existence Can Be Very Different

4. As mentioned in #1, internal *pasāda rūpa* and *thoughts* for the present life run non-stop until the death (with some exceptions, like in the *asaññā* realm). At the last thought-moment (called *cuti citta*, pronounced "chuthi chiththa"), a new *kamma* seed comes into play; see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." Now both the *rūpa* and *citta* for the new life contain brand new *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa* (i.e., a new *pañcakkhandha*); it is a "living being" that may look different, with its own "world." For example, a "*deva* world" is very different from what we experience.

- The only things that are carried over to the new life are those *kamma* seeds, which contain the "character" or "*gati*" of that life-stream. Energies in *kamma* seeds fade over time if they had not yet brought their *vipāka*.

5. Thus, at the moment of death, *pañcakkhandha* makes a quantum jump (meaning a sizeable instantaneous change).

- Let us take an example. A man has a physical body, which is part of his *rūpakkhandha* (we will make this as simple as possible). Other four *khandha* determine his mental state (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*), where *viññāṇa* is roughly consciousness. Suppose he dies and is born as an elephant. Now the life-stream gets a new *viññāṇa*. The "new" physical body is different, and his "new" consciousness level is much lower than a human's, now at the base level of an elephant.
- But the set of *kamma* seeds (*kamma bīja*) all got transferred to this new existence (*bhava*). Thus if there are many "good *kamma* seeds" there, there could later be a birth in a human or even higher realm.
- Normally, the rebirth takes place in a physically different location (New scientific evidence for such "actions at a distance" are discussed in "Quantum Entanglement – We All Connected").

Caterpillar and Butterfly – Not the Same

6. Sometimes a life-stream changes its *rūpa khandha* while in the same physical location. One example is the evolution of a butterfly from a caterpillar. A female butterfly lays an egg. The egg hatches and a caterpillar is born. It eats leaves and metamorphosis into a pupa that hangs like a small sack. The final stage is a butterfly that emerges from that sack.

- Now this butterfly is definitely not the pupa or the caterpillar or the egg. But it is not different from any of the above either. It is the same life-stream. That is why both "soul" and "no-soul" (or "self" and "no-self") are wrong views. Many people incorrectly translate "*anatta*" as "no-self" with the meaning of "no-soul," which is WRONG; see, "Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings."

7. Let us look at the caterpillar and the butterfly. The *rūpa khandhas* defining their physical bodies are different. Their *cittā* are different too. One thinks about eating leaves, and the other thinks about drinking nectar. The only commonality between the two lies in the *kamma* seeds (which also keep evolving in a given life).

- Now that life-stream may have kamma seeds for a human, *deva*, or a *brahma* too. But none of those got "selected," probably because they were less potent. So, a butterfly is likely to be born in lower realms for very, very long times, before a less probable "human seed" picked for a new life in a rare statistical event.

Gati are Carried to the Next Existence

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8. One's habits (*gati*) that mold one's character and the mental impurities (*kilesa*) are carried from life-to-life. Of course, those also keep changing even during a lifetime. I call this the "dynamic personality" of a life-stream in the sense that it is in constant flux. That is another reason why the Buddha rejected "no-self" as well as "self" or "soul."

- There is nothing that remains the same (i.e., not "self"), but we cannot say "no-self" either, because there is an "identity" in the form of one's *gati* (and *āsava* and *kilesa*) that survives in the next life. See, "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)", "Sansāric Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsava)," and "Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)."

9. *Gati* (character/habits) of a given life-stream can change significantly during human life. A human can change his/her destiny, but an animal cannot.

- Out of the 31 realms of existence (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"), the mind has much less capability in most other realms. Thus, it is very difficult to get rid of bad *kamma* seeds and cultivate good ones while in realms other than the human. Therefore, one should make the utmost effort to get rid of the bad seeds and to develop "good seeds" during this short life span of 100 years or so.
- Also, physical death does not necessarily mean the end of human rebirth. If the *kamma* seed that led to his human life has more *kammic* potential left, a human can be reborn a human again and again. That stops when *kammic* potential is exhausted; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein".
- It is a rare event to get a human existence (*bhava*) for a living being; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm." But during a given human *bhava*, there could be many rebirths. That is why some can recall recent past lives: "Evidence for Rebirth."

Most Suffering in the Rebirth Process Is In *Apāyā*

10. Rebirth process has so much suffering mainly because a given living being is mostly born in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*). Thus is the need to get out of the rebirth process by attaining *Nibbāna*.

- *Nibbāna* is attained NOT by getting rid of all *kamma* seeds. Getting rid of *kamma* seeds is not necessary. What we need to do is to reduce "the tendency to crave for things in this world (*upādāna*)" by following the Noble Eightfold Path.
- An *Arahant* may still have bad *kamma* seeds left. But his/her mind WILL NOT hold onto any of those at the dying moment (this happens when one truly comprehends the futility of staying in this world or craving for anything in this world); see, "Anicca – True Meaning", and "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?"). Thus, he/she will not be reborn "in this world."

11. Still one would want to stop accumulating "bad seeds" and to cultivate as many "good seeds" as possible. That will make it more probable of NOT getting a bad birth when one dies. That will also make it easier to attain *Nibbāna* in a future life without being born in a bad realm (in case one does not make it in this life). See the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section on how to get started.

- I have made this complicated process probably too simple. But I think it will help one to get the basic idea.
- The concept of an ever-changing life-stream is also discussed in ""Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis."

No "Discernible Beginning" to the Rebirth Process

12. It is also important to realize that any life-stream does not have a "discernible beginning," as the Buddha said. Thus each one of us has been going through this process from "beginning-less time."

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- In Buddha Dhamma — unlike in the "Big Bang Theory" of current science — our whole universe did not come to existence some 14 billion years ago. That requires a detailed explanation, but let me give a summary.
- Stars like our Sun have lifetimes of several billion years. At the end of their lifetimes, some of them blow up. Those explosions are supernovae in modern science. Even then, higher-lying *rūpa* realms and *arūpa* realms survive. All living beings move to higher realms before the destruction of the Earth.
- After many billions of years, the "material Solar system" re-forms. Then most of those living beings come back to the Earth as humans with very light "bodies" like *Brahmā*. With time, those "early humans" evolve into humans and animals with "denser bodies." That is a reverse evolution process, compared to Darwin's theory.
- Those details are in the *Aggañña Sutta*, and of course, current translations are way off. What is important for now is that the beginning of any life-stream has "no discernible beginning." A summary of the *sutta* at, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

13. In Buddha Dhamma (as well as in science) nothing happens without a cause: cause and effect. If there was a beginning, who or what gave rise to that beginning? And then what caused "that"? That is why "there is no discernible beginning." See, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin".

- Thoughts are more complex than described above; see, "Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."
- It is not possible to provide the "whole picture" in a post or even several. You can use the "Search" box on the top right to locate posts relevant to keywords.
- For a more detailed discussion, see, "Mental Body – Gandhabba."
- See also, "What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?"
- One may wonder where one's memory is stored: see, "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nāma Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka."

More details in the new sections on, "Origin of Life" and "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

6.1.3.5 Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)

Revised October 6, 2018; May 18, 2020

1. A normal human being can remember some "significant events" even from the very early days of this life. And these memories are not just a "summary", but we recall a significant event in detail. It is like playing back a videotape. We recall the whole scene with pictures sounds, the background, everything. Just recall some past events and one can verify that for oneself.

- There are many cases of "memories from past lives" reported mostly by children. But there are also accounts by some adults under hypnosis; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Now there is scientific evidence that our memory records are kept in minute detail somewhere and can be accessed at moment's notice. Such "detailed records" are called "*nāma gotta*" in Buddha Dhamma. See, "Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)" and "Memory Records – Critical Part of Five Aggregates."
- However, an average human can recall only a small fraction of past events.

2. Strong evidence is beginning to emerge that there is indeed a "complete record" of one's past (in this life) just like a videotape. These studies started with Jill Price, who contacted a team of scientists in the early 2000's about her ability to recall anything from 1974 onwards. Here is a video of her with Diane Sawyer on an ABC News program:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: The woman that never forgets

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3. Note that she says she can "see" what happened that day. It is not like she is recalling a "summary" or the gist of what happened. She can actually recall the whole episode in detail. Even the day and date come out effortlessly.

- A team of scientists has studied her for five years and published a paper providing their findings: A Case of Unusual Autobiographical Remembering-Parker-2006
- She has written a book about her experience: "The Woman Who Can't Forget", by Jill Price (2009).
- Jill Price's story led more people to come forward with their experiences, and ten more such individuals have been studied in detail recently: WebLink: Behavioral and neuroantomical investigation-LePort-2012.

4. These individuals have "highly superior autobiographical memory" or HSAM. They are not any smarter than average people, according to those two papers above. The ability to recall their past much more extensively is a "*puññā iddhi*" of a special *kamma vipāka* in Buddha Dhamma. They can focus their minds on any date in the past and "watch" what happened. Then they can say what the weather was like, who they were with, whether any significant world event took place that day, etc.

- This phenomenon is also known as Hyperthymesia; see, WebLink: WIKI: Hyperthymesia. Several other cases of HSAM are mentioned here.

5. Scientists believe that our memories are "stored" in the brain, in the synapses between neurons. I firmly believe that they will be proven wrong. This research is still in infancy, but there has been an explosion of activity within the past 15 years.

- While it is true that synaptic wiring are responsible for habit formation (see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View"), it is a stretch to assume that "video-like recordings" of all past events are somehow embedded in neural connections!
- It is true that people without HSAM do have false memories (or have no memories) of past incidents that were not significant for them. But their memories about significant/traumatic memories are astoundingly accurate.

6. There are a couple of key significant facts that come out of these studies on HSAM subjects:

- They can instantly access a "time slot" from many years back that is arbitrarily chosen by someone else. They "re-visit" that time slot and describe, in real-time, what took place with details.
- Since it has been confirmed in 11 subjects, it is not a "random event."
- It is a stretch to assume that all such details for a period of over 20 years can be stored in biological membranes that regenerate undergo changes continuously.
- It is not a matter of being able to remember. Jill Price describes extensively that it is hard for her to remember any "learning material"; she was an average student.
- Rather, it is a matter of just having a brain that is "wired" to be able to access the "video recorder like" memory stream. It is not something one can develop by studying hard.

7. In Buddha Dhamma, the life of a sentient being is not restricted to the current life. As described in the previous post ("What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream"), any given sentient being has been born an uncountable number of times, with no "traceable beginning."

- And a record of each of those lives is kept intact in the "mind plane", and can be accessed to different degrees by different people.
- And people who develop *abhiññā* powers via *jhānā* (need to get to at least the fourth *jhāna*) can develop Jill Price's capabilities and more; they can go back hundreds to thousands to billions of years depending on the level achieved.

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8. According to Buddha Dhamma, the brain is just like a computer that helps extract these memory records from the "mind plane." The mechanism is similar to a television extracting a broadcast signal; I will write a post on this later.

- These memory records are called "*nāmagotta*" (pronounced "nāma goththā") and they go back for eons and eons and even a Buddha cannot see a beginning; see, "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka."
- We can recall only bits and pieces even during this lifetime; this is because our minds are covered by the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*); see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."
- Ancient *yogis* who could get to the *eighth jhāna* could see all past lives in the present eon or *kappa*. But the Buddha could see numerous eons within a short time.
- This is why it is mostly children who can remember past lives. As they grow up their minds get "contaminated" more and more and these memories are lost. And those cases are different from the HSAM subjects.
- It appears that those individuals with HSAM have some of the capabilities of those who have developed *abhiññā* powers. Since those with HSAM have been reported to have somewhat different brain structures, it will be interesting to see whether those with *abhiññā* powers have similar brain structures as people with HSAM. I believe that it is a matter of the brain wiring to be able to "receive" more information from the "mind plane."

9. Here is a video on the amazing accounts of a few people with memory capabilities.

WebLink: youtube: Superhuman Geniuses (Extraordinary People Documentary)

- More than anything else, they confirm the fact that memories are held intact in the *mano loka* or the "mind plane"; see, "The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)."
- The brain is the interface between the base of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) and *mano loka*; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body." It is just that a few people's brains can do better in recalling those memories compared to others.

Next, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?", ...

6.1.3.6 Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?

Revised August 18, 2016; February 14, 2020

I participated in several internet forums on "Buddhism" over 2013 and a part of 2014. One thing that clearly stands out is the fact that there are many people who like Buddhism, but they cannot understand what the big deal is about rebirth, and they cannot comprehend what *Nibbāna* is. Thinking is: Why can't we have Buddhism without rebirth (because I do not believe in rebirth) and *Nibbāna* (because that seems to be too complicated)?

They are turned off by the concept of rebirth and are mystified by the concept of *Nibbāna*.

- **Rebirth.** I think that the first issue lies in the fact that most major religions are based on three levels of existence: This life, and one of two eternal stages of life thereafter; committed to either heaven or hell for eternity based on what one does in this life. That model is very simple. Buddha's 31 realms of existence with many "unseen beings" seems to be far fetched. Also, the possibility of being reborn as an animal is an abhorrent thought similar to the one people had about "evolving from the monkeys" before the theory of evolution.
- **Nibbāna.** The second issue has become a problem mainly because of *Mahāyāna* doctrines. *Mahāyāna* sect arose basically out of the philosophical analyses of *Nibbāna* by Nagarjuna, Asanga and other *Mahāyāna* forefathers. They could not understand the concept of *Nibbāna* or what happens to an

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Arahant when the *Arahant* dies. So, they came up with concepts like *suñyata* (*suññatā*) or emptiness; see, "What is Suñyata or Suññata (Emptiness)."

1. There are two co-existing facets of Buddha Dhamma:

- The Buddha said, "This Dhamma is unlike anything that the world has ever seen." It really needs a paradigm change to get into the "new perspective about this world view of the Buddha." One needs to be able to put aside all preconceived notions to understand the core message.
- However, the Buddha also said, "My Dhamma is good in the beginning, good in the middle, and good at the end." There is something to be gained from Buddha Dhamma for people who just came to know about it. This is why I have separated posts into three categories on the site.
- In Bhikkhu Bodhi's book, "In the Buddha's Words", there is a chapter on "The Happiness Visible in this Present Life", where Buddha's discourses to those who did not have aspiration to attain *Nibbāna* but were interested in pursuing moral lives, are described.
- The concepts such as rebirth and *Nibbāna* are paradigm-changing concepts. But as one follows what one understands, these concepts will become clear; I have summarized these two concepts below. But it will take much more effort and reading many more posts if one is really interested in understanding Buddha Dhamma.

2. For those who do not believe in rebirth, there is a simple way to get started without having to believe in the rebirth process. I strongly suggest the following post: "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth."

3. However, at the end — If one is to benefit fully from Buddha Dhamma — one needs to understand its core message. And that core message is that this life is only but an insignificant time in the cycle of rebirths that we have been on from eternity, and that "our world" is much more complex than we see with 31 realms instead of the two (human and animal realms) that we see. Even more significantly, the suffering in many of the lower realms of existence is much worse than that in the human or even the animal realm.

- That is a LOT of things to accept as a basis. But we are fortunate compared to those who lived even a hundred years ago. Because now we have EVIDENCE to back up this wider world view of the Buddha; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction."
- And both major *Mahāyāna* sects as well as Theravāda Buddhism believe in rebirth and the concept of *Nibbāna*. All Buddhists (except the type of Stephen Batchelor, who has written some popular books on Buddhism) believe in rebirth and *Nibbāna*. I have seen the label "secular Buddhism" being used to describe those who like other aspects of Buddhism (basically moral living and meditation), but not necessarily rebirth and/or *Nibbāna*.
- **Thus a Buddhist not believing in rebirth/Nibbāna is an oxymoron.** The Pāli or Sinhala word for Buddhist is "*Bhauddhayā*" meaning "a person trying the stop the rebirth process" ("*Bhava+uddha*"). One meaning of Buddha Dhamma is "path or method of removing *bhava* and thus stopping the rebirth process." Buddha means, "one who has removed *bhava* (and attained *Nibbāna*)."
- However, There is no need to forcefully accept rebirth, which gives rise to *sansāric* suffering. One can start at a point where one can actually experience **the other type of hidden suffering in this life** that most people can locate and remove: "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth."

4. Therefore, one can be a "secular Buddhist"; that could be an intermediate state before becoming a Buddhist. **We just need to get the concepts clear**. Since there is no formal established way to declare oneself a "Buddhist" (or a need to do that), it is really in one's own mind whether one is a Buddhist or not. The Buddha clearly stated that each person is at his/her own level of understanding. And there is no need to pretend; what one believes is what it is. **The critical thing is to make sure one is fully informed.**

- One does not become a Buddhist by reciting the precepts. **One becomes a Buddhist gradually as the mind embraces the world view of the Buddha and realizes that the real happiness is attained by**

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comprehending the true nature of this world: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and eventually by stopping the rebirth process.

5. In the mean time, it is important to realize that certain wrong views are bound to have adverse consequences according to Buddha Dhamma. Established (firm) view that there is no rebirth process is one included in *micchā diṭṭhi*, which is one of the (strong) *dasa akusala*, that makes a birth in the *apāyā* (four lowest realms of existence) possible. It is not necessary to firmly believe in rebirth, one should at least leave that as a possibility. What is critical is not to have *niyata* (established) *micchā diṭṭhi*.

- Faith in Buddha Dhamma is different from that in other religions; belief in rebirth or *Nibbāna* are not tenets. One either believes in them or one does not; see, "Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?." One MAY change one's view after looking at the facts, and especially if one can experience the release from one kind of suffering; see, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth"

6. Finally, it will take a real effort to sort through all different versions of "Buddhism" that are out there. Over two thousand five hundred years, just like now, people have tried to "mold" Buddha Dhamma to a form to their liking, and that is why we have so many versions. **But when that is done, the uniqueness, the real message, gets lost.** We need to keep intact this unique message, with the understanding that not everyone comprehends it right away.

- The key is to discard any version or aspect that does not provide a consistent picture. Buddha Dhamma describe the laws of nature, and there cannot be any inconsistencies. That is what I try to do with this website. If you see something inconsistent on the website, please let me know.
- I use the *Tipiṭaka* (Pāli Canon) as the basis. It was written down over two thousand years ago **(by *Arahants* who had experienced *Nibbāna*)**, and is the oldest document encompassing the three main teachings: *Suttā, Vinaya*, and *Abhidhamma*.
- I have documented the flaws in both *Mahāyāna* and (to a lesser extent) in current Theravāda books by pointing out the inconsistencies with the *Tipiṭaka*. Also, I show that everything is self-consistent, which is the scientific basis to illustrate the validity of a theory. Newton's theory on gravity had to be modified because they were not consistent with finer measurements.
- It does not matter what we believe personally. We need to find the true laws of nature that the Buddha discovered. **Laws of nature, like gravity or laws of motion, do not care about what we believe**; see, "Why it is Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma."
- Buddha Dhamma (in its pure form) has withstood all tests to date; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction." Both current *Mahāyāna* and Theravāda teachings need to be revised back to the original. It can be proven that there are self-contradictions within both sects in addition to contradictions with the teachings of the Buddha. I have a series of posts that point out these "problem areas" starting with, "Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings."

Having established that rebirth and *Nibbāna* are the "lifeblood" of Buddha Dhamma, now we can turn to the next question: What evidence is there to "prove" rebirth? What is the big deal about *Nibbāna*, which sounds so esoteric?

A. REBIRTH

I have summarized some of the existing evidence for rebirth; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." I am not sure what will qualify for "proof", but one thing is very clear: A strong case can be made for it. There is evidence from many different areas, and that are consistent with the Buddha's other teachings, for example, the existence of a *manomaya kāya*; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body."

- If a person can believe even a SINGLE piece of evidence presented there, it is not possible to explain that without accepting that there is a link between such two lives. Since there is no physical connection between the two lives (that existed many miles apart), the connection must be outside the physical realm, i.e., the mental energy. There is new evidence from "quantum entanglement" that is consistent with the

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presumption that everything in this world is inter-connected; see, "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected."

- However, one can actually verify the rebirth process by developing *abhiññā* powers via developing the fourth *jhāna*. One can then "see" one's previous lives; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Introduction" and the follow up posts. And there are some who have developed such *abhiññā* powers, and this number can be expected to grow. When a significant number of people can verify the rebirth process, it will be accepted. Today, not everyone has traveled outside one's own country. But everyone accepts that all those countries exist, because they believe the accounts of those who have made visits.
- And recent evidence confirm that there is indeed an unbroken memory record, at least in this life; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."

B. NIBBĀNA

1. "*Bāna*" in Pāli and Sinhala means "bondage"; thus *Nibbāna* means becoming free of bondage (to this world). We are bound to the unending cycle of rebirths via ten fetters called "*sanyojana* = "san+yojana"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)"; *yojana* means bond. *Saṃyojana* rhymes like called *saṃyojana* and that is normally written.

- The ten *saṃyojana* are removed via the four stages of *Nibbāna*: three at the *Sotāpanna* stage, two reduced at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage, and the remaining five removed at the *Arahant* stage.
- Removal of the ten *saṃyojana* also removes greed, hate, and ignorance from our minds; the *nirāmisa sukha* increases step-wise at each of the four stages, and the "cooling down" or "*nivana*" becomes complete; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna." There are many synonyms for *Nibbāna*, and *nivana* (or *niveema*) is one of them. The Sanskrit name "*nirvana*" does not convey any of these meanings.

2. When the mind becomes pure, a being is simply not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms. The mind has attained full release, and unconditioned happiness called *nirāmisa sukha*. Thus *Nibbāna* is stopping the rebirth process; the suffering stops. it is as simple as that. That mind cannot grasp even a fine form of a material body (which is subject to decay and death) anywhere in "the 31 realms." **The mind becomes free of a body that is subject to decay and death (suffering).** That is *Nibbāna*.

- The *Nibbānic* experience cannot be described by the terminology of "this world"; it is transcendental or "*lokuttara*," beyond "this world"; see, "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."
- Also, all we can say about what happens to an *Arahant* at his/her death is that he/she will not be reborn in "this world" of 31 realms. There is no more suffering. The mind is free of bondage to a physical body that leads to so much suffering.
- Many people say, "What suffering? I do not feel that much suffering." But the real suffering is in the lowest four realms; that is why the complete picture of 31 realms of existence is important. Furthermore, there is much suffering that is masked, especially when one is young. As one gets old, it is inevitable that one will start experience suffering at a higher degree, and then face death. Here is a video that illustrates this point:

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Aging Stars of the Golden Age

3. However, the point is NOT to get depressed about this inevitability. Some people get depressed thinking about old age, and try to "give up" everything to follow the Path of the Buddha.

- It is not even possible for someone who is not familiar with Buddha Dhamma to start working on attaining *Arahanthood* straight away, and it is not advised either. It needs to be done with understanding. As one follows the Path, and learns Dhamma, one could start feeling early stages of *Nibbānic* pleasure (*nirāmisa sukha*) and thus will start having fact-based faith on concepts like rebirth and *Nibbāna*: see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

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- Have you seen any depressed Buddhist monks? They have given up the worldly pleasures voluntarily, NOT with the mindset of a depressed person. Depression leads to hate; true "giving up" is done with wisdom.

This is only a summary. All these are described in detail with supporting evidence at this website. The key point is that EVERYTHING we observe, all we experience CAN be explained with the complete "world view" of the Buddha of which rebirth and Nibbāna are essential foundations.

One does not need to know all that if all one needs is a peace of mind. One could follow the basic guidelines for a moral life that the Buddha provided. However, his key message was that this 100-year life can be only be compared to a "drop of water in a huge ocean" that is the cycle of rebirths filled with suffering. Thus one should at least critically examine the evidence to see whether that message needs to be taken seriously.

Next, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth", ……..

6.1.4 Dhamma Concepts

"Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

"Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"

"Punna Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā"

"The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them"

"What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"

"How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma"

"Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma"

"The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada)"

"Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"

6.1.4.1 Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma

April 27, 2018; revised August 19, 2019

Introduction

1. There are six causes for things to arise in this world: *lobha, dosa, moha* and *alobha, adosa, amoha*.

- ***Akusala kamma*** (immoral actions) done with *lobha, dosa, moha* give rise to births in the four lowest realms or *apāyā*.
- ***Puñña Kamma*** (moral deeds) done with *alobha, adosa, amoha* give rise to births in the human and higher (good) realms.

2. However, births in good planes do not solve the problem of suffering for the long term.

- That is because unless one still has hidden defilement (*anusaya*) and thus can act with *avijjā* and *taṇhā*.
- Therefore, when strong sense attractions become too tempting, one could do *akusala kamma* with *lobha, dosa, moha,* and then be born in the *apāyā*.

Comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*

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3. When one comprehends #1 and #2 above, one would have realized the *anicca* nature, which is the following. Existence in any realm WILL NOT bring permanent happiness, or more correctly, it will not REMOVE future suffering.

- When one starts realizing the *anicca* nature, one will start "seeing" the dangers in continuing in the rebirth process. And that comprehension will lead to the gradual "wearing away" of hidden *anusaya*.

4. *Puñña kammā* are meritorious actions that CAN lead to rebirth in the higher realms. However, when one does *puñña kammā* without any comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa,* there could be *asobhana cetasika* involved. (Especially greed at lower levels, possibly including a desire for something in return for those actions.) Such actions would not count as *kusala kammā*, but they are still *puñña kammā*.

- ***Kusala kammā*** are actions that lead to the cleansing of the mind and help to stop the rebirth process.
- All *kusala kammā* are *puñña kammā*. But not all *puñña kammā* are *kusala kammā.*

5. That is why the Path is two-fold. When one starts, one will be on the mundane eightfold path and will be doing *puñña kammā.*

- When one switches to the Noble (*Lokottara*) Path as a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* (with comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*), one's actions will have more and more *kusala* components.
- A big jump from *puñña kammā* to *kusala kammā* is when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage. However, any trace of *akusala* component due to remaining *avijjā* will be completely removed only at the *Arahant* stage. At that point (for an *Arahant*) such actions are called "*kriya*" or just activities.
- For a discussion on the two paths, see, "Mahā Cattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

Switching From the Mundane to Noble Eightfold Path

6. When one is on the **mundane eightfold path**, one knows the difference between moral and immoral. Thus one will (try to) abstain from *akusala kamma* and will make an effort to engage in ***puñña kammā*** (virtuous deeds).

- That will help one keep away from rebirths in the *apāyā*, and be directed to rebirths in good realms at or above the human plane.

7. With the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*, one will start switching to the Noble (*Lokottara*) Path. One will begin realizing that *anicca* nature leads to *dukkha*, which in turn leads to *anatta* or helplessness when born in the *apāyā*.

- Then one will AUTOMATICALLY start doing moral deeds without any (hidden) expectation of a "good return in terms of good birth." That is because one has understood that even births in the higher realms WILL NOT solve the problem of future suffering.
- In other words, more and more ***PUÑÑA kamma*** **will automatically become** ***KUSALA kamma*****.** ***Kusala kamma*** **are better than** ***puñña kamma*****.**
- That is a point that is hard for many people to understand. But it should not be difficult.

8. When one proceeds this way, *lobha, dosa, moha* will be removed in four stages: *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi, Arahant*.

- By the time one gets to the *Arahant* stage, one has eradicated *lobha, dosa, moha*.
- By that time, one has also removed *alobha, adosa, amoha* as well. One will do moral deeds without any expectations for "good births." That is because one would have seen the futility of getting births in those good realms also.

9. Therefore, the removal of ALL SIX ROOT CAUSES leads to *Nibbāna* (*Arahanthood*).

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- However, since an *Arahant* still has a live physical body, previous *kamma vipāka* can result in bring bodily pains like injuries or body pains or sicknesses. But any mental suffering would be gone.
- Then that *Arahant* attains *Parinibbāna* (full *Nibbāna*) when the physical body dies at his death.
- AT that point, one attains full *Nibbāna*, and NO MORE SUFFERING will ever materialize.

10. It is essential to understand that *Nibbāna* IS NOT REACHED due to ANY causes. *Nibbāna* results when all six root causes are REMOVED.

- That is why *Nibbāna* is also called ***asaṅkhata***, unborn, unmade, unconditioned, etc.
- On the other hand, ***saṅkhata* (things in this world)** arise due to those six causes. Words like born, made, conditioned, are associated with *saṅkhata*.

Pāli Word Analysis (*Pada Nirukti*)

11. We can see the difference between *kusala kammā* and *puñña kammā* by looking at Pāli roots of those words. ***Kusala*** comes from "*ku*" + "*sala,*" where "*ku*" refers to "*kunu*" or *kilesa* or evils, and "*sala*" means "to get rid of." "***akusala***" is the opposite of "kusala." ***Kamma*** is an action.

- It is always good to know how Pāli terms originated ("*pada nirukti*").
- Therefore, an ***akusala kammā*** is an action that defiles or contaminates one's mind (one of *dasa akusala*). Any ***kusala kammā*** involves an activity that leads to the removal of evils or dasa *akusala* from one's mind; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

12. The word "***puñña***" is related to joy. The Sinhala word "*pina*" or "*pin*" is associated with "*pinaveema*" or "making one's heart joyful."

- Therefore, a ***puñña kammā*** is an action that makes one's heart filled with joy. It is usually an action out of *saddha* (faith in the *Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha*). Such activities may not necessarily be *kusala kammā*, **but some *puñña kammā* are *kusala kammā* too.**
- For example, when one offers food to the *bhikkhus* (or even to a hungry person) with joy in heart, that is a *puñña kammā* because one does with pleasure. It will be a *kusala kammā* if one has comprehended *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Ten types of *puñña kammā* are discussed in, "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

What Are *Pāpa Kammā*?

13. We talked about *kusala*/*akusala kammā* and *puñña kammā* but did not discuss the opposite of *puñña kammā*. The opposite of *puñña kammā* is *pāpa kammā*.

- *Pāpa* in Pāli and Sinhala means "evil" or "sinful" actions that are obvious: Killing of a human or routine killing of animals, raping, and *niyata micchā diṭṭhi* are some examples of *pāpa kammā*.
- So, what is the difference between *akusala kammā* and *pāpa kammā*?

14. The simplest way to state the difference is to say that *pāpa kammā* are the worst of *akusala kammā*.

- Usually, *pāpa kammā* lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*. *Ānantara pāpa kammā* are the strongest, and will even break the "*bhava shakthi*" in a human *bhava*. That will lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* when the current physical body dies (even if more *kammic* energy remains in the current human *bhava*).
- Mild *akusala kammā* can only bring *pavutti vipāka*, i.e., those can bring difficulties and sufferings during even a "good *bhava*" like a human *bhava*.

Some Examples of *Puñña Kammā*

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15. Engaging in any moral deed is a *puñña kamma*. Offering flowers and chanting *pirith* (*paritta*) or paying homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha is also *puñña kammā*.

- **The key reason is that one's mind becomes temporarily free of *pañcanīvaraṇa*** (*kāmacchanda, vyāpāda, thina middha, uddhacca kukkucca,* and *vicikicchā*) when doing a *puñña kammā*. All those actions make one's mind joyful and receptive to profound Dhamma. It is good to do them before sitting down to listen to a *desanā*.

16. The following question came up in the discussion forum: " Does circumambulation (walking around) a *stupa* or Buddhist relic brings merits to oneself? Does it matter whether one goes clockwise or counter-clockwise?."

- Circumambulation around a *stupa* or Buddhist relic (usually while reciting a *gātha* or *Tisarana Vandanā*) could be a *puñña kamma*. It belongs to the same category as offering flowers and chanting *pirith* (*paritta*).
- Whether there is an effect for clockwise or counterclockwise, I am not sure. If there is, it must be a small effect.
- The short answer is that it can benefit if done with the correct mindset. However, it cannot remove evils (i.e., it is not a *kusala kammā*) by itself. It could be a *puñña kammā* that can set up conditions that will enable oneself to do *kusala kammā*.

17. *Puñña kammā* are NECESSARY to setting up CONDITIONS suitable to cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path that leads to *Nibbāna* (stopping the rebirth process).

- One may also think that doing *puñña kammā* is part of *sīlabbata parāmāsa*. That is not correct. ***Sīlabbata parāmāsa* means one believes that one can ATTAIN *Nibbāna* by doing *puñña kammā*.**

6.1.4.2 Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)

Revised October 6, 2016; November 24, 2017; March 9, 2020; December 12, 2020

Dasa Akusala Connected to *Saṅkhāra*

1. One can do immoral acts with the body, speech, and mind (leading to *kāya, vacī,* and *mano saṅkhāra*); see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." Actually, *mano saṅkhāra* arise first automatically, according to one's gati and the specific *ārammaṇa*. Then some of them lead to *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*. and that is when they become *abhisaṅkhāra* (strong *kamma*.) Thus the way to reduce all bad *saṅkhāra* is to get control over bad *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*. See, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

As we know "Paṭicca Samuppāda" processes leading to suffering start with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra.*" This means we do *dasa akusala* because we generate *saṅkhāra* due to *avijjā* (not fully comprehend the Four Noble Truths.)

These are ten immoral acts (*dasa akusala*). They are divided into three categories, as follows:

Three *mano saṅkhāra* (immoral acts done with the mind):

1. *Abhijjā* [*Abhijjhā*] (covetousness; greed for other's belongings)

2. *Vyāpāda* (ill-will, hatred)

3. *Micchā Diṭṭhi* (wrong views)

Four *vacī saṅkhāra* (immoral acts done with speech):

4. *Musāvāda* (Lying)

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5. *Pisuṇāvācā* (slandering)

6. *Parusāvācā [Pharusāvācā]* (harsh speech)

7. *Sampappalāpa* (frivolous talk)

Three *kāya saṅkhāra* (immoral acts done with the body):

8. *Pāṇātipātā* (killing)

9. *Adinnādāna* (taking what is not given)

10. *Kāmesu micchācāra* (not just sexual misconduct, but also excessive of sense pleasures)

Dasa Akusala Expand to Forty

2. In Buddha Dhamma (i.e., in nature) it is always one's intention that matters. **Based on that, each of those *dasa akusala* expands to 40.** For example, it is not only stealing by oneself that matters. Also, getting someone else to steal, helping another's act of stealing, and praising such action by another are included.

- In another example, regarding *micchā diṭṭhi*, the following also count. Propagating *micchā diṭṭhi* to others, encouraging another to cultivate *micchā diṭṭhi* (say, for instance, that the rebirth process is not valid,) or praising such practices.
- That is how ten *dasa akusala* expand to forty.
- There are ten *suttā* in the *Kammapathavagga* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that lists those "four divisions" for each of the *dasa akusala*, AN 4.264 through AN 4.273. English translations of those start with: "WebLink: suttacentral: 264. Killing Living Creatures." You can click the "next" arrow at the bottom of the webpage to get to all ten *suttā*.
- As one starts avoiding more and more of these forty actions, one will start feeling the early stages of *Nibbāna* or "*nivana*," i..e, cooling down of the mind. The constant stress, excited-ness of the mind will gradually ease. Also see, "Root of All Suffering – Ten Immoral Actions."

A *Sotāpanna* Is Free of Only *Micchā Diṭṭhi*

3. First of all, it is essential to realize that only an *Arahant* is totally free from doing any of these. Even a *Sotāpanna* may commit some of these at least once-in-a-while. There are six things that a *Sotāpanna* is incapable of: killing mother or father, killing an *Arahant*, injuring a Buddha, knowingly causing a schism in *Saṅgha*, and having ***micchā diṭṭhi*** or **wrong views**.

- Thus it is inevitable that anyone below the *Sotāpanna* stage could break *dasa akusala*. Even a *Sotāpanna* has **completely removed only *micchā diṭṭhi***. A *Sotāpanna* would not WILLINGLY commit any of the *dasa akusala*, but some COULD happen, except for those six mentioned above; see, "Key to Sotāpanna Stage – Ditthi and Vicikicchā."
- What is essential is to realize that one needs to AVOID them if at all possible. It becomes easier as one learns Dhamma and see the benefits of avoiding them.
- However, a *Sotāpanna* has reduced *lobha* (extreme greed, especially for other's belongings) and *dosa* (hate) to reduced levels of *rāga* (craving for sense pleasures) and *paṭigha* (friction or tendency to get upset or angry); see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Patigha, Avijjā."

Two Categories of Micchā Diṭṭhi

4. The first category is the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong views) discussed in #5 below.

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- The deeper level of *micchā diṭṭhi* is not comprehending the essential characteristics of "this world" of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis."
- Because of the ignorance of the complete world view, one is likely to have the following three main wrong world views. (i) Everything has sprung without a cause (*ahetuka diṭṭhi*). (ii) Good and bad produce no effect (*akiriya diṭṭhi*). (iii) There is no after-life (*natthika diṭṭhi*).
- A common form of *micchā diṭṭhi* is to assume that if one obeys the five precepts, then one will be exempt from birth in the *apāyā*. That belief itself can lead to the birth in the *apāyā*; see, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them."

5. If someone has these world views, one is likely to carry out immoral acts. They will have *kamma vipāka* leading to rebirth in the *apāyā* (the lowest four realms) in the future, i.e., in future rebirths. **There are ten such specific wrong views or *micchā diṭṭhi* (sometimes just called *diṭṭhi*):**

- (1) No *kammic* benefits in giving, (2) no need to pay back debts (for what others have done for you), (3) no benefits of respecting Noble Ones and also *yogis* with *abhiññā* powers, (4) *kamma* do not have *vipāka*, no *kammic* benefits of taking care of (5) mother and (6) father, (7) this world does not exist ("*natthi ayaṃ loko*"), (8) *Paralowa* does not exist ("*natthi paro loko*") , (9) there are no *opapātika* birth (instant full-formed birth), (10) there are no Noble Ones and *yogis* exist who can see past lives. [WebLink: suttacentral: AN 3.117. Vipattisampadāsutta - Distress and Attainment Sutta '(1) *natthi dinnaṃ,* (2) *natthi yiṭṭhaṃ,* (3) *natthi hutaṃ,* (4) *natthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ, kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko,* (7) *natthi ayaṃ loko,* (8) *natthi paro loko,* (5) *natthi mātā,* (6) *natthi pitā,* (9) *natthi sattā opapātikā,* (10) *natthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaṃ parañca lokaṃ sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī*']
- For explanations on (7)-(10), see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."
- In particular, *para loka* is where a human lives in between consecutive human births as a *gandhabba*; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."

Niyata Micchā Diṭṭhi

6. What is *akusala* is to hold "*niyata micchā diṭṭhi*" or "established wrong views," i.e., one is not even prepared to consider, say, that there is a rebirth process. Thus if one has **unwavering** doubts about any one of the ten categories in the above paragraph, then one has **established** wrong views (*niyata micchā diṭṭhi*). Such wrong views can then lead to actions with *kamma vipāka* responsible for births in the *apāyā*.

- The critical point is that when one has established wrong views, one looks at the world differently without realizing that there are consequences for one's actions. One would not be aware of that without a Buddha explaining the true nature of the world. That includes the validity of the rebirth process, life in other realms, an uncountable number of planetary systems like the Earth, etc.
- As scientists are finding out, there are many things in nature that we do not experience/understand. For example, scientists can only account for 4% of the mass of the universe; they cannot account for the rest (Google "dark matter" or "dark energy"). Thus one needs to keep an open mind and learn more Dhamma to see whether all these make sense.

7. **The only *akusala* completely removed by a *Sotāpanna* is the *micchā diṭṭhi*;** see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."

- As explained there, an unimaginably huge amount of defilement is removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage, just via getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi*, mainly through the comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

Only a Buddha Knows All About This World

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8. A lot of you may be thinking "How do I know all this is true? Is there any evidence for the existence of *rūpa/arūpa lokā*, *apāyā* (hell), or spontaneous birth?. "

- There are a lot of things we do not know about "this world." We cannot rely on just science to verify/confirm these. Only within the last 100 years or so that science has accepted that our world is bigger than a few galaxies (now science has confirmed that there are billions of galaxies). Whereas the Buddha stated that *cakkavāla* (star systems or planetary systems) come into existence all the time, science has confirmed that only within the past 100 years; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction."
- Furthermore, the newest findings (yet unconfirmed) in string theory indicate that we live in an 11-dimension world, not the 4-dimension world that we experience. For a look at different dimensions, see, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions." Thus, more of Buddha's teachings will be confirmed with time.

9. It is easy to see that all immoral deeds start as *mano saṅkhāra* (bad thoughts) in the mind. Any of the *vacī saṅkhāra* (speech) or *kāya saṅkhāra* (bodily actions) are done with greed, hate, or not knowing the true nature of the world (ignorance). In particular, the basis for moral behavior comes out of the correct world view. Let us examine this below:

- The fact that there is no discernible beginning to conscious-life (see, "Saṃsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory") means all of us have been going through this rebirth process for an unimaginably long time. Thus we have been born in most of the 31 realms of existence. Not only that, we have been born innumerable times in EACH of those realms (except the realm that is reserved for the *Anāgāmīs*).
- The above fact means each sentient being had been related to any other sentient being at some point in this long *saṃsāra* (or *saŋsāra* rebirth process). **The Buddha said, "it is difficult to find ANY sentient being that was not your father, mother, or a sibling at some point in this long *saṃsāra*."** Infinity is a concept that is hard to grasp; see, "Infinity – How Big Is It?."
- An interesting book that talks about such hard to grasp ideas (in science) involving infinity is, "The Beginning of Infinity: Explanations That Transform the World" by David Deutsch.
- Therefore, not only us humans, but ALL sentient beings, are connected/related to each other. This is why it is wrong to kill any living being, steal from anyone, verbally abuse anyone, etc. **Those are the foundation of morality.** This is WHY it is not good to do any of the ten immoral acts.

The Intention is An Important Factor

1. The Buddha said, "*Cetanāhaṃ bhikkhave kammaṃ vadami*," i.e., "*Bhikkhus*, I say that *kamma* is the intention involved." We always need to look at the intention to pinpoint whether or what kind of *kamma* was committed.

- Let us take an example: if someone shoots a dog that is attacking a child, one's intention here is to save the child. On the other hand, if someone is shooting a dog for "target practice", then there is no excuse. The life of a human is million-fold more precious than that of an animal; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- Sometimes it is not possible to judge the *kammic* consequences just by looking at the particular act. Only the person committing the act will know whether it is a good or bad intention. Thus normally it is not wise to judge other people's actions.
- If it is a *mano saṅkhāra* (bad thoughts), the only person who even knows about that is the one who is committing it.

2. In many cases, it is possible for others to "see" when one is committing *vacī* or *kāya saṅkhāra*. But not always. Disciplinary actions against a child by a parent may appear to be *kāya saṅkhāra* (spanking) or *vacī saṅkhāra* (verbal threats) , but the parent is likely to have good intentions for the child in most cases.

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Also, in many cases, it is not possible for any person to advise another on what to do when conflicting issues are involved. Is it OK to steal some food to feed one's own kids when they are crying in hunger? Is it OK to spank a child when the child is misbehaving? Only the parent can make that decision based on the circumstances.

Also see, "What is Intention in Kamma?." This post has been updated on February 21, 2018, and provides a simple two-step process to evaluate a given situation.

Relative Weights of *Kamma*

1. **One critical problem many people have is that they try hard to avoid actions with relatively small *kammic* consequences, while unknowingly doing things that have stronger *kammic* consequences. Let us take an example: Suppose we have a large tank of water which is losing water due to many holes at the bottom. Some holes are pinholes, some are a little larger, and there are a few holes that are big and losing water fast. Obviously, one would want to plug those large holes first. Then one would fix the medium-size holes. The smallest or the pin holes are the last to be fixed.**

- Relative weights of ten immoral acts are not easy to quantify. However, we can clearly see that *kāya saṅkhāra* have higher "*kammic* potential" compared to *vacī saṅkhāra* if they are directed to the same living being; hurting someone physically is worse than verbal abuse.
- Another example: Say someone has hateful thoughts of a particular person all day long. That could be worse than just saying something to that person and "getting the load off the mind." However, even that is not necessary. The best solution is to develop *mettā* (loving-kindness) towards that person and get rid of those hateful thoughts. We always need to realize that we all are trapped in this constant struggle to find happiness in a world that is not set up to provide lasting happiness; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations."

2. *Kammic* consequences also depend strongly on the "consciousness level" of the living being against whom the immoral act was committed.

- Killing a human will have far stronger consequences compared to killing an animal. This is discussed in the essay, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

3. *Dasa akusala* and relative weights of different *kamma* are discussed in the following *desanā*:

WebLink: Download "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"

- This *desana* is in the post, "Root of All Suffering – Ten Immoral Actions," where you can find the relevant posts mentioned.

Related post: Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism

Next, "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā", ……..

6.1.4.3 Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā

Revised March 24, 2016; September 14, 2017; major revision with title change April 27, 2018

1. Here we discuss the 10 types of *puñña kamma* (doing meritorious deeds). These can be divided into three groups: *dāna, sīla, bhāvanā*.

- Those are essential for progress in one's mundane eightfold path.
- One must cultivate the mundane path and remove the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* before being able to comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa* and start on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

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2. The differences between *kusala/akusala kamma* and *puñña/pāpa kamma* were discussed in a previous post: "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."

- The ten types of *akusala kamma* were discussed in "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)." The ten types of *kusala kamma* are just the avoidance of *akusala kamma*.

3. As discussed in the above two posts, *kusala kamma* (getting rid of *raga*, *dosa*, *moha*) eventually lead to *Nibbāna*. **However, *puñña kamma* (meritorious actions) help set the background to attain *Nibbāna,* and thus are also critically important.**

- One needs to do both. However, the ability do *kusala kamma* is vastly improved when one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- One not only will be born in "good realms" with *puñña kamma*, but also one will be born with good longevity, health, comfort, and wealth (*ayu, vanna, sapa, bala*) to be able to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa* and pursue *Nibbāna* with ease.

These ten meritorious actions (*puñña kamma*) are divided into three groups: *däna* (generosity), *sīla* (moral behavior), and *bhāvanā* (meditation).

Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā

***Dāna* (Generosity) group includes:**

1. *Dāna* (giving)
2. Transfer of merits to others (*pattidāna*)
3. Rejoicing (accepting or participating) in other's merits (*pattanumodana*)

***Sīla* (Morality) group includes:**

1. *Sīla* (morality), i.e., observing 5, 8, or 10 precepts
2. Reverence to elders and holy persons (*apacayana*)
3. Pay homage to religious places, take care of such places, etc (*veyyavacca*)

***Bhāvanā* (meditation) group includes:**

1. Meditation (*bhāvanā*)
2. Listening to Dhamma discourses (*Dhamma savana*)
3. Teaching Dhamma (*Dhamma desanā*)
4. Correcting one's wrong views, especially on *kamma* (*diṭṭhijukamma*)

On the last one, see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

6. Therefore, *dāna*, *sīla, bhāvanā* constitute the "base" of a life of a moral person.

- The "*dāna* group" helps one overcome one's greed (*lobha*).
- The "*sīla* group" helps removing hate (*dosa*) from one's mind.
- The "*bhāvanā* group" helps removing ignorance (*moha*) from the mind by learning Dhamma and getting rid of the wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*).

7. Since *Nibbāna* is removing greed, hate, and ignorance from one's mind, it is clear how these ten actions pave the way for *Nibbāna*. As one engages in these activities more and more, the "cooling down" or "*niveema*" can be experienced; see, "How to Taste Nibbāna."

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- In the *sīla* group of activities, one starts by observing the five precepts, i.e., abstaining from killing living beings intentionally, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and getting intoxicated. This last one is normally taken to be intoxication with alcohol or drugs, but it also includes intoxication with money, beauty, power, position, etc.

8. It is always a good idea to keep in mind why these are to be moral actions: Because they help purify one's mind:

- Most people, in order to avoid breaking the five precepts abstain from drinking, but do not hesitate to show off their wealth, beauty, power, etc.; they are "drunk" too.
- Others pay a lot of attention not to lie, but do not hesitate to gossip, slander, or verbally abuse others.
- Also one should realize that a human life has much more weight compared to an animal life; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- Most of all, the tenth one is the most potent one that most people neglect to consider. Having established wrong views (*niyata micchā diṭṭhi*) is a very potent immoral action, and thus one needs to understand this clearly; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

9. This is why learning Dhamma has a prominent place in the *bhāvanā* section. As one learns the deeper concepts of Dhamma gradually, wrong views are gradually removed. It is not enough to just say, "I will not have these views anymore", even though making such a determination is good. The mind needs to see evidence to get rid of the wrong views it has. The feeling of the *nirāmisa sukha* when one starts on the Path will make it easier to remove wrong views; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

The High Value of *Puñña Kamma* Done with Understanding

1. If one performs a wholesome deed with the knowledge of *kamma* and its effects and also of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, then the wholesome roots will be associated with understanding. The volition is accompanied with all three wholesome roots: non-greed, non-hate, non-delusion. So three-root (*tihetuka* or "*ti*" + "*hetu*") wholesome *kamma* is acquired.

- On the other hand, if one performs a wholesome deed without any knowledge of *Kamma* and its effects or the basic unfruitful nature of this world, he is doing it without any understanding. Then the volition will not be accompanied by non-delusion, but only the two roots of non-greed and non-hate. So two-root (*dvihetuka* = "*dvi*"+ "*hetu*") kamma is acquired. These are less meritorious compared to the three-root (*tihetuka*) *kamma*.

2. A detailed discussion can be found at, "A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)." We will discuss these effects in detail in the Abhidhamma section too.

- But it is important to realize that the strength of the *kamma vipāka* for a given meritorious act will vary depending on the level of understanding. For example, while just writing check for charity will have its results, much more stronger results will be gained by someone who spends the same amount of money but involves more with giving by thinking about it before and afterwards, and "getting involved" in the process, for example preparing meals for the hungry etc.

3. To acquire this type of superior *kamma*, one should think of the moral action in advance and feel glad for having the chance to do it. Again after performing the action, one should reflect on it and be full of joy thinking about the good aspects of the deed. Furthermore, one can gain more merits by doing a *puñña anumodana* or *pattidana* (transfer of merits to others, #2 *kusala kamma* above) because this amounts to paying off *sansāric* debts; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

- On the other hand, if one feels lazy or reluctant or jealous or stingy before a moral action such as giving charity, and regrets doing the moral action afterwards, then the moral volition of giving to charity will be surrounded by other unwholesome intentions (*cetana*) and consequently its potentiality will be weakened. The wholesome *kamma* acquired in this case is inferior.

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Thus is the importance of learning Dhamma in order to grasp such details and to realize the full benefits one's meritorious actions. Plus, it is interesting to see how all these details "fit into the big picture"; see, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

Next, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them", …

6.1.4.4 The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them

Revised December 23, 2020

1. The five or eight precepts, of course with different meanings, were there before the Buddha. It is said that on the day the future Buddha, Prince Siddhartta (Siddhārtha in Sanskrit), was born, his mother had observed the eight precepts.

- Ancient kings banned the so-called five immoral acts in order to maintain a peaceful society. These were: killing (of probably other people), stealing, sexual misbehavior, lying, and getting intoxicated.
- The *vedic Brahmins* expanded these to include the killing of animals. They also expanded to eight precepts which enabled them to attain mundane *jhānā*.
- By the way, except those referring to the God, the Ten Commandments in Christianity also identify many of these "immoral acts."

2. Just like he did with many existing terminologies at that time (*kamma*, the four great elements of *paṭhavī, āpo, tejo, vāyo,* etc.), the Buddha adopted these precepts, but re-defined what he meant by them. (In fact, those concepts originated with Buddha Kassapa, who lived a long time before Buddha Gotama. The true meanings of many concepts were lost by the time of Buddha Gotama.)

- In Buddha Dhamma, all possible immoral acts are included in the *dasa akusala*; see "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- Therefore, all those are in the five precepts too. When one truly understands Buddha Dhamma, i.e., the nature of this world as embodied in *anicca*, *dukkha*, and *anatta*, one sees that these precepts come out naturally from the nature's laws. At that stage, one's mind automatically rejects all *dasa akusala*, and thus the five precepts are automatically obeyed; one does not even have to think about them.

3. For one embarking on the Path prescribed by the Buddha, the conventional five precepts (killing other beings intentionally, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and intoxication) are a good start.

- Furthermore, one needs to recite the five precepts, understanding that it is not a promise, but one's intends to do the utmost (otherwise, the act will itself be a *musāvāda* or a lie). **This is because anyone other than an *Arahant* is bound to break some of them per their true meanings.**
- But as one proceeds on the Path and experiences the benefits (peace of mind or the early stages of *nirāmisa sukha*), one should try to expand the scope of those five precepts from the conventional meanings. This can be done systematically: when one truly understands the meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, AND that our existence does not end with this life, one begins to have a deeper insight.
- **When that happens, the precepts are not followed as a ritual or a set of rules. Rather, one realizes that there is no other moral way to live.**

4. For example, when one realizes that one has been an animal or worse in previous lives, one stops thinking of animals as "mere things" that exist for our pleasure. Furthermore, understanding the laws of *kamma*, i.e., taking any life has consequences will make one re-think of just wantonly taking another life.

- But some people go to extremes. They start treating animal life on the same level as human life and then freak out when they have to clear a spider web in cleaning their house. Inevitably, we will unintentionally kill many small creatures while walking on the ground or even boiling some water. So, one need to get a sense of the relative weights of *kamma*; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma?."

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- What needs to be avoided first is those "pleasure killings" like fishing, hunting, etc.

5. Stealing is not merely acted like shop lifting, but also includes gains by immoral means. To live a functional society, we have to do transactions with each other. We need to make sure we do not take advantage of another person and becoming "morally indebted" to that person.

- *Vinaya* rules ("*vi*" + "*naya*" where "*naya*" is debt and *Vinaya* is becoming free debts) in Buddha Dhamma setup for the monks show how to live their lives by properly paying back for the sustenance they get from the laypeople.
- When the Buddha said to test any act or concept with "*Dhamma* and *Vinaya*," he meant that the concept needs to be consistent with Paṭicca Samuppāda (cause and effect) and also consistent with "*rāga vinaya, dosa vinaya*, and *moha vinaya*," i.e., not getting into debt via greed, hate, and ignorance.
- If we gain from someone by unjust means, we will have to pay that debt if not in this life, but in future lives; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

6. The third precept, "*kāmesu micchācārā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmī*," is commonly translated as "avoiding sexual misconduct." But "*kāma*" is not just sexual activity. "*Kāma*" includes all sense pleasures that are available in the *kāma loka*. And "*micchācārā*" (pronounced "michchāchārā") means "misbehavior" in the sense of "going to extremes." Thus the real meaning is not to over-indulge in sense pleasures.

- In fact, excessive drinking, gambling, etc., are included in this precept.
- We have to use all our five physical senses to live in this world. But we need to have restraints to not abuse them to the extent that we will hurt ourselves or others. Even a simple example of over-eating leads to health problems, which will hurt not only oneself but the whole family.
- **The first three precepts include all three *akusala kamma* done with the body.**

7. The fourth precept on *musāvāda* (lying) in Buddha Dhamma includes all abuses done in my speech, including harsh speech, slandering, and gossip which WILL harm oneself and others.

- **Thus the fourth precept encompasses all four *akusala kamma* done with speech.**

8. The fifth is a big one that is almost always misinterpreted. If it included just drinking, it would have been, "*surāmeraya veramaṇī*……." That was probably the original verse.

But in Buddha Dhamma it is, "*surāmeraya majjapamā daṭṭhānā veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ*……."

In the word, "*surā*", "*rā*" means "*rāga*" or excess greed. Thus "*surā*" means with excess greed; "*meraya*" is delicious. "*Majja*" means intoxication and "*majjapamā*" is getting delayed via intoxication, and "*daṭṭhānā*" means that mindset. Of course, "*veramaṇī sikkhāpadaṃ samādiyāmī*" means "I decide to avoid doing such things willingly."

Thus it should be interpreted as, "avoid the mindset of getting intoxicated by alcohol, drugs, money, power, etc.," anything that can make you "fall behind":

- All this happens in one's mind. **One gets intoxicated with greedy thoughts, and when one does not get one's way with them, one generates hate.** And all this happens because one does not understand the true nature of this world, i.e., one has *micchā diṭṭhi* or wrong views.
- To put it another way, one should be careful not to get intoxicated by the five sense inputs or "*kāma assāda*"; see, "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex."
- One believes that either, (i) one's actions will not have future consequences, and (ii) therefore, one needs to think about how to get what one wants (because there are so many tempting things out there to be had!); one does not realize all that is temporary.

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- **Thus in order to really obey the fifth precept, one needs to start working on one's mind. All three *akusala kamma* done with the mind are included in this fifth precept; see,** "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

9. The following scenario is given as an example to illustrate the futility of blindly following precepts. Many people live their entire lives without intentionally killing, stealing, engaging in sexual misconduct, lying, or getting intoxicated. But their minds are burdened with greed, hate, or ignorance. Depending on the state of their minds, they may not even get a human birth next time around.

- There is this story about an older woman who followed those conventional five precepts to the letter. Even though she was poor, she was greedy and kept all her money under her pillow. She was reborn as a louse (plural lice) on that pillow, because of her attachment to that money in the pillow.
- And if keeping those precepts will take one to *Nibbāna*, then a cow or a horse living in isolation will be certain to attain *Nibbāna*. They do not kill, steal, lie, or get intoxicated, and if their owners do not have any other animal of that kind, then there is no chance of sexually misbehaving either.
- It is all about purifying one's mind. A pure mind gains wisdom, and will not allow any harmful action by speech or by deed. Such a mind is not burdened, but has "cooled down"; that is the happiness of *Nibbāna*.

10. **The path to Nibbāna starts with the mundane Eightfold Path with *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā* in that order.** Then, one will comprehend the Noble Truths/*Tilakkhana*/ *Paṭicca Samuppāda* and become a *Sotapanna Anugāmi*. That is when one starts on the *lokottara* or Noble Eightfold Path with *lokottara Sammā Diṭṭhi*. **Now the sequence shifts to *paññā*, *sīla*, *samādhi* with wisdom (*paññā*) in front.** See, "Sīla, Samādhi, Pannā to Pannā, Sīla, Samādhi."

- A key step in completing the mundane Eightfold Path is to get rid of the wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*), as explained in that post. Another is to understand that *kamma* is not deterministic.
- A brahmin by the name of Nigaṇṭanāṭaputta in the days of the Buddha was preaching that everything happens due to *kamma*. He advised his followers to refrain from breaking the five precepts because, INEVITABLY such deeds lead to the birth in the *apāyā*. He also preached that if someone did not break even a single precept, that person would NOT be born in the *apāyā* in the next birth.
- The Buddha said that both were wrong. We have done both good and bad *kamma* in our previous lives, and the next birth will be determined by the relative strengths of those and what we do in this life. For example, Aṅgulimāla, who killed nearly 1000 people, attained the *Arahantship* in a week. And Buddha gave examples of those who lived a perfectly moral life, but were born in the *apāyā*, because they had bad *kamma vipāka* from previous lives. For details, see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Kammavibhaṅga Sutta (MN 136)."
- Furthermore, the Buddha said that if someone dies with such misconceptions, that is *micchā diṭṭhi*, and one WILL BE born in the *apāyā* just BECAUSE OF that *micchā diṭṭhi*. It is critically important to figure out this point. I meet many people (even Buddhists) who say, "I have not done anything bad to anyone; therefore, I do not think anything bad will happen to me." That is a *micchā diṭṭhi*. The only way to guarantee that one will be exempt from birth in the *apāyā* is to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.

Next, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?", ...

6.1.4.5 What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?

Revised January 28, 2020

Things Happen Due to Causes and Conditions

1. A key concept in Buddha Dhamma is cause and effect. Nothing happens without a cause or a reason.

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- **But even if root causes are there, we can stop them from bringing their results by blocking the CONDITIONS for them to come to fruition (a seed has the potential to bring about a tree, but for that to happen the seed must be given a fertile soil, water, and sunlight).**
- That is explained with simple terms in, "Working of Kammā – Critical Role of Conditions."
- That is why in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, "*paccayā*" does NOT mean "it will happen"; see, "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?."

Nature's Laws – *Niyāma Dhamma*

2. Nature enforces this cause and effect via five primary unshakable laws (*niyāma dhamma* or sometimes called *dhammatā*.) The correct word is *niyama* (meaning "fixed,") but it is commonly called *niyāma*.

- They are *kamma niyama, citta niyama, utu niyama, bīja* (or *bīja*), and *dhamma niyama*.
- We will discuss these in detail in another post. But the point here is that *kamma* is NOT deterministic, other than for *ānantariya kamma* (killing one's parents or an *Arahant*, injuring a Buddha, etc.) Everything plays out due to a complex process involving all five *niyama dhamma*.

3. First of all, there are actions by individuals that lead to harmful consequences right away. If one jumps from a tall building, one is bound to get hurt or worse. That is a result of ***dhamma niyama*** (law of gravitation is a *dhamma niyama*) which is cause and effect. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is the ultimate *dhamma niyama*. It explains **how and under what conditions** *kamma vipāka* produces results.

- When something appears in this world, it does not stay the same. It change in unexpected ways (*viparināma*) and eventually destroyed. Thus anything in the world (a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)) is subjected to the ***utu niyama***. Whatever results that *kamma vipāka* may bring in, they will also eventually go away.
- ***Bīja*** (or *bīja*) ***niyama*** is not relevant to the workings of the plant seeds, as some books explain. It dictates how *kamma bīja* (seeds) lead to their fruits (*vipāka*). A "*puñña kamma seed*" or a "good seed" will always produce excellent results, and a "*pāpa kamma seed*" or a "bad seed" will generate a bad result. A *Sotāpanna* would have made all those *kamma* seeds, that make it possible to have rebirths in the *apāyā,* to be ineffective. Thus a *Sotāpanna* will NEVER be born in the *apāyā*.
- ***Citta niyama*** involves laws associated with the working of the complex mind, and that can affect *kamma vipāka* in a significant way. For example, by purifying the mind, one can attain the *Sotāpanna* stage and thus make INEFFECTIVE all those *kamma* seeds that could lead to birth in the *apāyā*.
- ***Kamma vipāka*** are the root causes for all that happens in this world, **but their effects can be altered and even stopped** by exploiting the other laws of nature. That is what a Buddha discovers when he attains Enlightenment. All *kamma vipāka* are made ineffective at reaching full *Nibbāna* or the *Arahanthood*.

The main point here is that most bad consequences can be avoided by understanding Dhamma, living a moral life, and being mindful (*yoniso manasikāra*).

We Have Done Many Good and Bad *Kamma* in Our Past Lives

4. **In this beginning-less long journey of rebirths called *saŋsāra* (or *saṃsāra*,) each of us has done an uncountable number of both good and bad things.** When we do a good or an immoral act, the *kammic* energy associated with that act gives rise to a seed, called a *kamma* seed. It is energy (not a material thing) that stays with our minds until it gets a chance to come to fruition. An apple seed will not germinate and grow into an apple tree until the right conditions (soil, water, sunlight, etc.) appear. In the same way, all our *kamma* seeds lie in waiting for the right conditions to appear. If we allow such "conditions," we will have to experience the result of that *kamma* or *kamma vipāka* at that time.

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- Our *kamma* seeds (*kamma bīja*) are subjected to the *bīja niyama* mentioned above. In either case, a seed gives rise to a plant or a *vipāka* **according to the type of seed**. Someone, who did something terrible that only an animal would do, will pay for that may be with a birth in the animal realm; someone who did an act of generosity may get rewarded accordingly.

Conditions Must be Right to Bring *Vipāka* of Past *Kamma*

5. We can keep an apple seed (for example) in a dry, cool place for a long time. Some seeds have been kept intact for thousands of years. It will not germinate until we plant it in fertile soil and provide water and sunlight. In the same way, a *kamma* seed (good or bad) can lay dormant for a long time until conditions becomes right for it to germinate. We all have accumulated numerous *kamma* seeds over these repeated rebirths. What we need to do is to provide conditions for the good *kamma* seeds to germinate and NOT allow conditions for bad ones to germinate.

- Thus *kamma* is the act, AND *kamma vipāka* is the result of that act. **But since the right conditions need to appear for a kamma seed to "germinate," the *vipāka* may not come until later in the same life, next life, or even many lives later.**
- That is why it is not easy for people to see that their actions will have consequences. *Kamma niyama* is not the only law that is in effect; there are four more as mentioned above, and they all work together. It is a very intricate network. In particular, because there is a *citta niyama* (principle of thoughts), we also have some control over these *kamma vipāka*. **We cannot change any of the five *niyama*, but we can OVERCOME a cause (a power) due to a *niyama* by building an opposing force.**

Being Aware of the Conditions Is Key

6. We can take many steps to suppress the bad *kamma vipāka* coming to fruition and ALSO to get good *kamma vipāka* to come to fruition. **As emphasized above, we all have an unlimited number of both good and bad *kamma vipāka* waiting to bear fruit.** Rather than giving in to bad *vipāka* and saying "what to do, this is my *kamma*," we can find ways to suppress those. And rather than saying "I must not have done any good *kamma*, and this is my fate," we can probe and locate those hidden good *kamma* seeds and cultivate them. Let us consider some examples:

- If one does not take care of one's physical body, it may become fertile ground for many bad *kamma vipāka* to come to fruition. If we eat healthily and exercise, the body will not be vulnerable to ailments or injuries.
- The brain needs good food and exercise too. A healthy body and mind exercises such as solving problems, even word puzzles, keep the brain in good condition. But the best is meditation, and *vipassanā* or insight meditation is better than Samatha meditation. For example, even if one's family has a history of Alzheimer's disease, one can possibly avoid getting by keeping the brain active and healthy.

Outcome Can be Changed – Environment And Associations Are Critical

7. One may be born to poverty because of a past *kamma vipāka* that came to fruition at the death of the previous life. But this is NOT a reason to give up. Any person has an unlimited number of good *kamma vipāka* waiting to come to fruition. Indeed, birth to a poor family did not set up optimum conditions. But one has control over the *citta niyama* mentioned at the beginning (see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)"). One could use one's mind to overcome this condition and cultivate the background to achieve success.

- That is why the environment is critical to anyone. One needs to surround oneself with optimistic, moral people, who will help cultivate the good qualities that lie dormant. At the same time, one needs to avoid "bad company" that could pull one in the wrong directions. It is not that any person is intrinsically good or bad. Rather, at any given phase of life or even through most of this life, some people may be displaying

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their "bad habits" that have come to the forefront. One will be affected negatively by associating such people.

- The environment is CRITICAL for young children starting from the time of conception. Even the fetus in the womb is affected by the environment. For example a loving mother and father showing affection to each other positively affects the baby. When the mother is being abused by the father it will be a negative effect.
- It is critical to have a nurturing environment within the family, and also in the school. A significant part of an individual's character is molded by the first 10-15 years of life. That is the time they can acquire habits and once established, it will take a lot of effort to change them. The parents must instill good habits: moral behavior, eating well, exercise, associate with good friends, avoid bad friends, study well, etc.

"Wearing Out" Some *Kamma* Seeds

8. **It is also possible to remove many of one's bad *kamma* seeds.**

- When we acquire a "bad *kamma* seed," we get indebted to another being. In the same way that one can be debt-free by paying off existing loans, one can "payback" old debts accumulated in the cycle of rebirths. That can be done by "transferring merits" when one does good deeds, and also by doing the *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā*. See, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana)- How Does that Happen?" and "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."

Laws of *Kamma* Are Complex

9. The world is VERY complicated. Because all those five *niyama* are acting simultaneously to enforce the "cause and effect," it is not possible to sort through each and every event in isolation and say, "this is THE reason for this particular event." There could be a dominant cause in some cases, but most times, it is a combination of several, and most those are from the past.

- The main thing we have remember is that each action by us will have consequences (law of *kamma*). There is nowhere to hide. Even if we can fool the law enforcement sometimes, the nature cannot be fooled.
- We need to make a concerted effort to get rid of bad habits and to acquire and cultivate good habits. A habit can snowball into a *saŋsāric* habit, good or bad (related to law of citta and law of *bīja*). The environment is an essential factor in getting rid of bad habits and acquiring/cultivating good habits.
- We need to be constantly aware that there are zillions of *kamma bīja* (good and bad) waiting to be germinated. We should not provide conditions for "bad seeds" to grow. Thus we should avoid bad company, bad environment, etc. We must also provide conditions for "good seeds" to germinate (i.e., study well, provide the necessary conditions to get a promotion or a job, and learn and practice Dhamma). I am sure you can apply these principles to your own life; each one is different.
- Then some things happen due to random events: floods, hurricanes, earthquakes, etc. These come under *utu niyama* or circumstances that occur due to physical causes in the environment. When those happen, thousands of apparently "unconnected" people may be affected the same way. Again, this is partly due to the incredible number of *kamma* we have accumulated in this beginning-less rebirth process. There is ALWAYS something from the deep past that is going to MATCH any circumstance.

Nibbāna Attained via Removing *Upādāna* (and *Taṇhā*)

10. Finally, there is a misconception out there that one needs to get rid of all *kamma* (more accurately *kamma vipāka*) to attain *Nibbāna*. That is entirely false. One reaches *Nibbāna* via removing deep-seated cravings, called *āsavā*; see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas." More details at "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna."

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- Another way to say the same thing is to say one needs to remove *lobha*, *dosa*, and *moha* or the defilements in mind.
- However, one could remove most of one's bad *kamma vipāka* via cultivating *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā*; see, #5 above.

Some of the main concepts are discussed further in the "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka," "Habits and Goals," "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas," "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas," and other related posts.

Next, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)", …… \

6.1.4.6 How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma

Revised February 21, 2018

In the previous essay, "Ten Immoral Acts (Dasa Akusala)," we looked at the ten different types of acts that will have bad *kammic* consequences.

1. First of all, the most potent of all is *micchā diṭṭhi*. **The only *akusala* completely removed by a *Sotāpanna* is the *micchā diṭṭhi* and in doing that he/she removes an unimaginably huge amount of defilements;** see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."

- One critical problem many people have is that they try hard to avoid actions with relatively small *kammic* consequences, while unknowingly doing things that have stronger *kammic* consequences. Let us take an example: Suppose we have a large tank of water which is losing water due to many holes at the bottom. Some holes are pin holes, some are a little larger, and there are a few holes that are big and losing water fast. Obviously, one would want to plug those large holes first. Then one would fix the medium-size holes and those pin holes are the last to be fixed.

2. We can see that many *akusala* are with "acts" that are directed towards other beings, whether it is done bodily, verbally, or just by thought. In principle, a being could be in any one of the 31 realms (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma").

3. The severity of the consequence of any misdeed (ie., *kamma vipāka*) involving another living being depends strongly on the "level of existence" of the living being from lowest level of realm 1 (*niraya*) to the highest at the 31st realm (fourth arūpa loka); Any "*Ariya*" or a Noble Person (who has attained one of the four stages of *Nibbāna*), are at the highest levels regardless of the realm. A hurtful word against an *Ariya* carries thousand-fold bad *kamma vipāka* compared to killing thousand ants.

- See, "What is Intention in Kamma?." This post has been updated on February 21, 2018, and provides a simple two-step process to evaluate a given situation.

4. It is difficult to identify whether a given human is just an immoral human or an *Arahant* by just looking at that person. Human realm is unique in many ways.

Thus, we can try to sort out the *kammic* consequences of a given immoral act on the "level of consciousness" of the being that act was directed to:

- **Regardless of the realm**, the highest four levels are *Arahant, Anāgāmī, Sakadāgāmī,* and *Sotāpanna*. Humans can attain all four levels.
- Out of the 31 realms we can directly experience only the human and animal realms. Thus, normally we need only to evaluate how our actions affect other humans AND animals.
- Since any animal is inferior to any human, we need to pay special attention to how we interact with other human beings.

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- In particular, it is not possible to judge whether a given human has attained a *Nibbānic* state. Even by directing hurtful words to an *Ariya* (one who has attained at least the *Sotāpanna* stage), one could be acquiring thousand-fold more bad kammic potential compared to doing the same to a normal human.
- In some cases, even the person in question may not know that he/she is a *Sotāpanna*. There may be "*jāti Sotāpannas*," i.e., those who had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage in a previous life and thus born as a *Sotāpanna*, and may not realize it.
- Thus we need to be very careful with dealing with fellow humans in particular.

5. When we say killing is immoral it is implicit that killing is taking the life of any living being. But killing a human has a *kammic* consequence that is much higher compared to killing an animal. Killing a *Sotāpanna* has a even more drastic consequences, *Sakadāgāmī* even higher, *Anāgāmī* even higher, and killing an *Arahant* will have the highest, and is of the strongest kind at par with killing a parent (an *anantariya kamma* that will cause the very next birth in an *apāya*).

6. Similarly other immoral acts will have consequences depending on the "consciousness level" of the living being. It is not a matter of one particular living being is "better" than another.

- Rather it is a matter of how valuable that "level" is, and how difficult it is to attain that "level." One has been born a human because of the merits one has acquired in previous lives; it is extremely difficult to get a human birth as we will discuss in a separate post; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- One becomes a *Sotāpanna* by cultivating moral behavior and by purifying one's mind; thus a life of a *Sotāpanna* is much more valuable compared to a normal human being.

7. Even among humans who have not attained any *Nibbānic* state, there are "different levels of consciousness": One who has more wisdom *(paññā)* is at a higher level than one with less wisdom.

- Here wisdom does not mean book knowledge, but knowledge of Dhamma; understanding of the true nature of "this world", or *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Thus the possibility of that person attaining a *Nibbānic* stage is more likely, compared to one who has less wisdom.

8. Another important thing is not to worry about things that one does not have any control over. Everyday, we kill so many small animals unintentionally: stepping on them while walking, cleaning the yard, cleaning the house, and even while boiling water.

- We need to remember that "*kamma* is intention." We are not boiling water to kill any unseen life forms, rather we boil water to make sure we do not get sick by drinking contaminated water.

9. It is not even possible to live "in this world" without harming other beings unintentionally, even though we may be aware that our acts may lead to the destruction of many life forms.

- Once a *bhikkhu* who had developed *abhiññā* powers was getting ready to drink a glass of water, and with his ability to "see" finer things saw that there were numerous microscopic beings in the water glass. He tried to filter them out, but they were too small. The Buddha then explained to him that it is not possible to live without doing things that are necessary to sustain one's life.
- In another example, suppose one has a wound; if left alone it could lead to one's death. Thus one needs to apply medication to the wound. However, that wound is infested with numerous microscopic living beings, and they will be killed by the medication.
- Walking on the ground (especially grass) kills many insects; but we cannot live our lives without going places. What matters is our INTENTION. When one is walking, there is no intention of killing living beings.

10. What we need to do is to be careful not to do any harm to even the smallest of the creatures with a hateful or greedy mind. It is the intention, or the state of the mind, that counts.

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- There is this story about an old woman who was very careful about not breaking the five precepts. But she was extremely greedy; she was quite stingy, did not give much to charity, and kept all her money under her pillow. Because of that greed, she was born a *peta* (a hungry ghost).
- It is relatively easy to keep the five precepts. What is harder is to purify one's mind of greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts. This is what needs to accomplished in true "*ānāpānasati bhāvanā*"; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."
- Even though we may not be greedy or hateful in this life, we may have acquired such bad *kamma* in previous lives. This is why the Buddha said even if one lives morally in this life that does not guarantee a good rebirth unless one has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*; see, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire."
- Buddha Dhamma is all about the mind. Purifying the mind is the key, not just to follow set rules. Just following precepts will not be enough.

11. Finally, it is important to remember that hate is worse than greed. Excessive hateful actions lead to rebirth in the lowest realm, the *niraya*. Excess greed lead to rebirth mainly as *petas* (hungry ghosts).

- Mixture of hate and greed lead to rebirth in all four lowest realms, the *apāyā*. Even if one does not carry over the hateful or greedy thoughts to speech or bodily actions, they still count especially if one thinks about them most of the time.
- This is why it is important to develop good meditation habits; see, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)." A mind free of hate and greed becomes less agitated and peaceful; then it leads to wisdom (*paññā*).

More details on weights of different *kamma* at: 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage. Also see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

Next, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada)", ..

6.1.4.7 Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma

February 17, 2019; revised March 7, 2020

Introduction

1. Aṅgulimāla had killed 999 people but was able to attain the *Arahanthood* within a few weeks after meeting the Buddha. His life story can help us understand how and why even *vipāka* for such highly immoral deeds can be overcome.

- Even though the laws of *kamma* play an important role in Buddha Dhamma, one can overcome the consequences of such highly immoral actions. That is by comprehending the more fundamental principle of causality: **one can bypass all such *kamma vipāka* (all future suffering) by getting rid of *avijjā* and *taṇhā* (the root causes)**.
- The following two posts also discuss *kamma* and *kamma vipāka*: "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?" and "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

2. I highly-recommend a good account of the life story of Aṅgulimāla here: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Aṅgulimāla – A Murderer's Road to Sainthood."

- Reading that account first will help with the discussion below.

Brief Summary of Angulimāla's Life

3. To summarize the critical points in the story of Aṅgulimāla:

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- He was called Ahimsaka ("Harmless") as a boy and was an excellent student. He was the best in class at the premier learning institute of that day in Takkasila (Taxila). His peers were jealous and tried to convince the teacher that Ahimsaka was plotting to take his job.
- The teacher finally believed those false accusations and came up with a way to get Ahimsaka killed. When Ahumsaka finished his studies and asked how he can pay for his education, the teacher said: "You must bring me a thousand human little fingers of the right hand."
- That is how Ahimsika became a killer and came to be known as "Aṅgulimāla", because he started wearing some of those cut fingers in a garland around his neck.

4. Aṅgulimāla had killed 999 people and was about to kill his mother to get the last finge when the Buddha intervened.

- The quick-witted Aṅgulimāla was able to comprehend a few verses that the Buddha uttered and asked the Buddha to ordain him right there.
- Ven. Aṅgulimāla became an Arahant soon afterwards.
- Later on, the Buddha reminded Ven. Aṅgulimāla that he had now been "born" a *Āriya* (Noble Person), even though he had killed so many people when he was a murderer. This concept of changing "*bhava*" even during a given existence discussed below.

First Observation – Importance of *Gati* and Environment

5. The first thing we can see is that obedient and well-behaved Ahimsika became a murderer because of his teacher's influence. External influences (family, friends, etc.) can be a crucial factor in changing one's *gati* (pronounced "gathi") loosely translated as "character." (Note that Pāli words are written not in "standard English," but with an adopted "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention. See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2")

- This is why parents must always be on the lookout on what kind of friends a child has. Friends can be a considerable influence on a child.
- This is also true for adults. One must get away from those who pull in wrong directions, and make new associations along "good directions."
- *Gati* are discussed in many posts at this site. One can find a list of relevant posts by entering "*gati*" in the "Search" box on top right.

Second Observation – There is no "unchanging self"

6. The second thing we can see is that there is no "**unchanging self**."

- Harmless Ahimsika became a violent murderer in Aṅgulimāla and killed almost 1000 people.
- Then that violent Aṅgulimāla the murderer, became a Noble Person within a short time after meeting the Buddha and within weeks Ven. Aṅgulimāla became an *Arahant* too!

7. In the "bigger picture" of the "three *lokā*" and "31 realms," we saw that the "life-stream of any living being" can change from "good to bad", "bad to good", "good to bad again," etc. an uncountable times in the beginning-less rebirth process.

- We all have been in the highest *brahma* realm and the lowest *apāya* too. But we all have spent most of that time in the suffering-filled *apāyā*.
- The only way get out of this "ceaseless wandering in the rebirth process (*saŋsāra* or *saṃsāra*)" is to become an *Arahant*, as Ven. Aṅgulimāla did.
- The first step is to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage be free of at least the four lowest realms (*apāyā*).

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Third Observation – There is a Causal Link ("Sort of a Self")

8. However, as we discussed in the previous post, it is not possible to say that "**there is no-self**" either.

- Nothing happens without a reason or a cause (at least one, but usually many causes).
- **A human is reborn an animal or a *brahma* due to a reason.** There is a CONNECTION between two adjacent "*bhava*" or existences.
- Ahimsika did not become Aṅgulimāla without causes. One cause was the influence of his peers on the teacher. Then Ahimsaka blindly followed the instructions of the teacher.
- But then all that was reversed due to the influence of the Buddha.

9. That is why it is also incorrect to say, "there is no-self." There is a always a "self" — living at least momentarily — that is responsible for how that "self" evolves in the future.

- But that "changing self" can and will change between "good' and "bad" based on many factors. Key factors are self's deeds and external influences on that "self" at any given time.

Fourth Observation – Two Types of "*Bhava*" or Existence

10. Another critical point is that one could be born in a "temporary *bhava*" or "temporary existence" DURING this life. As we saw, Aṅgulimāla switched "temporary *bhava*" from an innocent boy to a murderer, and back to an *Arahant*!

- For example, a person who drinks habitually is not drunk all the time. He is in a "drunken *bhava*" or "drunken existence" while he is intoxicated. The next day he is sober and would not be in a "drunken *bhava*" until he drinks again.
- In the same way, one is in an "angry *bhava*" when she gets angry. But after the anger subsides, she is not in that "existence" or "*bhava*" anymore.
- Temporary *bhava* (or transient existences) explained via "*Idapaccayātā Paṭicca Samuppāda*" processes (those operate during a given life) . Even though only one type of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is presented in the textbooks today, there are different types.

11. When one habitually gets into such a "temporary *bhava*" repeatedly, then that becomes a cultivated *gati* or habit/character.

- In that case, it could lead to a new "*uppatti bhava*" (or "*bhava* associated with rebirth") too. For example, when one gets angry all the time and then one day kills a another human, that could lead to rebirth in an *apāya*. That is a "more permanent *bhava*" that can last a long time.
- That is the more common *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle, i.e., the "*uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda*."
- The section on "Paṭicca Samuppāda" is a must-read.

Fifth Observation – Going Back and Forth in the Rebirth Process

12. So, there could be some period in the rebirth process where one mostly does "good deeds", cultivates "good *gati*," and thus gets "good *bhava*" and therefore "good births" (*jāti*). We discussed the difference between *bhava* and *jāti* in the post: "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Then, one's *gati* may change to "bad *gati*," especially when one comes under "bad influences and associates." In that case, one may start on a "downward path" and eventually one's *gati* will become harmful to the extent that one will get a "bad *bhava*."
- We can see such examples around us. We all have seen good children becoming drug addicts and then becoming even murderers due to bad associations. The opposite happens too, when a violent person may change those bad *gati* and become a "good citizen" under right influences.

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- That is what we all have been doing (going back and forth between good and bad existences,) in this beginning-less rebirth process.

Sixth Observation – Angulimāla's Realization

13. When Aṅgulimāla was chasing the Buddha and could not get even close to the Buddha. To quote from the account referenced above, Aṅgulimāla stopped and called "Stop, monk! Stop, monk!"

"I have stopped, Aṅgulimāla. You stop, too."

- That got Aṅgulimāla to thinking, and he started asking why the Buddha — while still walking — said that he had stopped. **The Buddha explained that he had stopped his *samsāric* wandering (rebirth process) and had overcome all suffering.**
- That is when Aṅgulimāla gained insight and became Ven. Aṅgulimāla.

14. Therefore, the critical point to understand is that it is NOT ENOUGH just to do "good deeds," even though that is a must.

- One MUST take another step and realize that we have been trapped in this rebirth process filled with (mostly) suffering due to two reasons.
- Let us briefly discuss those two CRITICAL points.

Seventh Observation – The Critical Discovery of the Buddha

15. **First, until a Buddha comes to the world (meaning a human attains the *Buddhahood* by purifying the mind to the greatest extent)**, humans are unaware of the "wider world view" with "three types of *lokā*" and 31 realms.

- Even though one could be occasionally born in "good realms" at or above the human realm, beings are reborn mostly in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*) **due to misdeeds done in seeking sense pleasures.**
- Of course, there is suffering in any realm, but it is less in higher realms.
- Therefore, most of the rebirths lead to much suffering. That **is the essence of the First Noble Truth**.

16. Secondly, until a Buddha comes to the world, it is not known hot to escape from this endless rebirth process filled with suffering.

- There have been, and there will always be teachers who realize that misdeeds lead to unfortunate rebirths and good deeds lead to good rebirths, and teach that to others.
- **But it is only a Buddha that can figure out that doing good deeds is not enough.** One needs to see the *anicca* nature of this world of 31 realms. **That means even if one gets a rebirth in the highest realm with long lifetimes of billions of years, one will end up in despair and eventual death.**
- Then one gets back to the same cycle of rebirths, where one will inevitably do evil deeds (due to cravings or sense temptations) and will be born in the *apāyā*.

Eighth Observation – The Root Cause for Suffering

17. **Therefore, the key is to realize that one needs to REMOVE the tendency to be tempted by sense desires.**

- One needs to "see" that *anicca* nature, i.e., it is a waste of time to seek happiness in this world. That will sooner or later lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* (*dukkha*). Therefore, in the end, one will become helpless (*anatta*), when born in an *apāya*.
- **It is not possible to forcefully suppress cravings under "strong sense temptations." When one sees the "*anicca* nature," cravings are automatically removed (in four stages of *Nibbāna*).**

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- That is the **Second Noble Truth**, the cause of future suffering.

Ninth Observation – The Way to *Nibbāna*

18. Once the "big picture" of the 31 realms — together with how one WILL BE born among them due to one's actions (*kamma*) — is understood, one would have removed the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.

- That is because that "complete picture" requires the rebirth process, laws of *kamma*, etc.

19. Then one can begin to understand the "unfulfilling and dangerous nature of the wider world of 31 realms" or the "*anicca* nature."

- That "*anicca* nature" explains how "*dukkha*" or suffering arises, and one will become helpless (*anatta*) in the rebirth process. **Those are three main characteristics (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) that are called *Tilakkhaṇa*** (and they are inter-related).
- That is when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.

20. **That is why *anicca* has nothing to do with "impermanence," and "*anatta*" has nothing to do with a "self" or a "non-self."**

- That knowledge about *Tilakkhaṇa* or the "true nature of this world" is available only in Buddha Dhamma.
- Until a Buddha comes to this world and DISCOVERS that "bigger picture," no one will be able to see that "bigger picture." Thus humans are unaware of the dangers in remaining in this cycle of rebirths filled with suffering.

Tenth Observation – *Kamma Vipāka* Will be Effective Until Death of an *Arahant*

21. Even though Ven. Aṅgulimāla had attained the *Arahanthood*, he was getting injured by "stone-throwers" regularly. Most of the time, those stones were not directed at him, but he was getting hit accidentally.

- As described in the above essay, "with blood running from his injured head, with his bowl broken, and with his patchwork robe torn, the venerable Aṅgulimāla went to the Blessed One. The Blessed One saw him coming, and he told him: "Bear it, *brāhmanā*, bear it, *brāhmanā*! **You have experienced here and now the ripening of *kamma* whose ripening you might have experienced in hell over many a year, many a century, many a millennium**."
- If Aṅgulimāla died without being saved by the Buddha, he would have suffered in the *apāyā* for an unimaginable time!

22. As we had discussed before, even a Buddha cannot avoid some of *kamma vipāka*. The physical body in this life arose due past *kamma*, and many aspects associated with that body cannot be changed.

- At the death of the physical body, there are no more rebirths anywhere in the 31 realms. Then, there is no way for any *kamma vipāka* to materialize (come to fruition). That is why the physical death of an *Arahant* is called "*Parinibbāna*" or "complete *Nibbāna*."
- There will be absolutely no suffering after the *Parinibbāna*.

23. Therefore, we can see that there are many insights in the accounts of notable personalities in the *Tipiṭaka*. They are all consistent with the core teachings.

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6.1.4.8 The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipāda)

I used to have this post titled, "The Four Factors of Accomplishment." I changed it because those words do not do justice to these four mental qualities. They are called *satara Iddhipāda* in Pāli or Sinhala, meaning factors that are critical to accomplishing any goal, whether mundane or transcendental.

- *Iddhi* is conventionally taken to mean "magical" powers. Those *yogis* who could see things that are far away, hear sounds that are far away, read minds of others, etc., were supposed to have *iddhi* powers. They acquired those powers by harnessing the power of these four factors to KEEP THEIR DEFILEMENTS SUPPRESSED.
- When one works towards attaining *Nibbāna*, one can use the same factors to REMOVE defilements from the mind.
- One could use the same factors to attain mundane goals, such as achieving financial independence, excelling in academics or a sport, improving health, etc.

They are *chanda* (liking, but close to an obsession), *citta* (thoughts), *viriya* (effort), and *vīmaṃsā* (analysis). *Chanda* is NOT greed, it is the determination to attain a goal.

- Any innovator, business person, scientist, architect, in fact anyone who is an expert at his/her occupation, knows these factors are critical, even though they may not have thought about them.

1. One needs to have an liking (more like an obsessed liking) for the project; this is called ***chanda*** which we can translate as liking. It is not greed, but pure in quality and grows to become a life goal.

2. When one has this "obsession", one keeps thinking about it all the time. When one gets up at night to go to the bathroom, one thinks about it; it is the first thing that comes to mind when one wakes up. This is called ***citta***; we will call it thought or contemplation.

3. Thus one makes one's best efforts (***viriya***) to achieve the goal. This is what makes swimmers get up early morning to do laps, a scientist/innovator forgets about his/her meal, an innovator stays awake thinking about how to make improvements to his products, etc.

4. One is always on the lookout for any faults or possible improvements in current efforts. If the concepts involved do not make sense, one is always looking for a better explanation, a better way to make something, etc. This is reasoning/investigating (***vīmaṃsā***).

- These factors are mutually supportive of each other. Because of this, once getting started (slowly), **they can lead to explosive growth**; these factors feed on each other, and the project becomes self-sustaining. This is called exponential growth. Thus it is hard to calculate the time taken to finish the project by linear extrapolation.
- The same is true for someone starting on the Path. Initially, it takes time to absorb the concepts. But IF THE CONCEPTS ARE CORRECT (i.e., no contradictions), then progress is made very quickly. The principle of *paṭicca samuppāda* starts working and one will be attracting resources that will help in ways one would not have even thought about; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."

I know this by experience both as a scientist and now as a follower of the Path. After working for over four years, up until 2013, I had made only slow, steady progress on the Path. But I progressed enough that I kept looking for better explanations, discarding many things on the way. Since the middle of 2013, the growth exploded. That is when, just by the law of attraction (see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)") I came across the pure Dhamma.

- By the way, this is process the Buddha called *bhāvanā* (meditation). One keeps contemplating, clarifying, investigating, etc. it all the time, i.e., "*Asevitaya, bhavithaya, bahuleekathaya,.....*"

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- One can be meditating in all four postures: sitting, standing, walking, and lying down (on a bed). Of course one can concentrate better sitting down in one of the more formal sitting postures.

Deeper Meanings when Cultivating the Noble Eightfold Path

See, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power" for an anlysis based on Abhidhamma.

1. *Chanda* (cha + anda, where "*cha*" is mind and "*anda*" is "*anduma*" or clothes) means wrapping one's mind with appropriate "attire", which here means *sammā vaca, sammā kammanta,* and *sammā ajiva*. This is what fuels the "liking" for *Nibbāna* with increased *nirāmisa sukha*.

- By the way, a different meaning of "*anda*" (blind) is implied when *chanda* is used in "*kāmachanda*" (= "kāma" + "cha" + "anda"), i.e., mind blinded by *kāma* or sense pleasures.

2. *Citta* here means the mindset to attain *Nibbāna*.

3. However, even if one has liking and mindset on attaining *Nibbāna*, one needs to make an effort or *viriya*.

4. Even if one is exerting effort, it needs to be directed in the right direction. Thus one needs *vīmaṃsā* (investigation/reasoning) to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and to get to *sammā diṭṭhi*.

5. "*Iddhi*" means "grow", and "*pada*" means "headed direction." Thus with *iddhipada* one is accelerating in the direction that one sets one's mind. Thus all four factors of *chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṃsā* need to be there.

Next, "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?", …

6.1.4.9 Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?

Original written before October 23, 2015; Revised March 4, 2017; October 8, 2018

I had not given this issue much thought until someone at an online forum pointed out in 2014 that I was using too many Pāli words and it was difficult to understand the meaning of those terms. This is an important point that has two aspects:

- In the *Arana Vibhanga sutta* (MN 130), the Buddha advised *bhikkhus* to explain the Dhamma by providing the MEANINGS and not to emphasize a given language. As long as one comprehends the concept, it does not matter what language is used.
- On the other hand, we need to have a way to transmit the key foundational words for future generations without distorting the meaning of such words. And it is difficult to find suitable words in other languages for keywords like *anicca, anatta*, and *paṭicca samuppāda*.
- I have explained the meaning of any Pāli term I use. But for a first-time reader, this could be a legitimate issue. Please use the "Search" button on the top right to locate relevant posts for any keyword. There is a "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)" too.

1. Buddha Dhamma is the most complex theory in the world; it encompasses all of nature's laws. Even though its basic premises are not hard to grasp, if one needs to dig deeper, one needs to spend some time "learning the basics", or the "fundamental ideas involved."

- Think about it this way: Can one learn algebra without knowing arithmetic?
- The key is to learn the basic ideas well, words like *anicca, anatta, bhava,* etc. It is said that one could understand the Buddha's message about existence just by comprehending *anicca* (which will lead to an understanding of *dukkha* and *anatta*), and that is true.
- But that is not possible if *anicca* is translated into English as just one word: impermanence. The Pāli word *anicca* means much more than just impermanence. So, it is better for the word *anicca* and to learn what is meant by that word.

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- *Viññāṇa* is another word like that. It should not be be translated just as "consciousness"; it is much more complex; see, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

2. There is another aspect too. If one learns the basic concepts in addition/subtraction or even quantum mechanics, it does not matter what language one uses to learn it. The key is to get the IDEA, not just learn the words. One can learn addition/subtraction or quantum mechanics in ANY language, not by memorizing words but by understanding the key concepts.

- When a child learns how to add/subtract, he/she has to learn the basic multiplication table and the procedures on how to use that knowledge in handling big numbers. After that he/she can solve any arbitrary problem involving big numbers.
- In the same way, one needs to get the IDEAS embodied in some key Pāli words because many of those Pāli words CANNOT be directly translated into other languages: They are highly condensed, each word packed with deep meanings.
- In quantum mechanics, the word "quantum" embodies the subject; regardless of the language one uses, one knows what a quantum is. In the same way, one needs to know what "*anicca*" is. There is no other word for it in English.
- **Once one UNDERSTANDS the meaning of a certain key Pāli word, then one may even be able to find a suitable word in any language to keep it in mind. There is no need to memorize Pāli words for the sake of memorizing. It is similar to learning any concept.**
- We just should not change the original Pāli words in the *Tipiṭaka*. That is the "blueprint" that needs to be transmitted intact so that Buddha's original message will be kept intact.

3. Let us first examine the reasons why Pāli is a special language.

- The Buddha delivered his discourses in *Māghadhi* language; a version of that language suitable for memorization (Pāli) was used to SUMMARIZE those *suttā*. For example, *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta* was delivered to the five ascetics overnight. How many pages would it take to write all that down? Yet, it was condensed into a few pages.
- In the old days, *suttā* were orally transmitted generation-to-generation, and that was the other reason to condense it into a special form like a poem that is easy to remember and recite. The origin of the word "Pali" comes from that particular way of organization of the words.

4. Therefore, it may take several words in a different language to express the meaning of some Pāli words like *anicca, anatta, bhava*, etc. *Paṭicca samuppāda* is another whole phrase that is best kept intact and just learn what is meant by that phrase; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"."

- Thus most Pāli words are impossible to be translated word-by-word to other languages. **There is a system to glean the true meanings of the *suttā* as well as the deep subject of *paṭicca samuppāda***; see, "Sutta – Introduction."
- This is the reason that many commentaries were written in the old days to explain the meaning of keywords and phrases; see, "Preservation of Dhamma" for details.
- Unfortunately, most of those original commentaries (*Sinhala Attakathā*) cannot be found today, except for three; see the above post.

5. Most of the problems we have today are due to such "word by word" translation of *suttā* into other languages.

- The most visible and disastrous translations are the translation of the words *anicca* and *anatta* into *Sanskrit* as *anitya* and *anātma*; these words were then ADOPTED in the Sinhala language to express the meaning of *anicca* and *anatta*. Then within the last two hundred or so years, those *Sanskrit* words were directly translated to English and now have become established to mean "impermanence" and "no-self"; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

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- Incorrect translation of just those words have kept the message of the Buddha hidden for over fifteen hundred years. It is not an accident that there have not been that many *Arahants* during that time.
- For the correct meanings of these words, see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations" and the follow-up post.

6. In fact, it is said that one can reach the *Sotāpanna* stage by just comprehending the true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the three characteristics of the world. These three words have embodied in them a very broad message. Whole *suttā* were delivered to describe what was meant by those words! **It is WRONG and DISASTROUS to just translate them as impermanence, suffering, and "no-self."**

- **But if one wishes**, and knows the correct interpretations, one can dig much deeper to unimaginable depths. For example, there is a process involving 9 steps where a given *citta* starts off as a pure (*pabhasvara*) *citta* and gets "contaminated" before getting to the *viññāṇakkhandha* stage within within a billionth of a second!
- Those are discussed in detail, for example, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."
- However, there is no need to go to that depth for most people (and many will not have enough time to do that anyway, but there could be a few who would really enjoy it).
- I just want everyone to appreciate Buddha Dhamma for what it is, and to help remove many misconceptions that are out there today.

7. To summarize, I cannot emphasize enough the importance of UNDERSTANDING the meanings of key Pāli words. It may take some time to truly grasp those meanings. I keep revising those key posts, whenever a better way to express an idea comes to mind or when someone else points out a better way to express it.

- Experience is a key factor in understanding. The word "elephant" may not mean anything to someone who does not understand English. But if it is shown to him what an elephant looks like, then he can associate the word "elephant" with the big animal.
- In the same way, it is important to UNDERSTAND what *anicca* means, by using one's experience: for example, we cannot maintain even our body the way we would like for the LONG TERM, etc. Then you look at others, especially those who are even older than us, or those who died of old age, and realize that it is true. Then you think about anything in this world, and realize that it is true, i.e., we cannot maintain ANYTHING in this world to our satisfaction, and that is *anicca*.
- Also see, "Saññā – What It Really Means."

8. The following is a table with some key Pāli words and links to a few posts that describe what those words mean. More posts probably can be found by using the "Search" button on the top right.

Next, "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism", ..

Word	Links
Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta	Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta
Gathi, Bhava, jāti	Gati, Bhava, and Jāti
Āsava	Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi), The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas), Sansāric Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsava)
Nibbāna	Nibbāna

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Word	Links
Nirāmisa sukha	**Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?**, How to Taste Nibbāna, Nirāmisa Sukha (Happiness Arising from Dissociating from the 31 realms)
Paṭicca Samuppāda	Paticca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda, Paticca Samuppāda – Introduction
San	San
Saṅkhāra	Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka

6.1.5 Buddha Dhamma and Morality

"Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism"

"Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?"

"Do Things Just Happen? – The Hidden Causes"

6.1.5.1 Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism

1. Morality and immorality are both built-in to nature. A human can choose to become moral or immoral. This is because a human has a mind that can grasp right from wrong; on the other hand, an animal does not have a developed mind that can sort out good deeds from the bad most of the time.

2. In Buddha Dhamma, which describes nature's laws, the foundation of the moral code is the set of ten moral actions (*dasa kusala*), which are to avoid the ten immoral actions (*dasa akusala*); see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and the follow-up post.

3. If one does not follow this fundamental moral code, one becomes indebted to other humans and also to the nature (which means all living beings, from which we "see" only a small fraction) in general. In this life as well as in previous lives, we have become indebted to other beings.

- Thus getting out of that debt, as well not to get into new debts, is also a part of the moral code in Buddha Dhamma; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation" for more details.
- This is in the "*vinaya piṭaka*" of the *Tipiṭaka*; it is also described in the *suttā* in the *sutta piṭaka*. The third section of the *Tipiṭaka*, *Abhidhamma*, describes the ten moral/immoral actions in depth.

4. Now let us see how most of our conventional moral code(s), comes from these two foundational aspects of Buddha Dhamma.

- Of the ten immoral actions three are done with body: killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct. The basic difference with "conventional code" is that killing of animals is not considered immoral in many societies.
- There are four immoral actions done with speech: lying, slandering, harsh speech, and frivolous talk, of which the latter is not taken seriously as immoral in most cases; but one can experience the benefits of avoiding it for oneself.
- Those seven immoral actions and speech ARISE due to **the three kinds of immoral thoughts: greed for other's belongings, ill will or hatred, and established wrong views (*lobha, dosa, moha*).** In a way the last one is the root cause for all other nine, because one would not violate any of them if one

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knew the true nature of the "wider world" (of 31 realms of existence and the rebirth process therein): that it is unfruitful to engage in any of those nine immoral actions (called "*avijjā*" or ignorance).

5. Then there is the other aspects of morality that comes from abstaining from getting into new debt and paying off old debts (from the *vinaya*).

- As one can easily see, giving (*dana*) in general is an excellent way of "paying off debt." Since we do not know who we have becomes indebted to in this long cycle of rebirths, giving can be to anyone, including animals. For animals, the best giving is of course abstain from killing; not to take their lives. Even though they cannot think like us, they do have feelings.
- This point of "being debt free" incorporate many of our "conventional moral actions": helping out others, being considerate to others, etc.
- A big part of this is also making sure to fulfil one's responsibilities. All our associations have, at the root, "long term debts" in play even though we do not realize it. The biggest debts are those to our families and especially to children (and parents in return).
- We constantly benefit from the actions of innumerable others living in this complex society; we depend on each other for survival. Our food, energy needs, infrastructure needs, are hard to sort out. The best way to pay off such debts is to do "one's own part", honestly doing one's own job and being a "good citizen."

6. But the most important thing is to understand the true nature of this "wider world." When one has that understanding it will become automatic to follow the moral code. One does not have to make an effort, because one's mind clearly sees what is right and what is wrong. There are then such meritorious actions (*puñña kriya*), which cultivate the "moral code behavior" and also purifies the mind; see, "Punna Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

- The goal of this website is to clarify how people engage in immoral actions because their inability to REALLY understand the true nature of this "wider world" (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) and thus to help get rid of such wrong views.
- If one understood the "long term consequences" (and unfruitfulness) of acting with extreme greed and hate, then one becomes automatically moral.

7. Finally, morality is not a one street. Unfortunately, the nature has both morality and immorality built-in. Even though we think, "how one can do a highly immoral act like killing another human and have a peace of mind?", there are some who do ENJOY such acts. People like Hitler and Pol pot, as well as serial killers, are good examples. They PLAN and carry out such vicious deeds with pleasure.

- Thus the nature, at least on the surface (because the consequences are hidden and time-delayed), is neutral on the matter of morality and immorality. One can go the moral route or the immoral route. Humans have the ability to sort out which route is the correct one. However, it is not easy for children to figure that out. This is why the guidance of the parents and teachers is CRITICAL to point a child in the right direction.

Related Post: What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?

Next, "What does Buddha Dhamma say About Birth Control?", ……

6.1.5.2 Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?

Published before October 23, 2015; revised October 19, 2016; February 16, 2018

Note added **June 2, 2016:** I decided to revise this post because I received comments from a few people who thought it could encourage people to eat meat. My intention was not that, but merely to point out that there are much worse things people ordinarily do even without thinking twice. It is best to avoid eating meat out of compassion for animals.

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1. The Buddha spent a lot of his time dispelling "*bamunu matha*" or "superficial concepts about morality" adhered to by the *vedic brahmins* of that day.

- It is unfortunate to see that many current "Buddhists" are practicing the same "*bamunu matha*." We have gone a full circle and are back to status that the Buddha tried very hard to change.
- The reason is that we humans have the tendency to judge everything by how we perceive them with our five physical senses, on outward appearances. There is more to nature than what we see (*ditta*), hear (*suta*), taste (*rasa*) and smell (*muta*), and perceive (*vinnata*). The whole point of the appearance of a Buddha in this world is to show us that the truth is much deeper, and we need to "see" with *paññā* (wisdom). This will become clear as one learns Dhamma.
- Thus the Buddha advised us to go beyond that and to "see the reality" by always paying attention to his "*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*….", or ""dhamma that has never been heard before…." Therefore, let us analyze this matter using his "cause and effect" doctrine, and not the absolute, fatalistic doctrine of *kamma;* see, "What is Kamma? Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- Thus, sometimes, the outward appearance of morality could be nothing but *micchā diṭṭhi.* Some people try to attain *Nibbāna* by following rituals, and this is actually one *micchā diṭṭhi* one needs to get rid of (*silabbata paramasa*) before attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Misconception of categorizing "eating meat" as an *akusala kamma* is a *micchā diṭṭhi* too. Since there is ample evidence in the *Tipiṭaka* that the Buddha himself accepted meat prepared under certain conditions (see #9 below), are these people saying that the Buddha himself committed an *akusala kamma*?

2. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Āmagandha Sutta (Sutta Nipata 2.2)" , the Buddha explained to a *brahmin* why engaging in *dasa akusala*, and NOT eating "properly prepared" meat is a *duccarita* (immoral deed). If one kills an animal to get the meat, then it is not "properly prepared."

Pāli verse:

"Pāṇātipāto vadhachedabandhanaṃ,
Theyyaṃ musāvādo nikativañcanāni ca;
Ajjhenakuttaṃ paradārasevanā,
Esāmagandho na hi maṃsabhojanaṃ.

Here is one verse from the WebLink: suttacentral: English translation:

"Taking life, torture, mutilation too,
binding, stealing, telling lies, and fraud;
deceit, adultery, and studying crooked views:
this is carrion-stench, not the eating of meat."

3. Devadatta, who tried to kill the Buddha and thereby to "become a Buddha", first tried to split the *Buddha Sāsana* by proposing "five strict conditions for the *bhikkhus* to obey." His intent was to show that he was "more moral" than the Buddha.

- Devadatta demanded that the Buddha accede to the following five rules for the monks: they should dwell all their lives in the forest, live entirely on alms obtained by begging, wear only robes made of discarded rags, dwell at the foot of a tree, and **abstain from eating meat.**
- The Buddha replied that Buddha Dhamma does not advocate a "path of rituals" (*vatha*). Instead one attains *Nibbāna* by cleansing one's mind and moral behavior follows automatically. This is what is mean by, "*sanvarattena silan*," or "when one sees the futility of '*san*' via comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, moral behavior or '*sīla*' is realized automatically"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."
- On the other hand, there are people who are genuinely repulsed by the thoughts of animals living under harsh conditions and being killed in animal farms and have voluntarily given up meat eating, and that is

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good. In fact, as one gains *paññā* (wisdom), one's craving for many sensually pleasurable things, not just meat, automatically diminishes.

- The craving for excess sense pleasures diminish automatically when one starts feeling the *nirāmisa sukha* and realizes that that is much more calming and long lasting to the mind than any sense pleasure that is brief; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- But the point is that *paññā* (wisdom) comes through understanding the true nature, and not being persuaded via untruths.

4. In the *Jivaka sutta*, the Buddha states that *bhikkhus* can accept meat, " when it is not seen or heard or suspected that an animal has been **purposely slaughtered for that offering**." I also found out recently that the custom those days was to use "*pavatta mānsa*" for *bhikkhus* which means the meat was from animals killed by other animals in the forest (lions and tigers normally eat only parts of an animal and leave the rest which people then recover for food).

- However, the Buddha prohibited *bhikkhus* from eating the flesh of human, elephant, horse, dog, cat, lion, tiger, leopard, bear, hyenas. This was done for various reasons and the chief among them is that they are not suitable for human consumption.
- Just like some vegetations are toxic, some meats can have harmful effects. Other than that, meat of a dead animal is no different from corn or wheat; they are all made out of *satara mahā bhūta*: *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo*.
- Once the mind leaves the physical body, the body becomes inert like a log. **What is immoral is to end the life of a living being willfully or to aid in such acts**; once that deed is done, what is left is no different than a log of wood.
- However, this is not to say that the Buddha advocated eating meat. It is actually better for the body to eat less meat and more vegetables and fruits. In general, we eat much more food than necessary, and that leads to many health problems starting with obesity.

5. The key point is that EATING MEAT or ANYTHING ELSE **if done with greed**, then that is an *akusala kamma* done with the mind: *abhijjā [abhijjhā]* or strong greed.

6. Then there are people who say, "if we all eat meat, that encourages other people to operate animal farms and kill animals; therefore, we should not eat meat." For those who are bothered by such thoughts, it is better not to eat meat for the peace of mind. I actually have cut down a lot just out of compassion. But we also need to examine the REASONS for some acts to be categorized as *akusala kamma*.

- Don't farmers use pesticides to kill uncountable number of living beings when they cultivate rice, wheat, vegetables, for our consumption? With the above logic, aren't we encouraging farmers to kill all those insects by eating basically any food that we buy at the supermarket?
- These are the true "*musavāda*" ("*musa*" means "incorrect" and "*vāda*" means "debate"), i.e., trying to win an argument by using false premises. They appear to make sense on the surface, but when you examine carefully, they have no substance.
- We have to be really careful about having such "*micchā diṭṭhi*," because *niyata micchā diṭṭhi* can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*. There are many such false beliefs that appear "harmless" but count as *micchā diṭṭhi* (not knowing the true nature of things), and that is another reason why it has been hard for people to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- The bottom line is that it is better not to eat meat especially if that bothers one's conscience. But for those who don't have that problem, there are probably other bad acts one needs to worry about first; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

7. There will always be people who engage in immoral acts and make a livelihood from that. We cannot force others to be moral; we can only point out what is moral and what is immoral. It is up to each person to decide, and understand that, "what one sows, one will reap."

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- As I mentioned before, there was a "pig butcher" Chunda Sukara, who ran his butcher shop right next to *Veluwanaramaya*, where the Buddha resided for many years. Even at the time of the Buddha some questioned why the Buddha did not try to "save him." If he did that, Chunda Sukara would have generated hateful thoughts about the Buddha and would have ended up in an even worse *apāya,* as explained by the Buddha. Thus one needs to think deeper than just go by "outward appearances."
- On the other hand, **we should point out the bad consequences of raising animals under unfathomably harsh conditions in animal farms, and killing animals with unimaginably cruel ways (see #10 below).** Even though animals have much lower levels of "consciousness", **they feel pain same as us.** Still, we need to get rid of the "wrong *saññā*" that eating meat (which is like any other food made of the *satara mahā bhūta*), is equivalent to eating "an animal." Once the animal is dead, the dead body is inert; the *gandhabba* has left that "inert shell"; see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."
- In Sri Lanka, and probably in many Buddhist countries, there are many movements to "rescue cows and other animals from the butcher." They consider this act as an "*abhaya dana*," which they interpret as "giving back the life or saving the life of that animal."

8. First, let us examine WHY a cow is born a cow in the first place. A cow is called a "harakā" in Sinhala, which comes from "hara" meaning "the essence or what is good", and "kā" meaning "eat or destroy." Thus one is born a cow due to a "cow sankhara," i.e., one had done acts that led to hardships for people. We know many people who do immoral acts that destroy other human lives or at least lead to hardships for other people; those people are bound to be born cows, pigs, and other animals and "pay back those debts."

- Even though we may save the life of a cow by paying off the butcher, that cow will go through many such "cow lives" until the *kammic* energy of that "cow *bhava*" is spent and during that time will be subjected to numerous killings. This may sound harsh, but that is the reality.
- Instead of "trying to save existing cows", which is a futile task as we saw above, what we SHOULD do is to try to prevent even a single HUMAN from **becoming a cow** in future lives. Once one gets a "cow *bhava*" one will be born in that *bhava* multiple times; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein." What we can do is to try get as many people as possible to be EXPOSED to true Dhamma.
- Thus even though we should not try to prevent people from rescuing such animals (saving a life is always good), we need to educate people about the misconceptions on relative merits of different deeds.

9. In that context, let us see what is really meant by "*abhaya dana*." "*Bhaya*" means "fear" and "*abhaya*" means preventing one from a dreadful outcome; of course "*dāna*" means "giving." Thus "*abhaya dana*" means giving the gift of removing one's fright.

- One should be dreadful about the suffering one could undergo in the four *apāyā* (four lowest realms of existence), animal realm being one. If one can motivate a single human to contemplate on that, that itself will be much more meritorious than "saving" millions cows; of course, as we saw above a "saved cow" is not truly saved; it will pay its debts somehow or other.
- Yet, imagine the number of cow, pig, … lives that one could save if one can point another human being toward becoming a *Sotāpanna*: that person will NEVER be born in any of the four *apāyā*. That could be an uncountable number of lives saved by "saving a SINGLE human." That is the true "*abhaya dana*," and that may not even cost any money.

10. The key point here is that a cow (or any other animal) cannot be "saved" by making it comprehend Dhamma. And, there is no way to "shorten the time of existence" or in this case the duration of the "cow *bhava*." the It just has to wait until the *kammic* energy for that existence to run out through however many "cow lives."

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- But a human can comprehend Dhamma and could change the type of existence, and say for example become a *brahma*. Furthermore, one could attain the *Sotāpanna* stage and be freed from the *apāyā*, and may even attain the *Arahanthood* stage.
- So, there is a HUGE difference in saving an animal life versus a human life.
- Still I am not discouraging anyone from saving an animal. I am just saying that there are better ways to utilize resources and try to help out humans. We never kill a bug or a fly that occasionally gets in our house. We have a "bug catcher cup" that we use to catch it and throw outside; trap the thing in the cup, slide a cardboard piece underneath slowly and carry to the door.

11. I need to also point out that the Buddha himself ate meat when offered under the conditions given in #3 above. In fact, the last meal of the Buddha was a "pork dish" which was especially made to alleviate the pain that the Buddha had with ulcer-like ailment.

- In this context, let us discuss another misconception about that "last meal." After the meal, the Buddha asked the remainder of the meal not be consumed by any human, and to be buried. Some say this was because of a "contamination problem with that meal" which led to a discomfort of the Buddha. If there was a problem with the dish, the Buddha would have seen it beforehand.
- The reason that the Buddha asked the remainder of the meal to thrown away was simply because that meal was a special meal just like the first meal of milk rice offered to him at the time of the attainment of the Buddhahood. Such meals can be digested only by a Buddha. *Devas* and *brahmā* infuse highly potent nutrients into such meals; the Buddha was sustained for 7 weeks with that single meal of milk rice.

12. **Finally, the suffering of the animals is real, and this is one form of *sansāric* suffering that the Buddha referred to.** If you have nerves made out of steel, you can watch the gruesome acts that occur in some animal farms, see the full movie "Earthlings" at the following site (**Warning:** These scenes are highly disturbing to the mind, especially after about 10-15 minutes): "Nationearth.com"

- We should not hesitate to point out the bad consequences of raising animals under unfathomably harsh conditions in animal farms, and killing animals in unimaginably cruel ways.
- As I pointed out above, animals are bound to "reap what they already sowed in their past lives." Nature always finds a way to impart *kamma vipāka*. But the problem is that humans volunteer to carry out those punishments, and in turn, generate much future suffering for themselves.
- Thus the only tragic that CAN BE AVOIDED is the creation of similar outcomes (in future births) for current humans who engage in such activities.
- In any case, we cannot force morality on others. We can only point out the dangers and help enact and enforce laws to forbid such unconscionable activities; such efforts have led to making cockfighting illegal in the United States.

Next, "Do Things Just Happen? – The Hidden Causes", ..

6.1.5.3 Do Things Just Happen? – The Hidden Causes

October 30, 2015

Just like in science, Buddha Dhamma is based on cause and effect. Nothing happens without a cause (or more accurately multiple causes). But some of the causes are hidden and can be revealed only a Buddha with the perfect mind. By learning his Dhamma, we can figure out many such important and relevant causes that affect us.

1. There are many instances when we face a traumatic situation, and the first thing comes to our mind is "Why is this happening to me? What have I done to deserve this?."

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- And when we encounter good fortune (say landing a good job or winning a lottery), we are overjoyed: "my luck has finally turned around."
- Both those conclusions are wrong. Nothing happens in this world without a cause (usually there are multiple causes). Things DO NOT just happen. Nature does not work that way. In science, we always look at the underlying causes to explain material phenomena.
- A scientific theory is not even taken seriously unless it can provide evidence to support the theory, i.e., to illustrate "cause and effect." Buddha Dhamma is based on "cause and effect."

2. The "cause and effect" of inert objects is easy to see and verify. Scientists can accurately land a spaceship on the Moon because they can take into account all the causes and effects that would be relevant to the flight of the spaceship. All scientific progress is made due to the "apparent" causes and effects.

- We can even predict/control the behavior of plants. By making suitable conditions for their growth, farmers can reap good harvests. Even when things do not work out with farming, we know the reasons (drought, too much rain, etc).
- Thus we can verify the applicability of "cause and effect" when dealing with inert matter and vegetation. The causes are not hidden.
- This principle is also known as "action and reaction" in physics. Every action has an equal and opposite reaction. Laws of *kamma* are more complex, but it is the same basic principle. You cannot expect to do something and assume that it has no consequences.

3. Unlike material phenomena that involve dead and inert matter, each sentient living being has a "history that goes back into the deep past" (a tree is living, but not sentient, i.e., it cannot think).

- Therefore, for each sentient being, there could be causes that lie in the deep past. We just cannot see them (if we develop *abhiññā* powers, we could see some).
- This is why it is hard for many people to grasp the concept of *kamma*. When we look around us, we may not see the "law of *kamma*" working. While a pious peasant may be living in a hut, a drug lord seems to be enjoying life. Yet, in the long run, the laws of *kamma* work: that pious peasant may be reborn to enjoy a good life, while the drug lord may suffer for a long time to come in future births.
- **The present birth started due to past causes. It will proceed until that *kammic* power is exhausted. What we should be mainly worried about is the next life.**
- All deeds have their consequences. As Nietzsche (1882) said, "..Lightening and thunder require time, the light of the stars require time, deeds require time even after they are done, before they can be seen and heard..."

4. Then people ask: "But where is the evidence for that?." The (indirect) evidence is all around us. We just do not take time to analyze what we see. Our tendency is to take things at the face value, without bothering to analyze a bit deeper; see, "Wrong Views (Micchā Ditthi) – A Simpler Analysis."

- When we look around we see that some people are rich, some are poor; some die within a few months, but there are others live to old age; some are healthy and vibrant, others are sick most of the time, etc. All these happen now due to causes from past lives.
- What are the causes for all those and much more varieties of life that we see all around us? Many more are discussed in, "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths."

5. Laws of *kamma are* nothing but "causes and effects." Moral behavior leads to good results either in this life OR in future lives. Immoral behavior leads to bad results, including bad rebirths.

- However, *kamma* is nondeterministic, i.e., a cause does not inevitably lead to a result; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." By acting with mindfulness, one can avoid many possible bad *kamma vipāka*, and also make conditions for good *kamma vipāka* to come to fruition.

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- Actually, without a Buddha in the world, a normal human cannot figure out these things on his/her own. But luckily, some evidence is coming from modern science due to the efforts of thousands of scientists over the past few hundred years.
- Many "wrong views" that people used to have in the old days have been corrected by science. Actually, those helped confirm what the Buddha taught 2500 years ago; see, "Dhamma and Science."

6. Our ancestors could not explain many natural phenomena like earthquakes, volcano eruptions, floods, etc and attributed those to "the fury of the Gods." Even to date, whenever we don't understand something, our tendency is to attribute that to a supernatural being and "fill that gap"; this tendency is called, "God of the gaps."

- But advances in science are slowly but surely closing those gaps, that exist with regard to the workings of the MATERIAL WORLD. Those are due to natural causes.

7. However, there ARE gaps in our knowledge base that CANNOT be closed by the current approach of science. These are to explain the workings of the human mind or consciousness.

- Most theologians of today are correct in saying that mind cannot arise from matter; it does not make sense to say that a human with feelings and perceptions can just "arise" out of inert matter.
- However, there is no need to "fill that gap" with God either. The Buddha described in detail the workings of the human mind, which is separate from the working of the material world; see, "Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?."
- The "cause and effect" for the mind to arise is described by *paṭicca samuppāda*, but before that can start making sense, one needs to understand the basics of Buddha Dhamma discussed in the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section on the top menu.

8. Another effect that cannot be explained by current science is the "sense of fulfilment" one gets by giving to the poor. If one takes a totally materialistic view, it is not possible to see ANY benefits in giving.

- There was a wealthy brahmin at the time of the Buddha, who was very much against giving. He explained to others why giving can only lead to a loss by actually doing a demonstration: He took a sack of rice and started giving portions to those who gathered. At the end the sack was empty and he said, "look, this is what happens when you give. You lose what you have."
- The Buddha explained that the brahmin was unable to see the benefits in giving even in this life (sense of joy), because of his wrong views, and thus there was no way he could see the benefits in future lives. The brahmin died and was born a dog at the same house. It is a long story and I may get to it in a future post.
- The key point here is that there are many things that cannot be explained by just what we see with our eyes. Cause and effect is not readily apparent when it involves the mind. Furthermore, benefits of giving are not proportional to the value of the things given, but the state of the mind of the giver.

9. But more than anything else, the truth of what the Buddha taught can be experienced. When one follows the path recommended by the Buddha one can feel and experience the results in this life itself.

- Just by reading and understanding Dhamma concepts one's mind can become calm and peaceful; see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances." I encourage everyone to peruse through different sections at the site and read first whatever seem to make sense or relevant to what one is looking for.
- For example, one of the key issues that led people to believe in a supernatural being was how morality can be there without such a being. But the Buddha taught that morality and immorality are both built into nature; see, "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism."
- It could be surprising to many. But Buddha Dhamma can explain ANY phenomenon, whether material or mind-based. Everything happens due to causes, even though some may be hidden from a normal human's sense faculties. By purifying one's mind, one can have a better understanding of how the nature operates; see, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

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- October 18, 2016: A new post explains this in more detail: "Micca Diṭṭhi – Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect)."

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6.2 Working Towards Good Rebirths

"Sansāric Habits and āsavas"

"Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Rebirths"

"How to Avoid Birth in the Apayas"

"How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm"

"Kamma, Debt, and Meditation"

"How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Diṭṭhi)?"

"Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi"

"Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society"

"What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?"

"Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi"

"Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)"

6.2.1 Sansāric Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)

Revised December 7, 2016

Our character (*gati*), behavior, and cravings (*āsava*) sometimes have causes from past lives. It is easier to break bad habits when one understands causes and consequences.

- In the "Moral Living" section, we discussed how to get rid of bad habits, incorporate good habits, and thus achieve goals; see, "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)." We saw that one's behavioral patterns or habits can form one's character (*gati*). Here we will see that some of these habits are not formed in this life, but may have origins in previous lives. In a way, these are only "discernible things" we carry from life-to-life; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."

1. **Habits ("*gati*" in Pāli and Sinhala)** are acquired by the repeated use. Habits can be neutral (one can make a habit of start brushing teeth on the top left), good (exercising at a scheduled time), bad (smoking).

- The more one can stick to a set habit, that habit becomes more ingrained in the mind. Riding a bike or learning to drive is a habit to learn. Initially it is hard, but once the habit is formed it is done almost automatically; it becomes an ingrained "*gati*."

2. Bad habits can be stopped by making a conscious effort to disrupt the habit. Initially this takes a lot of effort, and that is why assessing the consequences and convincing the mind of the dangers of a bad habit is important at the very beginning.

- Replacing a bad habit with a good (at least less harmful) habit is also important. Instead of smoking, one could chew on a chewing gum when one gets the urge.

3. Habits also help mold the character (*gati*) of a person. We see very different qualities of character among people: kind and malicious, calm and agitated, thoughtful and easily-excitable, etc. It is easy to see that people with "bad character qualities" are those with one or more prominent bad habits.

- But the good news is that no one is "inherently bad." There are causes (reasons) for a person to have bad habits/character, and once those causes are removed one becomes a person with good habits/character.

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- The best example is Aṅgulimāla, who lived during the time of the Buddha and killed close to thousand people. The Buddha was able to show him the consequences of his behavior and he was able to attain the *Arahantship* within a few weeks!

5. It is not only humans that display such personal characteristics; animals have them too. Some dogs are vicious while others are adorable; some are more loyal than others, etc.

- These are habits/character (*gati*) that have been molded over multiple lives; but most character (*gati*) CHANGES happen only during a human life, because human mind is the most capable of CHANGING habits. Animals, for example, are more like robots (not completely).

6. Bad habits are formed via bad judgements arising from a defiled mind that is covered by the five hindrances. And bad habits lead to actions that further strengthen those same habits.

- Once a certain bad "*gati*" becomes established it can even lead to a birth with that "*gati*," i.e, will be destined for "*dugati*" (du + gati) which is another name for the *apāyā* (the four lowest realms). for example, someone who behaves and acts like an animal could well be reborn an animal.
- The cycle needs to be broken to stop this self-feeding process. But as long as the hindrances are there, it is likely that sooner or later new bad habits will be formed.

7. Those beings that are in the *apāyā* can be put in to four major categories according to the proportions of greed and hate that are in their sansāric "*gati*" (of course ignorance is in all of them) :

- *Pretas* [Sanskrit], *petas* [Pāli], i.e., hungry ghosts, have "greedy" *gati.*
- Those in the lowest realm, *niraya* (hell), have *gati* dominated by hate.
- Animals have "*gati*" with both greed and hate. Therefore, the Pāli (or Sinhala) word for animals is "*thirisan*" (="thiri"+"san" or three defilements). Remember that ignorance is there always.
- Those in the *asura* ("a"+"sūra", where "a" means "not" and "sūra" means proficient or capable; thus *asura* means those who depend on others, and are lazy) realm have the habit of doing as least as possible and exploit others' hard work.

8. Similarly, one who cultivates good habits is destined for a "good" rebirth (*sugati* = su + gati), i.e., human realm or above. For example, one who does not indulge in sense pleasures and cultivates compassion and loving kindness could be reborn in the Brahma realms where there is relatively less suffering, and mostly *jhānic* pleasures.

- *Devas* (realms 6-11) are full of compassion and do not have hateful thoughts. But they like to enjoy sense pleasures.
- *Brahmā* (realms 12-31) do not have either greed or hate.
- Humans (realms 5) COULD have all three. However, the unique aspect of the human realm is the ability to purify one's own mind and REMOVE all three, and become an *Arahant* (attain *Nibbāna*). This is done by following the Noble Eightfold Path and removing all "bad habits" one has.

Of course, *Devas* and *Brahmā* both have ignorance, and thus could be reborn in any realm when they die (unless they had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage).

9. Once ingrained in the mind, habits can be carried over repeated rebirths, from life to life. One who is easily tempted by alcohol is likely to have had that habit in the previous lives.

- One who forms that habit in this life (even if he did not have it before), is likely to carry it over to the next life. Similarly, one who cultivates generosity in this life is likely to have that habit in the next life as well.

10. If those bad habits keep building up life after life, they get fermented and solidified and thus will become deeply embedded in one's psyche. We all carry deeply ingrained *sansāric* habits associated with one or

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more of defilements. **These are called mental fermentations or deeply embedded cravings ("*āsava*" in Pāli or Sinhala).**

- Some *gati* and *āsava* lay hidden (sleeping), and are called "*anusaya*." With a strong enough "trigger" an ingrained *anusaya* can be brought to the surface. *Anusaya* are the hardest to get rid of.
- **When one continually acts in ways to strengthen one's *gati* (character), that makes the corresponding *āsava* and *anusaya* even stronger.**

11. Thus it is clear why breaking bad habits is critically important, not only for the benefit of this life, but also for future lives.

Next, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"", …….

If you would like to read about how these āsavas can be removed, see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas."

6.2.2 Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"

Revised May 18, 2017; March 14, 2020

Introduction

1. Everything that we see around us can be roughly put into three categories: lifeless matter, plant life, and sentient beings (i.e., life with consciousness). Scientists have been most successful in explaining the behavior of inter matter, at least in the macroscopic scale.

- For example, a rocket can be launched with high precision to land on a given spot on the Moon.
- However, complexity increases when going to biological matter without consciousness (plants).

2. On the other hand, the behavior of a sentient being is almost impossible to predict with any kind of precision. This is because the working of a mind with 89 types of *cittā* (thoughts) and 52 types of *cetasikas* (mental properties) is very complex; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and the posts in the "Abhidhamma" section.

- However, the Buddha has taught us how to understand why different types of living beings are born that way, and why people are born with wide-ranging levels of health, wealth, beauty, etc.
- Laws of *kamma* can be explain with such phenomena that involve conscious minds.

3. When we look around, we see that animals, in general, encounter more suffering than humans. Even among people, the range of suffering is enormous. Then there are some people even seem to be enjoying life without any apparent signs of suffering.

- Also, some are born rich, healthy, beautiful, etc. others are born to poverty, handicapped, ugly, etc.
- The character of people also lies in a very broad spectrum, as we discussed above.
- Furthermore, the "fortunes" of a given person could change drastically in a relatively short time. One could go from being penniless to a riches or the other way around quickly.
- When we look at animals too, some pets get treated even better than some humans, while others live under horrible conditions. They also have a wide range of personal characteristics.

Complexity of Life – Buddhist Explanation

4. Such apparent vagaries of life have perfectly good explanations in Buddha Dhamma. However, there are no simple one-to-one correspondences compared to the comparatively simpler rules that are available for tracking the behavior of macroscopic inert objects.

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5. The behavior of (macroscopic) inert matter can be explained in terms of simpler cause and effect. If one knows the current conditions, one can predict the future outcome using scientifically-found natural laws (law of gravitation or laws of relativity).

- However, even this is beginning to change with the advent of quantum mechanics; we are now beginning to probe the realm where matter merges with the mind. We will discuss such an instance in the future.

6. Similarly, the behavior of life can be explained in terms of *kamma vipāka* (results of one's actions) together with habits ("*gathi*") and *āsavas*; see, "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas." However, unlike cause and effect regarding inter matter, the behavior of life is much more complex, because the MIND IS COMPLEX, see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- There are many causes (innumerable *kamma vipāka* and numerous types of habits and *āsavas*) leading to many effects, versus just one or few causes leading one effect or a few effects.
- This is discussed in many *suttā*, but a good start is the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cula Kamma Vibhanga Sutta (MN 135)." That site gives translations in several languages, but as with almost all internet sites, translations of some key Pāli words may not be accurate.

Good and Bad *Kamma* Bring Corresponding *Vipāka*

7. In general, good habits and good *kamma vipāka* lead rebirth in realms at or above the human realm. We need to make sure not to commit any *akusala* (unwholesome) *kamma* that could lead to rebirth in the four lower realms, and to engage in meritorious actions.

- Another is to realize that *āsavas* (mental fermentations or deeply embedded cravings) could lead to spontaneous actions (in a rage or a sudden mental weakness). Maintaining good habits, removing bad habits, and acting with generosity, kindness, and wisdom help cleanup the deeply embedded *āsavas*, thus preventing such actions on sudden impulses as well as being able to be mindful.

Meditation Is Contemplation

8. Any type of meditation (*samatha*, *metta*, and *vipassana*) will also be quite helpful. Just contemplating on good thoughts and suppressing bad thoughts as they arise throughout the day is also meditation (this was the original definition of *bhāvanā*).

Next, "How to Avoid Births in the Apāyā", ……..

6.2.3 How to Avoid Birth in the Apāyā

1. There are five heinous *kamma* (acts) that GUARANTEE a rebirth in the lowest four realms in the *very next birth*. These are called the *panca anantariya kamma* or five acts that will bring a bad birth without "a gap" (unlike many *kamma vipāka* can come to fruition in later lives, i.e., their results are seen only later in *saṃsāra*). These five are:

- Killing one's mother
- Killing one's father
- Killing an Arahant
- Causing an injury to a Buddha
- Causing schism in the Saṅgha (the monastic order)

2. The next level is "*niyatha micchā diṭṭhi*" or "an established wrong world view" (which means one is not even willing to consider the possibility that one could be wrong in holding onto such views) that will cause one to be born in the *apāyā* at some point in *saṃsāra*. This means that one with these false views could be reborn in the *apāyā* in the next life or any future life. There are eight such views:

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- No such thing as, (1) mother, (2) father, (3) Buddha, (4) rebirth, (5) *kamma vipāka*, (6) *opapātika* birth (instant full-formed birth), (7) *apāyā*, and (8) *rūpa loka/arūpa loka*. For explanations on (6)-(8), see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

It must be noted that Even a Sotāpanna may not be fully convinced of the truth of some of the above. But a Sotāpanna has not ruled out any of the above and is not adamant on holding onto a wrong view.

3. Thus the possibility of a birth in the *apāyā* in any future birth is there until all **established (unshakable) wrong views (*niyata micchā diṭṭhi)*** *are rejected by one's mind. We all have committed both good and bad kamma in the past* lives that we are not aware of; thus any of those could cause a birth anywhere in the 31 realms.

4. It is important to remember that those false views cannot be just memorized and pretended to be discarded. The mind needs to be convinced that those are indeed false views. This is why it is important to examine the world view of the Buddha. These are the key concepts discussed in the top menus, especially, "What is Buddha Dhamma?" and "Key Dhamma Concepts."

5. The only guaranteed way to stay out of the *apāyā* (the four lowest realms) in ANY future life is to become a Sotāpanna.

What Happens at the Sotāpanna Stage?

1. As I keep repeating, the Buddha is just the messenger; he discovered the true nature of this world. First of all, this world is much more complex than we perceive. In order to understand how to remove suffering, one has to understand the causes, and that requires the complete picture of "this world" (see, "What is Buddha Dhamma?" and in particular, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma") and also why it is not possible to remove suffering without understanding the Three Characteristics of "this world" (see, "Key Dhamma Concepts" and in particular, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations").

2. When one "sees" the true nature of "this world", the mind will automatically give up those false views mentioned in the above section (#2). **This is why it is first important to learn Dhamma first**. No one, regardless of one's high intellect, can discover the complete set of nature's laws other than a Buddha.

3. From the discussion so far, it is clear what needs to be done to reach the Sotāpanna stage. All that is needed is to carefully examine the world view of the Buddha as mentioned in #1 in this section. One needs to understand the "vision", and to become "*dassanena sampanno*" or "one with clear vision." This is why "*dassanena pahatabba*" or "removal by vision" is listed as #1 item in the seven items required to attain Nibbāna in the Sabbasava Sutta; see, "Key Points in the Sabbasava Sutta" in "The Sotāpanna Stage."

4. Thus essentially all that happens at reaching the Sotāpanna stage is to get a clear world view. Now one has understood the true nature of this world, and thus "knows" that it is not possible to achieve lasting happiness anywhere in the 31 realms. One may not have removed any *āsavas* other than the *diṭṭhi āsava*. Thus one still may have *kamasava*, *bhavasava*, and *avijjasava*, i.e., one still may have greed, hatred, and ignorance even though parts of all three have been permanently been removed by the clear vision. How the āsavas are formed starting with habits is discussed in the "Habits and Goals," "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas," and "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas" sections in that order.

5. Therefore, even though one may have greed, hate, and ignorance left, one knows what they are. And one knows how to remove them. After attaining the Sotāpanna stage one does not need a teacher. One knows what needs to be done. As one gets rid of the remaining *āsavas*, the vision becomes even more clear and full and complete *Sammā Diṭṭhi* is attained at the Arahanthood.

Next, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm", …….

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6.2.4 How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm

Revised May 5, 2017, August 24, 2017; October 30, 2018; February 29, 2020

Many people believe that if we live a "good, moral life," a human rebirth or rebirth in the higher *deva* worlds is guaranteed. That is a misconception. Even if we do not accumulate a single new bad *kamma* in this life, we may have accumulated many bad *kamma* in past lives. **That is why it is difficult get a human existence (*bhava*).**

- Evidence for rebirth is at, "Evidence for Rebirth." Rebirth can occur not only in as a human but in any of the 31 realms. Most suffering in the cycle of rebirth occurs in the lowest four realms: *niraya* (hell), *asura*, animal, and *peta* realms. Of those four, only the animal realm is visible to us. They are collectively called the *apāyā*.
- Getting a "human existence (*bhava*)" is rare. But once one grasps a human *bhava*, one could be born (*jāti*) many times as a human until the *kammic* energy for that human *bhava* is exhausted. That is why children can recall past lives. In between consecutive human births, that life-stream exists in the nether world or "*para loka*" as a *gandhabba* with a subtle body; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)"
- The 31 realms of existence described in "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

1. From the *Nakhasikha Sutta* (SN 20.2):

Pāli version: WebLink: suttacentral: Nakhasikha Sutta (SN 20.2):

Translation:

At Sāvatthī. Then the Buddha, picking up a little bit of sand on his fingernail, addressed the *bhikkhus*: "What do you think, *bhikkhus*? Which is more: the little bit of sand on my fingernail, or this great Earth?"

"*Bhante*, the great earth is far more. The little bit of sand on your fingernail is tiny. Compared to the great Earth, those cannot be compared or even imagined; it is not even a significant fraction."

"In the same way, *bhikkhus,* sentient beings reborn as humans are few as this bit of sand on my fingernail. But those not reborn as humans are many as sand on this great Earth. Therefore, you should strive diligently and without delay to end this suffering in the rebirth process."

Let us make two points clear regarding the above simile of the Buddha:

1. When a being gets a human life, that "human *bhava*" has a specific kammic energy associated with it, say 1000 years worth. In that case, the person may be born a few times with a human body (this is the difference between "*bhava*" and "*jāti*"). The *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition to a new "*bhava*" happens at the end of 1000 years; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein," and "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

- What the Buddha refers to above is concerned with that new *paṭisandhi* at the end of the "human *bhava*."
- It is extremely rare to attain a human *bhava*, but once in a human *bhava*, one can be born tens or even hundreds of times as a human. In the animal realm, a given animal may be reborn thousands or even millions of times to exhaust that *kammic* energy.

2. Even though the above simile may seem to be out-of-proportion with the realities, it is not. That is why I say that modern science has given a boost to Buddha Dhamma by making many things clear. Ordinary humans were not aware of the existence of innumerable microscopic living beings until the invention of the microscope in the 1500s. In 1676, Van Leeuwenhoek reported the discovery of micro-organisms. He observed numerous tiny living beings in a glass of water; see, WebLink: WIKI: Microscope

Here is a short video showing countless such microscopic creatures:

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WebLink: Live in a water drop @TSRlab

- If you go out and dig a bit of dirt, there could be millions of living organisms there. In a household there may be a few humans, but possibly billions or even trillions of living beings. The oceans cover two-thirds of the Earth's surface, and the living creatures there are much more densely-packed. And there are beings in other 29 realms that we cannot see. Seven billion or so humans in this world are indeed a thumb-full compared to countless living creatures that live associated with the Earth. Thus, as in many cases, modern science has helped verify Buddha's words.
- Some of these realms could be in other dimensions; see, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions." In the string theory, scientists say there could be ten dimensions instead of the three that we experience.
- However, one can actually "see" beings in other dimensions as well as microscopic beings in a glass of water if one develops *abhiññā* powers; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Introduction" and the follow-up posts. One time, a *bhikkhu* who had developed *abhiññā* skills but had not becomes an *Arahant*, saw the presence of a large number of microscopic beings in a glass of water. He tried to filter them out but was unsuccessful, and became distraught. The Buddha told him that "it is not possible to live in this world without harming other beings. It is necessary to live this life to attain *Nibbāna*," and to drink the water. The INTENTION there is to quench the thirst; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- Modern science has found out that there are millions of living beings on a single human body (as well as on any other large animal). They have used sophisticated instruments to see microscopic creatures. See, "There are as Many Creatures on your Body as there are People on Earth!."

Thus modern science has indeed shown that the human population is negligible compared to just the animal populations (including microscopic beings). And we can experience only two realms (animal and human) compared to the 31 realms that the Buddha described.

2. *Dutiyachiggaḷayuga Sutta* (SN 56.48)

Pāli version: WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyachiggaḷayuga Sutta (SN 56.48)

Translation:

"*Bhikkhus*, suppose that this great Earth had become one mass of water, and a man would throw a yoke with a single hole upon it. An easterly stream would move it eastward. A westerly stream would move it westward; a northerly stream would move it northward. A southerly stream would move it southward.

There was a blind turtle that would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, *bhikkhus*, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole?"

"It would be an extremely rare occurrence, *Bhante*, that the blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, would insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole."

"So too, *bhikkhus*, how extremely rare that one is born a human.

You have this rare chance now, *bhikkhus,* to be not only born a human but be born while *a Tathāgata* has arisen in the world. While the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the *Tathāgata* shines in the world.

Therefore, *bhikkhus*, you should strive without delay to understand the following. 'This is suffering (*dukkha*). This is the cause of suffering (*dukkha samudaya*). This is how that cause is removed (*dukkha nirodhaya*). And this is the way leading to the cessation of suffering (*dukkha nirodha gāmini paṭipadā*).'"

- Many scientists are now discussing these "hard to fathom" ideas about infinity. Of course, they are unaware of Buddha's teachings. See, for example, "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch (2011).

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- Most human beings head to the *apāyā* because they are not even aware of the ten immoral actions; see, "Ten Immoral Actions – Dasa Akusala," and "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma." It is also essential to know the baseline procedure to avoid such immoral actions and to cultivate moral behavior; see, "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

However, when a living being acquires a human *bhava* or human existence, that can last a long time (many hundreds to many thousands of years). Within that human *bhava*, there will be multiple human births; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

3. *Assu Sutta* (SN 15.3)

Pāli version: **WebLink: suttacentral: Assu Sutta (SN 15.3)**

Translation:

First, the Buddha made the famous statement: "*Anamataggoyam bhikkhave, samsaro pubbā koti na pannāyati avijjā nivārananam sattānam taṇhā-samyojananam sandhāvatam samsāratam*."

- **Translated:** "*Bhikkhus*, this rebirth process has no discernible (*na pannāyati*) beginning. Beings whose minds are covered by ignorance and **are bound to this rebirth process with bonds of craving**."

The rest of the *sutta* is as follows:

"What do you think, *bhikkhus*: Which is greater, the tears you have shed while trapped in this rebirth process or the water in the four great oceans? (Crying because of being born into a bad birth **or** being separated from loved ones in good births)"

"As we understand the Dhamma taught to us by the *Bhante*, the tears we have shed while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process is greater than the waters in the four great oceans."

"Excellent, *bhikkhus*. It is good that you thus understand the Dhamma taught by me. That is the larger: the tears you have shed while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process — not the water in the four vast oceans.

Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a mother. The tears you have shed over the death of a mother while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process are greater than the water in the four vast oceans.

Long have you (repeatedly) experienced the death of a father, death of a brother, death of a sister, death of a son, death of a daughter, loss of relatives, or loss of wealth. The tears you have shed over diseases while trapped in this beginning-less rebirth process would fill the four vast oceans.

Why is that? The beginning of this rebirth process is not discernible."

The Buddha many other analogies to describe how long the rebirth process is: **it is infinite.** In another analogy, the blood from uncountable times where one is killed while born a specific animal (deer or cow, for example) is more than the water in the four oceans.

- Infinity is a hard to comprehend. Scientists have only recently realized this; see, "Infinity – How Big Is It?."
- In fact, there are many *suttā* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Saṃyutta (SN 15)," "WebLink: suttacentral: Opamma Saṃyutta (SN20)," and the "WebLink: suttacentral: Sacca Saṃyutta (SN 56)" SN 56.31 through SN 56.70 of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* that provides many more similes/descriptions to illustrate the beginning-less rebirth process, during which an infinite amount of time has passed.
- **In the above, I presented only three out of about 70 such *suttā* in SN 15, SN 20, and SN 56. They all provide analogies to show how rare human birth is.**

Next, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation" …….

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6.2.4.1 Nakhasikha Sutta

"At one time the Buddha, showing them some dust which he had taken upon the tip of his finger-nail, addressed the disciples thus: 'If, O Bhikkhus, these few grains of dust upon my finger-nail and all the dust in the universe were compared in quantity, which would you say was less, and which more?' The disciples replied: 'Lord, the dust on your finger- nail is less, and that of the universe is more. Surely, Lord, the dust on your finger-nail is not worthy of mention in comparison with the dust of the universe.' Then the Buddha continued; 'Even so, Bhikkhus, those who are reborn in the abodes of men and Devas whence they have expired, are very few even as the few grains of dust on my finger-nail; and those who are reborn in the four realms of misery are exceedingly many, even as the dust of the great universe. Again, those who have expired from the four miserable worlds and are reborn in the abodes of men and Devas are few even as the grains of dust on my finger-nail; and those who are repeatedly reborn in the four miserable worlds are innumerable, even as the grains of dust of the great universe."

What has just been said is the substance of the Nakhasikha Sutta. But, to say nothing of the beings of all the four realms of misery, the creatures that inhabit the four great oceans alone will suffice to make evident how great is the evil of Vinipatana-gati, that is, the dispersion, the variety of possible kinds of existence after death.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 22

10. Pupphavagga

97. Nakhasikhāsutta

Sāvatthinidānaṃ. Ekamantaṃ nisinno kho so bhikkhu bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: “atthi nu kho, bhante, kiñci rūpaṃ yaṃ rūpaṃ niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassati? Atthi nu kho, bhante, kāci vedanā yā vedanā niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassati? Atthi nu kho, bhante, kāci saññā … pe … keci saṅkhārā, ye saṅkhārā niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassanti? Atthi nu kho, bhante, kiñci viññāṇaṃ, yaṃ viññāṇaṃ niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassatī”ti? “Natthi kho, bhikkhu, kiñci rūpaṃ, yaṃ rūpaṃ niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassati. Natthi kho, bhikkhu, kāci vedanā … kāci saññā … keci saṅkhārā … pe … kiñci viññāṇaṃ, yaṃ viññāṇaṃ niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassatī”ti.

Atha kho bhagavā parittaṃ nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsuṃ āropetvā taṃ bhikkhuṃ etadavoca: “ettakampi kho, bhikkhu, rūpaṃ natthi niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassati. Ettakañcepi, bhikkhu, rūpaṃ abhavissa niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ, nayidaṃ brahmacariyavāso paññāyetha sammā dukkhakkhayāya. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhu, ettakampi rūpaṃ natthi niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ, tasmā brahmacariyavāso paññāyati sammā dukkhakkhayāya.”

Ettakāpi kho, bhikkhu, vedanā natthi niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassati. Ettakā cepi, bhikkhu, vedanā abhavissa niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā, na yidaṃ brahmacariyavāso paññāyetha sammā dukkhakkhayāya. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhu, ettakāpi vedanā natthi niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā, tasmā brahmacariyavāso paññāyati sammā dukkhakkhayāya.

Ettakāpi kho, bhikkhu, saññā natthi … pe … ettakāpi kho, bhikkhu, saṅkhārā natthi niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassanti. Ettakā cepi, bhikkhu, saṅkhārā abhavissaṃsu niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā, na yidaṃ brahmacariyavāso paññāyetha sammā dukkhakkhayāya.

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Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhu, ettakāpi saṅkhārā natthi niccā dhuvā sassatā avipariṇāmadhammā, tasmā brahmacariyavāso paññāyati sammā dukkhakkhayāya.

Ettakampi kho, bhikkhu, viññāṇaṃ natthi niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ sassatisamaṃ tatheva ṭhassati. Ettakampi kho, bhikkhu, viññāṇaṃ abhavissa niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ, na yidaṃ brahmacariyavāso paññāyetha sammā dukkhakkhayāya. Yasmā ca kho, bhikkhu, ettakampi viññāṇaṃ natthi niccaṃ dhuvaṃ sassataṃ avipariṇāmadhammaṃ, tasmā brahmacariyavāso paññāyati sammā dukkhakkhayāya.

Taṃ kiṃ maññasi, bhikkhu, rūpaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā"ti? "Aniccaṃ, bhante." "Vedanā … saññā … saṅkhārā … viññāṇaṃ niccaṃ vā aniccaṃ vā"ti? "Aniccaṃ, bhante" … pe … "tasmātiha … pe … evaṃ passaṃ … pe … nāparaṃ itthattāyāti pajānātī"ti.

Pañcamaṃ.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 56

6. Abhisamayavagga

51. Nakhasikhāsutta

Atha kho bhagavā parittaṃ nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsuṃ āropetvā bhikkhū āmantesi: "taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, katamaṃ nu kho bahutaraṃ—yo vāyaṃ mayā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito, ayaṃ vā mahāpathavī"ti? "Etadeva, bhante, bahutaraṃ yadidaṃ—mahāpathavī; appamattakāyaṃ bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito. Saṅkhampi na upeti, upanidhampi na upeti, kalabhāgampi na upeti mahāpathaviṃ upanidhāya bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito"ti. "Evameva kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvakassa diṭṭhisampannassa puggalassa abhisametāvino etadeva bahutaraṃ dukkhaṃ yadidaṃ parikkhīṇaṃ pariyādinnaṃ; appamattakaṃ avasiṭṭhaṃ. Saṅkhampi na upeti, upanidhampi na upeti, kalabhāgampi na upeti purimaṃ dukkhakkhandhaṃ parikkhīṇaṃ pariyādinnaṃ upanidhāya yadidaṃ sattakkhattuparamatā; yo 'idaṃ dukkhan'ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti … pe … 'ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā'ti yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti.

Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, 'idaṃ dukkhan'ti yogo karaṇīyo … pe … 'ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā'ti yogo karaṇīyo"ti.

Paṭhamaṃ.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 13

1. Abhisamayavagga

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1. Nakhasikhāsutta

Evaṃ me sutaṃ— ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā sāvatthiyaṃ viharati jetavane anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme. Atha kho bhagavā parittaṃ nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsuṃ āropetvā bhikkhū āmantesi: “taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, katamaṃ nu kho bahutaraṃ, yo vāyaṃ
mayā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito, ayaṃ vā mahāpathavī”ti?

“Etadeva, bhante, bahutaraṃ, yadidaṃ mahāpathavī. Appamattako bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito. Neva satimaṃ kalaṃ upeti na sahassimaṃ kalaṃ upeti na satasahassimaṃ kalaṃ upeti mahāpathaviṃ upanidhāya bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito”ti. “Evameva kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvakassa diṭṭhisampannassa puggalassa abhisametāvino etadeva bahutaraṃ dukkhaṃ yadidaṃ parikkhīṇaṃ pariyādiṇṇaṃ; appamattakaṃ avasiṭṭhaṃ. Neva satimaṃ kalaṃ upeti na sahassimaṃ kalaṃ upeti na satasahassimaṃ kalaṃ upeti purimaṃ dukkhakkhandhaṃ parikkhīṇaṃ pariyādiṇṇaṃ upanidhāya yadidaṃ sattakkhattuṃparamatā. Evaṃ mahatthiyo kho, bhikkhave, dhammābhisamayo; evaṃ mahatthiyo dhammacakkhupaṭilābho”ti.

Paṭhamaṃ.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 20

1. Opammavagga

2. Nakhasikhasutta

Sāvatthiyaṃ viharati. Atha kho bhagavā parittaṃ nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsuṃ āropetvā bhikkhū āmantesi: “taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, katamaṃ nu kho bahutaraṃ, yo cāyaṃ mayā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito yā cāyaṃ mahāpathavī”ti? “Etadeva, bhante, bahutaraṃ yadidaṃ mahāpathavī. Appamattakoyaṃ bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito. Saṅkhampi na upeti upanidhimpi na upeti kalabhāgampi na upeti mahāpathaviṃ upanidhāya bhagavatā paritto nakhasikhāyaṃ paṃsu āropito”ti. “Evameva kho, bhikkhave, appakā te sattā ye manussesu paccājāyanti; atha kho eteyeva bahutarā sattā ye aññatra manussehi paccājāyanti. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, evaṃ sikkhitabbaṃ: ‘appamattā viharissāmā’ti. Evañhi vo, bhikkhave, sikkhitabban”ti.

Dutiyaṃ.

6.2.4.2 Kanakacchapa-sutta

"At one time, the Buddha addressed the disciples thus: 'there is, O Bhikkhus, in the ocean a turtle, both of whose eyes are blind. He plunges into the water of the unfathomable ocean and swims about incessantly in any direction wherever his head may lead. There is also in the ocean the yoke of a cart, which is ceaselessly floating about on the surface of the water, and is carried away in all directions by tide, current and wind. Thus these two go on throughout an incalculable space of time: perchance it happens that in the course of time the yoke arrives at the precise place and time where and when the turtle puts up his head, and yokes on to it. Now, O Bhikkhus, is it possible that such a time might come as is said?' 'In ordinary truth, O Lord,' replied the Bhikkhus 'it is impossible; but time being so spacious, and an eon lasting so long, it may be admitted that perhaps at some time or other it might be possible for the two to yoke together, as said; if the blind tortoise lives long enough, and the yoke does not tend to rot and break up before such a coincidence comes to pass.'

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Then the Buddha said, 'O Bhikkhus, the occurrence of such a strange thing is not to be counted a difficult one; for there is still a greater, a harder, a hundred times, a thousand times more difficult than this lying hidden from your knowledge. And what is this? It is, O Bhikkhus, the obtaining of the opportunity of becoming a man again by a man who has expired and is reborn once in any of the four realms of misery. The occurrence of the yoking of the blind tortoise is not worth thinking of as a difficult occurrence in comparison therewith. Because those who perform good deeds and abstain from doing bad alone can obtain the existence of men and Devas. The beings in the four miserable worlds cannot discern what is virtuous and what vicious, what good and what bad, what moral and what immoral, what meritorious and what de-meritorious, and consequently they live a life of immorality and demerit, tormenting one another with all their power. Those creatures of the Niraya and Peta abode in particular, live a very miserable life on account of punishments and torments, which they experience with sorrow, pain and distress. Therefore, O Bhikkhus, the opportunity of being reborn in the abode of men is a hundred times, a thousand times harder to obtain than the encountering of the blind turtle with the yoke."

According to this Sutta, why those creatures who are born in the miserable planes are far from human existence is because they never look up but always look down. And what is meant by looking down? The ignorance in them by degrees becomes greater and stronger from one existence to another; and as the water of a river always flows down to the lower plains, so also they are always tending towards the lower existences; for the ways towards the higher existences are closed to them, while those towards the lower existences are freely open. This is the meaning of "looking down". Hence, from this story of the blind turtle, the wise apprehend how great, how fearful, how terribly perilous are the evils of the -- Puthujjana-gati, i.e. "the dispersion of existence."

What has been said is concerning the Puthujjana-gati. Now what is Ariya-gati? It is deliverance from the dispersion of existence after death. Or it is the disappearance of that "dispersion of existence" which is conjoined with the destiny of inevitable death in every existence". It is also the potentiality of being reborn in higher existences or in existences according to one's choice. It is also not like the fall of coconuts from trees; but it is to be compared to birds, which fly through the air to whatsoever place or tree on which they may wish to perch. Those men, Devas and Brahmā who have attained the Aryan state, can get to whatever better existence, i.e., as men, Devas, Brahmā, they may wish to be reborn into, when they expire from the particular existence in which they have attained such Aryan state. Though they expire unexpectedly without aiming to be reborn in any particular existence, they are destined to be reborn in a better or higher existence, and at the same time are entirely free from rebirth into lower and miserable existences. Moreover, if they are reborn again in the abode of men, they never become of the lower or poorer classes, nor are they fools or heretics, but become quite otherwise. It is the same in the abodes of Devas and Brahmā. They are entirely set free from the Puthujjana-gati.

What has been said is concerning the course of Ariyā. Now we will explain the two Gatis side by side. When a man falls from a tree he falls like a coconut because he has no wings with which to fly in the air. In precisely the same way when men, Devas and Brahmā who are Putthujjana, riveted to the hallucination of wrong views and having no wings of the Noble Eightfold Path to make the sky their resting-place, transmigrate after the dissolution of their present bodies into new ones, they fall tumbling into the bonds of the evils of dispersion. In this world ordinary men who climb up very high trees fall tumbling to the ground when the branches which they clutch or try to make their resting place break down. They suffer much pain from the fall, and sometimes death ensues because they have no other resting-places but the branches, neither have they wings to fly in the air. It is the same with men, Devas and Brahmā who have their hallucination of Wrong Views, when their resting-place of Wrong Views as regards self is broken down, they fall tumbling into the dispersion existence. For their resting- places are only their bodies; and they have neither such a resting place as Nibbána, nor such strong wings as the Noble Eightfold Path to support them. As for the birds, though the branches they rest on may break, they never fall, but easily fly through the air to any other tree. For the branches are not their permanent resting places but only temporary ones. They entirely rely on their wings and the air. In the same way, men, Devas and Brahmā who have become Ariya and are freed from the hallucination of Wrong Views, neither regard their bodies as their Attá or Self, nor rely upon them. They have in their possession

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permanent resting places, such as Nibbána, which is the entire cessation of all tumbling existence. They also possess the very mighty wings of the Noble Eightfold Path, which are able to bear them to better existences.

What has been said is concerning the distinction between the two Gatis, i.e., the Putthujjana-gati and the Ariya-gati.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 56

5. Papātavagga

47. Paṭhamachiggaḷayugasutta

"Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, puriso mahāsamudde ekacchiggaḷaṃ yugaṃ pakkhipeyya. Tatrāpissa kāṇo kacchapo. So vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakiṃ sakiṃ ummujjeyya. Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, api nu kho kāṇo kacchapo vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakiṃ sakiṃ ummujjanto amusmiṃ ekacchiggaḷe yuge gīvaṃ paveseyyā"ti? "Yadi nūna, bhante, kadāci karahaci dīghassa addhuno accayenā"ti.

"Khippataraṃ kho so, bhikkhave, kāṇo kacchapo vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakiṃ sakiṃ ummujjanto amusmiṃ ekacchiggaḷe yuge gīvaṃ paveseyya, na tvevāhaṃ, bhikkhave, sakiṃ vinipātagatena bālena manussattaṃ vadāmi.

Taṃ kissa hetu? Na hettha, bhikkhave, atthi dhammacariyā, samacariyā, kusalakiriyā, puññakiriyā. Aññamaññakhādikā ettha, bhikkhave, vattati dubbalakhādikā. Taṃ kissa hetu? Adiṭṭhattā, bhikkhave, catunnaṃ ariyasaccānaṃ. Katamesaṃ catunnaṃ? Dukkhassa ariyasaccassa … pe … dukkhanirodhagāminiyā paṭipadāya ariyasaccassa.

Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, 'idaṃ dukkhan'ti yogo karaṇīyo … pe … 'ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā'ti yogo karaṇīyo"ti.

Sattamaṃ.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 56

5. Papātavagga

48. Dutiyachiggaḷayugasutta

"Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, ayaṃ mahāpathavī ekodakā assa. Tatra puriso ekacchiggaḷaṃ yugaṃ pakkhipeyya. Tamenaṃ puratthimo vāto pacchimena saṃhareyya, pacchimo vāto puratthimena saṃhareyya, uttaro vāto dakkhiṇena saṃhareyya, dakkhiṇo vāto uttarena saṃhareyya. Tatrassa kāṇo kacchapo. So vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakiṃ sakiṃ ummujjeyya. Taṃ kiṃ maññatha, bhikkhave, api nu kho kāṇo kacchapo vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakiṃ sakiṃ ummujjanto amusmiṃ ekacchiggaḷe yuge gīvaṃ paveseyyā"ti? "Adhiccamidaṃ, bhante, yaṃ so kāṇo kacchapo vassasatassa vassasatassa accayena sakiṃ sakiṃ ummujjanto amusmiṃ ekacchiggaḷe yuge gīvaṃ paveseyyā"ti.

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"Evaṃ adhiccamidaṃ, bhikkhave, yaṃ manussattaṃ labhati. Evaṃ adhiccamidaṃ, bhikkhave, yaṃ tathāgato loke uppajjati arahaṃ sammāsambuddho. Evaṃ adhiccamidaṃ, bhikkhave, yaṃ tathāgatappavedito dhammavinayo loke dibbati. Tassidaṃ, bhikkhave, manussattaṃ laddhaṃ, tathāgato loke uppanno arahaṃ sammāsambuddho, tathāgatappavedito ca dhammavinayo loke dibbati.

Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, 'idaṃ dukkhan'ti yogo karaṇīyo … pe … 'ayaṃ dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā'ti yogo karaṇīyo"ti.

Aṭṭhamaṃ.

Saṃyutta Nikāya 56

Connected Discourses on the Truths

47. Yoke with a Hole (1)

"Bhikkhus, suppose a man would throw a yoke with a single hole into the great ocean, and there was a blind turtle which would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole?"

"If it would ever do so, venerable sir, it would be only after a very long time."

"Sooner, I say, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole than the fool who has gone once to the nether world would regain the human state. For what reason? Because here, bhikkhus, there is no conduct guided by the Dhamma, no righteous conduct, no wholesome activity, no meritorious activity. Here there prevails mutual devouring, the devouring of the weak. For what reason? Because, bhikkhus, they have not seen the Four Noble Truths. What four? The noble truth of suffering … the noble truth of the way leading to the cessation of suffering.

"Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: 'This is suffering.'… An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'"

Saṃyutta Nikāya 56

Connected Discourses on the Truths

48. Yoke with a Hole (2)

"Bhikkhus, suppose that this great earth had become one mass of water, and a man would throw a yoke with a single hole upon it. An easterly wind would drive it westward; a westerly wind would drive it eastward; a northerly wind would drive it southward; a southerly wind would drive it northward. There was a blind turtle which would come to the surface once every hundred years. What do you think, bhikkhus, would that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole?"

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"It would be by chance, venerable sir, that that blind turtle, coming to the surface once every hundred years, would insert its neck into that yoke with a single hole."

"So too, bhikkhus, it is by chance that one obtains the human state; by chance that a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One arises in the world; by chance that the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata shines in the world.

"You have obtained that human state, bhikkhus; a Tathāgata, an Arahant, a Perfectly Enlightened One has arisen in the world; the Dhamma and Discipline proclaimed by the Tathāgata shines in the world.

"Therefore, bhikkhus, an exertion should be made to understand: 'This is suffering.'… An exertion should be made to understand: 'This is the way leading to the cessation of suffering.'"

6.2.4.3 Tiṇsamatta Sutta - About Thirty Monks

1. I heard thus. At one time the Blessed One was living in the squirrels' sanctuary in the bamboo grove in Rajagaha.

2. Then about thirty monks from Pava, all of them forest dwellers, dependants on morsel food, wearers of rag robes limited to three and all with bonds approached the Blessed One, worshipped and sat on a side.

3. Then it occurred to the Blessed One: "These thirty monks from Pava, are all forest dwellers, dependants on morsel food, wearers of rag robes limited to three and all with bonds. What if I teach them, so that their minds would be released from desires without holdings while sitting in these same seats?"

4. Then the Blessed One addressed them: "Monks." And those monks said-:"Yes, venerable sir."

5. The Blessed One said: "Monks, without an end is the train of existence, a beginning cannot be pointed out of beings enveloped in ignorance and bound by craving, running from one existence to another.

6. "Monks, what is more, the blood you have shed on account of the neck being severed from the body in this long journey in existences running from one existence to another, or the water in the four great oceans?"

7. "Venerable sir, as the Blessed One has taught us the blood we have shed on account of the neck being severed from the body in this long journey in existences running from one existence to another, is more than the water in the four great oceans."

8. "Excellent! Monks, you know the Teaching as taught by me.

9. "Indeed monks, the blood you have shed on account of the neck being severed from the body in this long journey in existences running from one existence to another, is more than the water in the four great oceans.

10. "Monks, you have long experienced the severing of the neck from the body and the shedding of blood when you were born as cattle, that blood is more than the water in the four great oceans.

11. "Monks, you have long experienced the severing of the neck from the body and the shedding of blood when you were born as buffaloes, that blood is more than the water in the four great oceans.

12. "Monks, you have long experienced the severing of the neck from the body and the shedding of blood when you were born as sheep, that blood is more than the water in the four great oceans.

13. "Monks, ... re ... born as goats ... re ...

14. "Monks, ... re ... born as deer... re ...

15. "Monks, ... re ... born as fowl ... re ...

16. "Monks, ... re ... born as pigs..... re ...

17. "Monks, you have long experienced the severing of the neck from the body and the shedding of blood when you were taken as robbers who destroy villages, that blood is more than the water in the four great oceans ...

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18. "Monks, you have long experienced the severing of the neck from the body and the shedding of blood when you were taken as robbers who wait in ambush, that blood is more than the water in the four great oceans ...

19. "Monks, you have long experienced the severing of the neck from the body and the shedding of blood when you were taken as robbers who went to other wives that blood is more than the water in the four great oceans ...

20. "What is the reason? Monks, without an end is the train of existence, a beginning cannot be pointed out, of beings enveloped in ignorance and bound by craving, running from one existence to another.

"Monks, it is suitable that you should turn away from all determinations, fade and be released from them."

21. The Blessed One said thus and those monks delighted in the words of the Blessed One.

22. When this discourse was given the thirty monks of Pava experienced the release of their minds from desires without holdings.

6.2.5 Kamma, Debt, and Meditation

Revised April 7, 2016; September 4, 2019

1. "This world" of 31 realms is very complex; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Nothing happens due to a single cause, and nothing happens just by itself: Multiple causes lead to multiple effects.

2. In a perfect world, everyone will share everything equally, and everyone will be happy. But people are born with different levels of not only wealth but also different levels of health, physical appearance, capabilities, etc. These are the results of *kamma* (good and bad) accrued over very long periods in the past.

3. No one has everything "just right." So, we try to get what we don't have or like to have. Every time we crave for something and try to acquire those things by immoral means, knowingly or unknowingly we get into debt.

- When those *akusala kamma* (immoral deeds) involves another living being, we get into some kind "*sansāric* relationship" with that being; this is how we have friends, family, AND enemies. These things do not happen by chance.

4. NOTHING in this world happens by chance. Everything happens due to a cause, a reason. **But since results (*vipāka*) can materialize later, even in future lives, we cannot see this "cause and effect" in most cases.** When we do something harmful to another being we become indebted to that being; that debt will have to be paid with interest that is many many times over. Thinks about the following:

- When we get a loan, we have to pay back the loan with interest. If we promise to pay back and do not fulfill that commitment, we will have to pay it with interest sometime in the future. Imagine how much interest we would have to pay on a $1000 loan at 6% interest over, say just 200 years, which is insignificant in the *sansāric* time scale. You can use the "72 rule." That means if you do not make any monthly payments, the amount you have to pay will double every (72/interest rate) years. In this case, it will double every 12 years. It will double again in another 12 years, i.e., after 24 years you will have to pay $4000. After only 40 years, the amount will be $10,000. Only after 200 years it will a billion dollars!
- Can you imagine how much money we may have to pay to settle even small that we took a long, long time ago?
- We have to pay back not only monetary transactions. Imagine how much would it cost to bring up a child, as a mother does? It is unimaginable over long times.
- When we have such debts, nature has set up many ways to pay off such debts. Many times the same group of people is born to the same families, paying back "old debts." Or one may become a servant for another.

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- Many relationships that we have in this life arise from "long-term debt" from many lives in the past. For example, people are born in the same family, same community, or same geographical locations, for many, many lives. That is for just paying back debts and for claiming old debts. In Sinhala, relationships are called "*sanbandha*" (="*san*" + "*bandha*" where "*san*" is defilement (*saṅkhāra*), and "*bandha*" is a connection; thus connection due to *saṅkhāra*). Sometimes old creditors come back even in the form of annoying mosquitoes, ants, bugs, etc.
- Now if one takes another's life, one may have to sacrifice one's own life many times over. That is scary stuff, but we need to know that our actions will have consequences.

5. Instead of paying off such "old debts" that way, there is another way to pay back old debts. When one does a good deed, one could transfer the merits of that good deed to old creditors called "*pattidāna*" (this is commonly called "*puñña anumodana*"; see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna)- How Does It Happen?").

6. In this beginning-less *saṃsāra*, we have been indebted to unbelievably many beings. Thus we transfer the merits to all beings. We think in our mind, "May the merits of this good deed be shared by all beings."

- If one does this genuinely, it will be quite beneficial in the long term. The Buddha said that this is the most efficient way to pay back old debts. However, one needs to do this with sincerity, truly understanding the suffering caused by one's actions to others.living

7. One could accrue good merits not only by good deeds but also with insight meditation. The Buddha stated that if one cultivates *vipassanā* meditation on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, that leads many more merits compared to even donations or giving. After the meditation session, one transfers the merits to all beings.

- The nice thing is that one does not "lose any merits" either. Giving merits itself is meritorious. Also, one should forgive old debts from other beings. The mind is very powerful. If done with right intention, also these thoughts will have beneficial consequences for oneself and other living beings.

8. Therefore, we must try to alleviate the *kamma vipāka* from past *kamma* by using the mentioned methods above. **But the main purpose of such methods is actually to purify one's mind.**

- We can pay off past debts gradually this way. However, bigger chunks are paid off by attaining *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī*, and *Arahant* stages of *Nibbāna*. (Actually, the Buddha has said that if one does the *Ariya mettā* meditation frequently, one could pay off the debts associated with the *kāma loka* (first 11 realms). See, "5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."
- When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, all those *kamma vipāka* that could have given rebirth in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*) become nullified. When one reaches the *Arahanthood*, only those *kamma vipāka* that get a chance to come to fruition during the remaining time in that life will be paid off. Since there is no more rebirth, all remaining *kamma vipāka* do not get a chance to come to fruition.

9. The first step in purifying one's mind is to avoid *dasa akusala*; see, "Ten Immoral Action (Dasa Akusala)." One does not need to try to do all at once (especially for those who are new to Buddha Dhamma).

- It is a life journey, and one can start slowly. First, trying to avoid bad actions, and then do things that can be done without much stress. See the posts in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section and in particular, "2. The Basics in Meditation."
- There is no one watching, and only you know what your intentions are: whether they are moral or immoral.
- You will feel the benefits in terms of a less-stressed mind over time. It takes time, especially in the beginning. Then it will accelerate when one starts seeing the benefits. When one starts understanding that *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong views) play a big role in one's tendency to do some immoral acts will automatically reduce. see, "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis."

10. The Buddha said one could become indebted in four ways:

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- Engaging in ***dasa akusala* (10 unwholesome actions)**.
- Getting someone else to do such acts.
- Helping another in carrying out such acts.
- Praising someone who is doing such acts.

Thus one can become indebted in 40 ways. By avoiding all that will make one joyful (*adhimokko* or sense of well being). That will give impetus to accelerate one's efforts. Also, see, "Habits and Goals," and "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada)."

Another more in-depth analysis at, "Difference Between Giving up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless", ……

6.2.6 How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Diṭṭhi)?

More than 99% of one's immoral acts have their causes in *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong views); see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?." Thus it is critical to understand what wrong views are.

- A simpler, yet a fundamental, analysis on wrong views can be found at, "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis."

1. We all have our views about different things: politics, religions, sports, lifestyles, etc. And most times it is fun to talk about and debate whose views are the correct ones. But each one of us have views based on a limited knowledge about only a fraction of "this world."

- A good way to figure out whether one view is better than another is to see whether that view provides more insight AND has more explanatory power about the world.
- In fact, that is the only way. Because anybody can just say, "my view is better than yours."

2. When I refer to "*diṭṭhi*" or wrong views, these are the wrong views per Buddha. **It must be noted that "*diṭṭhi*" means views, but in Pāli literature it has been common to call "*micchā diṭṭhi*" (pronounced "*michcha*") or wrong views as just "*diṭṭhi*."** It is critical to have the "right views" because otherwise we may be taking wrong decisions, and that could have very bad outcomes for billions of years to come. In order to make right decisions we need to "see the whole picture" or the world view of the Buddha.

- Of course, one is entitled to have his own views. It is just that according to Buddha Dhamma certain views are not only wrong, **but could lead to disastrous outcomes,** and those are called *diṭṭhi*. One either accepts this fact, or rejects it. It is a good idea to look at the "big picture" of the Buddha and THEN decide whether it makes sense or not. First let us see why one should even go through this exercise of looking at the big picture.

3. When one does not have a clear overall picture, one makes bad decisions. For example, a fish does not see the string or the hook, only sees the worm, and gets into trouble. If it saw the whole picture, with the string and the hook, it may realize that there is something wrong and would not try to grab the worm. If it saw the man standing on land holding the pole, that would have been another clue; but the fish can only see its "domain." Just like that we can only see "our domain" within the wider 31 realms, and we do not see the level of suffering in other lower realms.

- We are inherently incapable of seeing the "whole picture" because our sense faculties are formed by our *kamma* to be aware of only a part of whole existence; you may get an idea of what I am referring to in the post, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions." Therefore, no matter how smart each of us is, we cannot even imagine this whole picture by ourselves. It takes a very special, very pure mind to see the whole picture, the mind of a Buddha; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Introduction," and follow-up posts.

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4. The Buddha described this in the parable of the "elephant and the six blind men." Each blind man is feeling or exploring a different part of the elephant, and comes up with his view of what an elephant is: The one examines the tail says the elephant is like a rope, one examining a leg says the elephant is like a pillar, etc.

- The person holding the tail is certain that the elephant is like a rope "because I know what I experience; you cannot tell me it is not like a rope." He just does not realize that he is experiencing only part of the whole elephant.

5. Until a Buddha comes to this world, any human can only see a very small part of the whole picture. Like the little girl in the video being able to see the whole elephant, only a Buddha can see the whole picture about our true existence.

- Mathematician Kurt Gödel proved this mathematically in his Incompleteness Theorem, which says that it is not possible to discover complete truth of a closed system within that system; see, "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem." Thus science will NEVER be able to discover a COMPLETE set of laws about the nature. It can only uncover parts and the parts that have been discovered are totally consistence with Buddha Dhamma.

6. According to the Buddha, *diṭṭhis* are like that: some people say there is a rebirth process, and some say not. Some say when we die we will either go to hell or heaven. Some say, things really exist in a permanent way, and others say it is all a mirage. All these are *diṭṭhis*, because none of these fit the WHOLE PICTURE. None of these can explain the vagaries of life; see, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths"."

- For example, we can only see two of the 31 realms of existence: animal and human realms. We are not aware that most beings are trapped in the lowest four realms where there is much more suffering than we can see in the human and animal realms. We do not realize that our immoral actions from this life, AND from our past lives (that we are not aware of) could give us rebirth in those lower four realms; **this is "law of *kamma*" another part of the "big picture."** There is evidence for rebirth; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

7. Buddha Dhamma cannot be fully understood without having learned of that "big picture" from a Buddha or from a person who has learnt the correct version of it. Now, since the Buddha is not here and there are many versions of Buddha Dhamma, the question is how do we figure out which version to believe. The Buddha gave a solution to this problem: Find the version that satisfy the following conditions:

- All aspects should be consistent with the *Suttā* and *Vinaya* (and thus *Abhidhamma*); these were transmitted orally for about 500 years and then written down in the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* about 2000 years ago (Pāli *Tipiṭaka*).
- And all three descriptions in the *Tipiṭaka* (*sutta, vinaya, abhidhamma*) must be consistent with each other.

8. This second requirement is there to catch any mistakes made in the (especially oral) transmission from the time of the Buddha. It must be kept in mind that all three sets were formulated for easy oral transmission. I know several *suttā* by heart which I leaned when I was little; they have been formulated to be easily remembered. And there were different groups of *Bhikkus* assigned the responsibility for different sections during the time of oral transmission. Also see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

9. In a series of posts I have provided evidence that many versions of "Buddhism" being practiced today do not pass the above tests. All Mahayana versions are in blatant contradiction to the teachings in the *Tipiṭaka*, and some key concepts taught in Theravāda are also inconsistent with *Tipiṭaka*; see, "Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?," and the follow-up posts.

- Once one finds the key Dhamma concepts that are self-consistent, then one can easily figure out what is *diṭṭhi* and what is not. If anyone can point out anything on this website that is not internally consistent, I would appreciate it. Because my goal is genuine: to find and document the original teachings of the Buddha.

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10. Thus it is important to realize that *diṭṭhi* is an **established view (a view one is not even willing to rethink)** about the world, that is inconsistent with Buddha Dhamma. Let us take a few examples:

- Two good examples are the two views of "there is a self" and "there is no self"; see, "Ditthi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)." Both are wrong views according to the Buddha: there is only an ever-changing lifestream that progresses according to cause and effect (paṭicca samuppāda); see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."
- Another *diṭṭhi* many people have is that there is no rebirth process, or that there is a rebirth process but we will never be born as an animal because we have not done anything bad in this life. It is just a belief, there are no supporting evidence to back that up. On the other hand, the rebirth process involving all 31 realms and the natural law of *kamma*, together with *paṭicca samuppāda*, and other key concepts like *Tilakkhaṇa* can explain EVERYTHING that we experience. What needs to be understood is that ALL THOSE PIECES MUST BE THERE to complete the whole picture.

11. Just like a blind man holding onto a leg of the elephant and saying "This is what I experience and the elephant is like a pillar. I know what I experience, and I am right", we hold onto *diṭṭhis* that are inconsistent with the nature's laws. Once one hears the message of a Buddha, one should at least examine the credibility of that message by looking at the evidence he presented. Ultimately, one has to make the decision to accept Buddha's message or not. **This is why no one can lead anyone else to salvation. It is all in one's own mind.**

- Let me give an example how limited our world view had been even two hundred years ago. People believed that Earth was the only planet with the Sun going around the Earth. So, when the Buddha said there are innumerable world systems with other Suns and Moons, people thought that was a loony idea. There are many such diṭṭhis that have been proven to be wrong by science over the past hundred years or so; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction."

12. Some of the views we have are deeply ingrained, and not easy to get rid of. The main thing is NOT to take a firm stand on things that the Buddha called *diṭṭhi* and say, "I know this to be true, and only this to be true" and to cling to them. **Even a *Sotāpanna* may not be fully convinced that, for example, there is a *arupaloka*, but he/she has not ruled that out, i.e., does not have a *diṭṭhi*.** Only an *Arahant* has "complete" *Sammā Diṭṭhi*.

- As one learns pure Dhamma, one will have more and more confidence on the world view of the Buddha and will get rid of the wrong views. Since the mind cannot be forced to accept anything, this "change of vision" comes only through learning the pure Dhamma and through the enhanced life experience, which means purifying the mind; see, "The Importance of Purifying the MInd."
- **We cannot pick and choose parts of Buddha Dhamma that we like** if we want to reap the full benefits. Of course one could decide to "live with" parts of Dhamma that one is comfortable with. The Buddha said to accept his teachings only if they make sense. To make sense though, one needs to look at the whole picture too. Otherwise, it will be like a blind man examining only the leg of an elephant and saying it really feels like a pillar.

13. Diṭṭhi is one of 14 *akusala cetasika* and one of the ten *kilesa*; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)," and "Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)." *Diṭṭhi* have been described in many ways by the Buddha. At the Sotāpanna stage, those *diṭṭhis* that could lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* (*sathkaya diṭṭhi*, *vicikicchā, silabbata paramasa*) are permanently removed; see, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Cittas."

- Thus it is important to realize that the Sotāpanna stage CANNOT be reached until ***niyata micchā diṭṭhi*** or ESTABLISHED wrong views are removed. For example, one should not hold on to a firm belief that there is no rebirth process; one should at least keep an open mind.
- **Stated most succinctly, *micchā dithi* is the wrong perception of *nicca, sukha, atta, i.e.,* things can be be maintained to one's satisfaction, thus lasting happiness is possible, and thus it is**

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fruitful to stay in this world of 31 realms. One attains the first stage of *Sammā diṭṭhi* when one comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta* to a certain extent at the *Sotāpanna* stage.

14. The Buddha said his Dhamma is hard to understand, and it is not like anything that anyone taught before, except for another Buddha: It is "*Pubbe anunussetu Dhammesu*," "A Dhamma that has not been heard before." This is why the Buddha worried just after the Enlightenment whether he will be able to teach this difficult Dhamma to normal human beings. It takes a real effort to glean the message of the Buddha.

- Most of us have different types of *diṭṭhis*; see, "Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi Is Key"
- For a description of the ten *micchā diṭṭhi*, see, "Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi."

6.2.7 Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi

Buddha Dhamma explains how three kinds of worldviews lead to three types of *samādhi* (basically mindset) via three different paths. All these are discussed in detail in other posts, but here we summarize them. You can use the Search box on top right to find relevant posts.

1. Have you ever wondered how some people have any "peace of mind" while engaging in abominable actions day in and day out? It is easier to excuse someone who commits a bad act in a "moment of fury", i.e, when such action was not pre-planned (and the common law accommodates for that).

- But some people (think Hitler, Pol Pot in Cambodia) plan evil acts for years, and they seem to thrive doing it; they do not feel any remorse; rather they enjoy what they do. This is because just like facilitating a journey towards *Nibbāna* for someone who embarks on the Noble Eightfold Path, the nature also lets someone go in the opposite direction too. "*Dhammo ha ve rakkhati dhammacari*" applies to both kinds of "Dhamma."
- Dhamma is what one "bears." If one "carries good Dhamma", one will be guided in the "good direction" by nature. In the same way, one who "carries bad Dhamma" will be guided in the opposite direction. Both can get into "*samādhi*" doing it.

2. Samādhi ("*sama*"+"*adhi*" where "*sama*" means "same" and "*adhi*" means "dominance") means the object becomes the priority and the mind gets focused on it; as we discussed in many posts, when the mind becomes focused on one object (*arammana*), no matter what the object is, the *ekaggata cetasika* takes over and make the mind latched "on to it."

- When the minds gets to *samādhi*, the mind feels calm because it is stopped from jumping back and forth among many thought objects (*arammana*).
- This is how one gets to not only *samādhi* but also *anāriya jhāna* (a *jhāna* is a deeper state of absorption or *samādhi*) using breath meditation, just by focusing the mind on the breath.
- Thus, a master thief gets to *micchā samādhi* when intently focusing on the plan of a grand robbery in minute details. Not only does he get a joy out of it, his mind helps him work out the fine details; but someone with *micchā samādhi* can never get into a *jhāna.*
- It does not matter what the focus is, nature helps get it done if one really sets his/her mind to it. This is why "*Dhammo ha ve rakkati dhammacari"* can work in any situation. The human mind is very powerful, but it can be used in all three directions.

3. However, that does not change the fact that outcomes of "bad actions" will ALWAYS be bad in the long run. This is a universal law called "*bīja niyama*" which is one of five natures' primary laws called "*niyama*" ("*niyama*" in Pāli or Sinhala means "fixed", "unchangeable"); even though most times it is pronounced "*niyāma*", the correct pronunciation is "*niyama*."

- Bad kamma result in "bad *kamma bīja*" which will ONLY bear "bad fruits"; also, the consequences will be proportional to the "size" of the *kamma bīja (kamma* seed*)*. And the same holds true for good *kamma* seeds.

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4. Now, when someone gets on the "wrong track" mostly through bad associates or bad environment, one has the "ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*", and one could get into the "*micchā* eightfold path." **The ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are**:

1. giving (*dana*) has no merits,
2. being grateful and responding in kind (for what others have done for oneself) has no merits,
3. respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues has no merits,
4. what we enjoy/suffer in this life is not due to *kamma vipāka* but they "just happen",
5. this world does not exist, there are no other worlds than the one we can experience,
6. when one dies it is not possible to be born in para loka (netherworld),
7. mother is not a special person,
8. father is not a special person,
9. there are no instantaneous (*opapathika*) births,
10. there are no *samanabrahmana* (basically *Ariyā* or *yogis*) who have cultivated their minds to be free of defilements and thus can can see other realms and previous births.

- See, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)" for a discussion on *para loka*.

5. When one has **unshakeable** or ***niyata micchā diṭṭhi*** one gets on the ***micchā* eightfold path**; now one's mind is

- Since these factors feed on each other, once one gets into *micchā* eightfold path, it is difficult to break out of it. The key is *micchā diṭṭhi*: "Wrong vision" is hard to break, when it is continually being reinforced by wrong speech, actions, etc. Thus it is inevitable that one keeps strengthening one's "bad *gathi*" or behavior. Then it is increasingly easier to get to "*micchā samādhi*."

6. The Buddha said that ***Sammā Diṭṭhi* is two-fold**: there is a **mundane (*lokiya*) *Sammā Diṭṭhi*** and an ***Ariya Sammā Diṭṭhi***. When one has mundane *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, one rejects the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* mentioned above, and one strives to be born in human or higher realms. One knows that bad actions will lead to birth in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms).

- Thus one with mundane *sammā diṭṭhi* will develop **mundane versions of** *sammā sankappa* (good thoughts), *sammā vaca* (abstain from lying, gossiping, etc), *sammā kammanta* (engages only in moral acts), and so on and then it is easier for one to get to mundane *sammā samādhi*. This is the **mundane sammā eightfold path**.
- However, while someone following the ***micchā* eightfold path cannot attain any *jhāna***, one on the mundane *sammā* eightfold path can attain *anāriya jhāna*; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Anariya Jhāna."

7. The critical difference between mundane *sammā diṭṭhi* and *Ariya Sammā Diṭṭhi* is that while one with mundane *sammā diṭṭhi* rejects immoral behavior based on one's fear of rebirth in the *apāyā* and one's hope for rebirth in comfort-filled *deva* or *brahma* worlds (or even because it makes one feels good about the act), one ATTAINS *Ariya Sammā Diṭṭhi* when one comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta* at least to a significant extent, i.e., one becomes a *Sotāpanna*.

- Thus one starts on the Path by following the mundane *sammā* eightfold path, and at some point enters the *Ariya Sammā* Eightfold Path when attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- At that stage, one's mind **automatically rejects** immoral acts because **one's mind sees the futility** as well as the danger of such acts. What is the point of having some sense pleasure if it lasts only a short time AND could lead to much misery in the future for long times?

8. The critical point is that when one becomes a *Sotāpanna*, **one's mind (and the brain) will be changed** so that one will not act even impulsively, let alone capable of pre-planning an act that could yield rebirth in the *apāyā*.

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- Scientists do confirm that there are significant changes in the brain just due to breath meditation alone; see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."
- Such future brain studies on people engaged in the correct *ānāpāna* meditation can be expected to yield profound changes in a brain when a person attains the Sotāpanna stage.

9. Thus one becomes a *Sotāpanna* (enter the stream) from the mundane *sammā diṭṭhi* stage by comprehending the true nature of the world (i.e., it is fruitless to be born ANYWHERE in the 31 realms) by learning the meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* from a Buddha (who discovers them), or from a true disciple of the Buddha.

- Once one becomes a *Sotāpanna,* the Path to *Nibbāna* becomes clear, and one does not need any more help. One will cultivate the next six steps and get to *Ariya Sammā Samādhi* and to the *Arahant* stage of *Nibbāna*.

10. I need to re-emphasize the difference between "living a moral life" which is promoted by most of world's major religions, and the emphasize on "purifying the mind" and "comprehending the true nature of the wider world of 31 realms" in Buddha Dhamma.

- One needs to approach this extra step first by being "moral", i.e., by following the mundane *sammā* eightfold path and getting rid of some of the five hindrances. Then one's mind is purified to an extent to be able to "see through the fog of ignorance" and comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- Buddha's message about the "suffering hidden in the midst of apparent sense pleasures" is indeed a "Dhamma that has never been known." It could be contrary to one's instincts, because all we have known from the beginningless time is about enjoying the sense pleasures.

Note: The three kinds of eightfold paths, *micchā diṭṭhi*, and *micchā samādhi* are described in the *Mahā Chattareesaka Sutta*; see, "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

6.2.8 Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society

1. Unless one develops *abhiññā* powers via meditation, the rebirth process cannot be "proven" with certainty. Yet, there is mounting evidence for it that cannot be ignored either; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

- Putting that question aside, let us look at some mundane implications IF indeed the rebirth process, as described by the Buddha, is correct.

2. The first thing to realize is how short this life of 100 years or so is. It is unimaginably small. Our universe has been there for about 14 BILLION years and that is just a blip in the cosmic time scale.

3. Looking at the world history, most calamities of war could have been prevented if people understood how short this life is. Where are those emperors and kings today, who sacrificed so many human lives to capture another country or to maintain their powers?

- Because of the atrocities they committed, they are most likely to be in the lowest of the *apāyā*.
- For the briefest time of enjoyment and power, they accumulated so much bad kamma to spend billions of years in total misery.

4. What significance would race, color, ethnicity, religion, beauty, money, etc would have in one's actions if one really understood that all those are not only temporary, but one could be on the other side in the very next life? This is a topic that is worth contemplating a lot.

5. Let us take the struggle between the Palestinians and the Israelis, because it is making headlines these days; one could take any other conflict. According to Buddha Dhamma, there are two effects that come to play here.

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- One in either camp will develop a mindset to hate the other side, take revenge for some action, etc. If they have any kammic energy for the human "*bhava*" they will come back to the same place with matching "*gathi*", looking for revenge; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati + ichcha" + "Sama + uppada."
- The other aspect is for any bad action one does in such a conflict is going to have consequences RELATED to that act. When person A kills or harms another person B, A becomes indebted to B. One way to "pay back this debt" is for B to be born as a child to A; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation." Isn't that the biggest irony of all? A Palestinian (Israeli) becoming the child of an Israeli (Palestinian)?
- Either way, the conflict will continue for a long time, unless both sides realize the folly of it all.
- This is true for many other conflicts that have been going-on for generations. It is likely that most of the characters involved have been the same. They are too much "involved" in the conflict and are unable to free their minds from it.

6. Let us take another example of a slave owner in the old days. That person made a lot of wealth by exploiting those slaves, but for how long? At most 100 years. Where are those slave owners now? They would either be in one of the lowest four realms OR could be a slave himself somewhere, possibly to a former slave.

- It is easy to extend this analysis to many other cases; it is good idea to contemplate on such things. It makes one understand the true meanings of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*. That is unfruitful to do immoral things to achieve a brief moment of sense pleasure, where the consequences can play out for much longer time in a future birth.

7. Yet we strive for a quarter of our lives to go through the basic educational process (which is the only part that makes any sense in the long term), and basically most of the rest of the life to "accumulate things and prestige."

- We do not stop and think about how the last years of the life are going to be, let alone about future lives. By the time we have made much of those accomplishments, our senses start degrading, and no matter how much money we have, we will never be able to maintain our physical appearance or the level of sense pleasure to our liking.

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Done Got Old
- The problem is that we are too busy to contemplate on such issues because we are in a frantic struggle to "make money for survival", and whatever vacation time we get we would not want to spend that time for contemplation, but to go on trip or do some such activity to "enjoy ourselves." But when one gets back from a vacation, it feels like one needs another to recover from those hectic activities.

8. There is another reason that people do not want to even think about such things; it could be depressing. But I can say with conviction that once one understands the "true nature of this world", it WILL lead to a peaceful state of mind. It will also be easier to get into *samādhi* and *jhānā*.

- The reason is that as one understands *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (the futility of doing immoral things to gain sense satisfaction in world that is INHERENTLY not setup for that), one GRADUALLY loses attachment to worldly things and this makes the mind peaceful; this is the root cause of *nirāmisa sukha*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."
- *Nibbāna* or "Nivana" or "cooling down" is not like any sense pleasure. Rather, it is a relief. A good analogy is the following: suppose someone has a migraine headache; then the day that headache disappears, that person will get a HUGE sense of relief. It is not a sense pleasure, but rather a feeling of well-being that is hard to express.

9. I can give one example to make this point. Many people who start understanding *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* realize that they do not watch TV or go to entertainment events as much as they used to. This is not something they do deliberately, it just happens. They would rather enjoy a meditation session at home or read/listen to Dhamma. It may be already happening to some of you.

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- The mind cannot be forced. It just takes the better path; **but the mind has to be exposed to the better, correct path.** This is why giving true Dhamma is the best giving.

6.2.9 What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons?

Revised February 20, 2019; August 21, 2019

1. While the concept of a Creator God is absent in Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism), some beings fit into some conventional ideas on satan, angels, and demons, such as "Seth" and "Ramtha." Since some readers may not be familiar with "Seth" and "Ramtha," let me first provide some background.

- Jane Roberts wrote a series of popular books based on "Seth," a being who could "possess" her body with her permission, and spoke to her husband about various things about the world; see, for example, "Seth Speaks" by Jane Roberts (1994). Seth commented on diverse issues and made many predictions too. I am not sure how those "predictions" worked out, but I am sure the success rate must be no better than any human making such predictions.
- Then there is "Ramtha"," who speaks through J. Z. knight; see, for example, "Ramtha -The White Book" by J. Z. Knight (2005). He is a very benevolent being, proving honest advice on how to live a better life. As I understand, there is a significant following for Ramtha.

2. Therefore, there are two issues (or concepts) to be discussed:

- First, there is the more predominant belief of a "Creator God" in many religions. That concept is of course in direct contradiction with not only Buddha Dhamma, but also with modern science. The principle of Causality is the basis of both Buddha Dhamma. There must be a cause(s) for every effect.
- On the other hand, modern science does not believe in any "unseen beings." Science does not attempt to tackle phenomena not measurable with physical instruments.
- We will discuss both the concept of a creator and also possible influence by unseen living beings.

3. Some background on the idea of a Creator God: In my early stages of learning about other religions, I read a variety of books ranging from those by C. S. Lewis ("Mere Christianity" is an excellent introduction) to "The Language of God" by Francis Collins (2007) to understand the "case for a Creator"; see, "The Language of God" by Francis Collins."

- From all those books, the books by these two authors better focus on the issue to provide a rational basis for believing in a creator God.

4. As I understand, one reason for those two authors for believing in a Creator is the existence of Moral law. How can we know and feel the truth of the Moral laws unless God instilled those in us?

- On the other side, both authors struggled with the issue of Satan (or Devil), and why there is suffering.
- Why would God allow the existence of Satan, and the associated immoral behavior by people? The main conclusion was that God chose to give the man free will, and the man abused it.
- Lewis in particular worried about the existence of suffering. Why would God allow that?

5. Let us see what Buddha Dhamma says about those two issues.

- Of course, in Buddha Dhamma, there is no Creator. Everything happens due to (multiple) causes and by definition, there is no first cause (i.e., a Creator). The "world" has existed as far as one (with supernormal powers or *abhiññā*) can see; for details, see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- Even people without *abhiññā* powers can remember one or a few past lives; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." In some exceptional cases, some can recall multiple past lives under hypnosis; see the book "Many Lives, Many Masters" by Brian Weiss, who is a psychotherapist.

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6. In Buddha Dhamma, "the good" and "the bad" in this world are all built into nature's laws. Any sentient being experiences "the world" with its sense faculties, and that experience comes in the form of thoughts (*citta*).

- Based on those sense inputs AND one's *gati* AT THAT TIME, one generates various "good" and "bad" responses. These responses first manifested as mere thoughts, but we may act on them further by speech and bodily actions.
- There are 52 mental factors (*cetasika*) that include both "good" characteristics (such as kindness, generosity, fear and shame of wrong, etc.), and "bad" traits (such as greed, hate, shamelessness and fearlessness of wrong doing, etc.). In the "Abhidhamma" and "Tables and Summaries" sections.
- Until one becomes one of the "*attha purisa puggala*" (eight Noble Persons), one WILL have both good and bad *gati* that COULD lead to births in the *apāyā*.

7. Thus there is no "Creator God" or a "Satan." Each person acts on his/her own free will and commit moral or immoral acts. What a person today is the "cumulative result" of all one's actions in the deep past. These manifest as our character (or "*gathi*" or "*gathī*") or *sansāric* habits (or "*āsavas*"). There are many posts on this issue at the site, starting with "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)."

- And these *gathi* and *āsavas* are in constant flux; thus, one could be a murderer one day, but then through sheer willpower can decide to be a "better person." There is no "soul" or a fixed "self." One cannot say there is "no-self" either, because one's "*gathi*" or "*āsava*" are unique characteristics and are "one's own"; see, "What Reincarnates? – The Concept of a Lifestream."

8. And no one else can make that change but oneself. Even the Buddha can only show the way to change, i.e., how to change these "*gathi*" and the "*āsavas*" for the better. When one follows that one can feel the "cooling down" or '*niveema*" or the *nirāmisa sukha*. That is the real goal in Buddhist meditation; see, "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation."

- The "moral code" comes naturally out of this big picture. One can lead a peaceful life by practicing "*dasa kusala*" (ten moral acts), and avoiding "*dasa akusala*" (ten immoral acts); see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and the follow up post.

9. Let us also discuss briefly "demons" and "angels" (or other gods). Most Creator-based religions have such entities. And they are supposed to be able to influence humans. Are there beings like that according to Buddha Dhamma?

- Yes. In Buddha Dhamma, the world is much more complicated than with just demons and angels. We can see and experience only two realms (human and animal) out of 31 possible realms in this world; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- If someone develops *abhiññā* powers (see, "Power of the Human Mind" and follow-up posts), depending on the level attained one could "see" some or many of these other beings. Some people can do this at present.

10. However, even the majority of people with *abhiññā* power can only "see" some inhabitants in the lowest 11 realms or "*kāma loka*." That includes the six *deva loka* with less dense bodies than ours.

- The beings in the *rūpa loka* and the *arūpa loka* have "bodies" even less dense than those in the deva realms, and it is even more difficult to "see" them.
- The six realms in the *deva loka* are the closest thing to a "heaven" according to the Buddha Dhamma. Those beings have bodies that are free from physical illnesses, and there is much more happiness there than in the human world. And they have long lifetimes. However, any being in any higher realm can end up in the lowest four planes (*apāyā*) in the future unless they reach at least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.

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11. Some of these beings can communicate with humans with or without *abhiññā* powers. Some of these beings are benevolent, and others who are evil. As pointed out in the posts on "*gathi*", a being normally communicates with a human with similar "*gathi*" or character.

- Thus an evil being (we could say "a demon") tries typically to communicate with a human with similar lousy character. They may try to impress the human and try to get their agenda fulfilled.
- A benevolent being (we could say "an angel" or "a god") is usually a *deva* from the six *deva* realms. They like to help out people with good character, but usually, do not try to communicate directly. Typically, the person may not even know about it.

12. Therefore, many such beings like to "show off" and also genuinely try to help people live a better life. But those beings themselves are "travelers of *saṃsāra*" who happen to have a good birth for a more extended period.

- Then some beings are evil or with bad intentions. I am not aware of any prominent cases like those mentioned in #1 above. However, there are many reports on "hearing voices" and even committing crimes based on the instructions through such voices.

13. Those beings with bad intentions cannot influence us if our mindsets are NOT COMPATIBLE with theirs. That is a crucial point to understand!

- **One is ALWAYS responsible for one's action. If one is influenced by an "unseen evil being," that is also due to one's own lack of morality (one has cultivated bad "*gati*").**
- **Just as in common law, ignorance of Nature's laws is not an excuse.**
- This is why we all have been trapped in this suffering-filled rebirth process for this long. We had not been able to understand Nature's laws. Only a Buddha can understand those, and we should be thankful that we live in a time when that message is still available.
- We need to learn Dhamma, get rid of bad *gati*, and cultivate good *gati*. That will pave the way to becoming a Noble Person and thus be free of all future suffering!

14. This world is very complex, and we perceive only a tiny part of it. But the point is that there is no place anywhere in the 31 realms that can provide permanent happiness.

- There is no point in pursuing such demons or even angels. They are in the same predicament, or worse, compared to us. Those benevolent beings will help us, even without seeking help, if they see the good in us.
- As humans, we have the unique advantage of learning the truth about the dangers of this rebirth process (*saṃsāra*) and work towards getting out of it by seeking *Nibbāna* or "cooling down." That was THE message of the Buddha.

6.2.10 Paṭisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi

Revised September 7, 2016; revised #2 on March 15, 2018; September 7, 2019

1. The transition of a life-stream from one existence (*bhava*) to another takes place during the last *citta vīthi* of the present *bhava*. For example, when a human is reborn an animal or a *deva*. For a fundamental description of this process, see, "Cuti-Paṭisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

- But here let us look at how different types of kamma, as well as one's "*gati*" (pronounced "gathi") lead to corresponding rebirths in different realms.

2. As discussed in "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta," all ten types of *akusala kamma* are done with 12 types of *akusala citta*.

- Only those five *akusala cittā* with wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*) or *vicikicchā* can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* (four lower realms). Those *akusala cittā* lead to just one *paṭisandhi vipāka citta*, and it is called

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the "*akusala vipāka upekkhā santīraṇa citta*." That is the type of *cittā* that comes to the mind of the dying person destined for the *apāyā*.

- The two dislike-rooted (*paṭigha*) *cittā* do not arise at the *Anāgāmi* stage. The remaining five *akusala cittā* do not occur only in Arahants; see, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

3. That one *paṭisandhi citta* can lead to rebirth in an uncountable number of "*bhava*" in the four lowest realms. In the animal realm itself, there is an uncountable number of varieties.

- Thus what determines the actual "place of birth" in the four lowest realms is one's "*gati*." Once the fate is determined by to be born in one of the four lowest realms due to an *akusala kamma*, the next step for nature is to match "*gati* to *gati*." A greedy person is likely to be matched with a birth in the *peta realm* (hungry ghosts). A vicious person is expected to be destined to the hell (*niraya*); see, "How Character (Gathi) Leads to Bhava and Jāti."

4. Now let us look at how rebirth takes place according to one's *kusala kamma*. The merits of a *kusala kamma* are ENHANCED when done without *moha*, i.e., without *micchā diṭṭhi (*or with at least mundane *sammā diṭṭhi).* That is discussed in the post, "A Simple way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)."

- Thus out of the eight *mahā kusala kamma* (great meritorious actions), four are done with knowledge. They, of course also *alobha* and *adosa*, i.e., generosity and loving-kindness. Since they have all three *kusala* roots, they are "*tihetuka*" birth ("*thi*" means three and "*hethu*" means roots). **They lead to the best kind of rebirths.** Those are "*tihetuka paṭisandhi*" or "rebirth with three roots."
- The other four *mahā kusala kamma* have generosity and loving kindness, but without mundane **or** *lokuttara sammā diṭṭhi*. Thus the resulting *kamma vipāka* lead to "*dvihethuka paṭisandhi*" or "rebirth with two roots." They also point to birth in the realms 5 through 11 (i.e., in the human and *deva* realms), but they will have less *kammic* power for that birth.

5. It is only those with *tihetuka paṭisandhi* who can attain *magga phala* and attain *Ariya jhānā* in this life. Those with "*dvihetuka paṭisandhi*" lack in necessary wisdom (but this is NOT book-knowledge); they can make progress and acquire the essential merits to have a future *tihetuka paṭisandhi*. But it is impossible to say who has a *tihetuka* or *dvihetuka paṭisandhi*; only a Buddha is capable of that.

- There is one more *paṭisandhi citta* that is possible from a lower grade *mahā kusala kamma.* That is also a *kamma* done without knowledge and with less enthusiasm. It involves a *kusala vipāka upekkhā santīraṇa citta*, and is a "rebirth with no good roots." That is an "*ahetuka paṭisandhi*." Note that here even though there are two roots present technically, they are very weak due to absence of enthusiasm. For example, some people participate in exemplary work just because others do it, or they did not have a choice.
- Such an "*ahetuka paṭisandhi*" can leads to births only in the human or the lowest *deva* realm. Such a birth is comparatively easy to recognize (but not always). People with *ahetuka paṭisandhi* have low IQ, could be blind or deaf at birth,. Or they are severely handicapped in other ways.
- However, such deficiencies COULD occur due to problems encountered in the womb (if the mother is a drug addict or had an ailment during the pregnancy). That is why, in some cases, we see people with above characteristics, but are smart. They are not born with an *ahetuka paṭisandhi* and could learn Dhamma and attain *jhānā*.

6. Thus we see that there is only **one *paṭisandhi citta* due to the ten *akusala kamma* (from 12 *akusala citta*). There are nine possible *paṭisandhi citta* due to the eight *mahā kusala kamma.***

- The remaining *paṭisandhi citta* lead to rebirth in the *Brahma loka* (16 *rūpa loka* and four *arūpa loka*). These rise due to *jhānic* states: rebirth in the *rūpa loka* are due to the 5 *rūpa jhānā* and rebirth in the four *arūpa loka* are due to the four *arūpa jhānā*.

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7. Therefore, **only 19 *paṭisandhi citta* that lead to rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms.** As we have discussed, there is an uncountable number of species (we ourselves can see numerous animal species). **What differentiates different species are the "*gathi*."** You can see that each species has its own "character": Even within a given species, there are differences in "*gati*." If you look at dogs, there are some who are vicious and then there are cuddly (poodles).

- In the days of the Buddha, when someone dies, relatives of the deceased usually ask the Buddha "what the *jāti* is, and what the *gatī*" is for the new birth. These days we don't have the Buddha to clarify that for us. But we can sort of guess what "*gatī*" we have and make sure to change them for the better.
- When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, any "*gatī*" matching those in the *apāyā* is permanently removed. That means hate, greed, ignorance at the highest levels.
- At the *Sakadāgāmī* stage, one's liking to a "dense body" to enjoy sense pleasures is no longer there. Such a "dense body" is one that can get diseases. Thus a *Sakadāgāmī* is never born in human or lower realms where sickness and body aches are a fact of life.
- Then at the *Anāgāmī* stage, one loses craving for enjoying pleasures with the nose, tongue, and the body. Then one can find matching "*gatī*" only in the *rūpa* and *arūpa loka*.
- At the *Arahant* stage, one loses craving for any sensory pleasure associated with even a trace of matter. At that stage, the mind attains the true freedom; no more "*gatī*" left.

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6.3 Seeking Nibbāna

1. This section is for those who are interested not merely in pursuing a good life or seeking better lives in future births. Other religions can also provide guidance for those goals to a certain extent. The uniqueness in the Buddha's message is that there is perpetual suffering in the unending cycle of rebirths in "this world", the root causes for that suffering, that there is possible release from that suffering (Nibbāna), and there is a way to attain *Nibbāna*.

2. The first stage of attaining Nibbāna is the *Sotāpanna* (Stream Entry) stage. In order to reach this stage, one needs to have a complete understanding of Buddha Dhamma (or the laws of nature). Since only a Buddha can discover these laws, it is not possible for anyone (no matter how intelligent) to discover these laws by oneself.

3. Once the *Sotāpanna* stage is attained, one knows what to do next. Thus there is no need to get further information from anywhere else. My goal with this site is to provide necessary information to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.

Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna subsection has a number of posts describing the *Sotāpanna* stage.

Posts in this section:

- Attha Purisa Puggalā – Eight Noble Persons
- Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava
- The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of āsavas
- Kaṇha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya
- Dasa Saṃyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process
- The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How the Root Causes are Removed
- Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?
- How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path Starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta
- Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta
- Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless
-

6.3.1 Aṭṭha Purisa Puggalā – Eight Noble Persons

March 4, 2019; revised #9 on March 6, 2019; October 5, 2019 (#11)

Introduction

1. There are many *suttā* that describe various characteristics of *Aṭṭha Purisa Puggalā* or *Ariyā* (Noble Persons). We will discuss some key features in this post, especially regarding the maximum time taken to attain the *Arahanthood*.

- There are likely to be several different ways that Noble Persons are defined in the *Tipiṭaka*. Here we will start by considering a categorization based on the state of development of *pañca indriya* in a set of suttā in *Saṃyutta Nikāya* 48.
- The "WebLink: suttacentral: Suddhika Sutta (SN 48.1)" states what the *pañca indriya* are: *Saddhā indriya, vīriyiya indriya, sati indriya, samādhi indriya, paññā indriya*.

2. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhama Vibhaṅga Sutta (SN 48.9)" explains what those five *indriya* are. I will just provide a short translation to get the idea.

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- ***Saddhā indriya*** is optimized when one truly realizes the truth of the virtues of the Buddha (*itipi so bhagava…*": "That Blessed One is an *Arahant*, perfectly enlightened, accomplished in true knowledge and conduct, perfectly purified, knower of the wider world (of 31 realms), unsurpassed in virtue, teacher of *devas, brahmā*, and humans, the Enlightened One, the Blessed One." This is about the Buddha as a person AND even more importantly, the comprehension of the concept of Buddha as "*bhava uddha*" [**Buddha** = ***bhava*** + ***uddha***: one who figured out how to stop existences (*bhava*) from arising. ***uddha*** is rooting out]; see, "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha."
- ***Viriya indriya*** represents one's effort in cultivating *kusala* and discarding *akusala*.
- ***Sati indriya*** represents one's ability to be mindful of one's thoughts, speech, and actions.
- ***Samādhi indriya*** indicates one's ability to focus on *Nibbāna* and to get to *samādhi*.
- ***Paññā indriya*** represents one's comprehension of the Four Noble Truths about *sansāric* suffering.

Categorization Based on *Pañca Indriya*

3. WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyasaṅkhitta Sutta (SN 48.13) states, "*Imesaṃ kho, bhikkhave,* ***pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ samattā paripūrattā arahaṃ hoti****, tato mudutarehi* ***anāgāmī*** *hoti, tato mudutarehi* ***sakadāgāmī*** *hoti, tato mudutarehi* ***sotāpanno*** *hoti, tato mudutarehi* ***dhammānusārī*** *hoti, tato mudutarehi* ***saddhānusārī*** *hoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave, indriyavemattatā phalavemattatā hoti, phalavemattatā puggalavemattatā*"*ti.*

- **Translated:** "*Bhikkhus*, **one who has fulfilled *pañca indriya* is an *Arahant***; one who has developed them to lesser levels are *Anāgāmī, Sakadāgāmi, Sotāpanna, Dhammānusāri*, and *Sadhhānusāri. Bhikkhus,* that is how different levels of *indriya* development determine the level of progress."
- As we know, *Dhammānusāri* and *Saddhānusāri* are *Sotāpanna Anugāmis.*

Two Kinds of *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*

4. There are 10 *suttā* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Okkantika Saṃyutta (SN 25)" that focus only on the two kinds of *Sotāpanna Anugāmis*: *Dhammānusāri* and *Saddhānusāri.* These are important because they emphasize the need to comprehend the *anicca* nature of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*).

"WebLink: suttacentral: Cakkhu Sutta (SN 25.1)" states: "***Cakkhuṃ, bhikkhave, aniccaṃ vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi; sotaṃ aniccaṃ vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi****; sota..ghānaṃ.. jivhā .. kāyo .. mano anicco vipariṇāmī aññathābhāvī. Yo, bhikkhave, ime dhamme evaṃ saddahati adhimuccati—ayaṃ vuccati saddhānusārī, okkanto sammattaniyāmaṃ, sappurisabhūmiṃ okkanto, vītivatto puthujjanabhūmiṃ; abhabbo taṃ kammaṃ kātuṃ, yaṃ kammaṃ katvā nirayaṃ vā tiracchānayoniṃ vā pettivisayaṃ vā upapajjeyya; abhabbo ca tāva kālaṃ kātuṃ yāva na sotāpattiphalaṃ sacchikaroti.*"

- **Translated:** "***Bhikkhus*, the eye is of *anicca* nature, bound to be destroyed, and is subject to unexpected change during its existence**." The ear… nose… tongue… body… mind… *Bhikkhus*, one who has conviction and belief that these phenomena are this way is called a faith-follower (*Saddhānusāri*): one who has entered the Noble Path (*sammattaniyāma*), has entered the plane of integrity (*sappurisabhūmi*), has transcended the plane of the run-of-the-mill (*puthujjanabhūmi*). He is incapable of doing any deed by which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal womb, or in the realm of hungry shades. He is incapable of passing away **(from this *Ariya* birth)** until he has realized *Sotāpatti phala.*
- Then the same verse is repeated for the *Dhammānusāri* with the following replacement for the part marked in red above for the *Saddhānusāri*: "one who, after pondering with insight, has accepted that these phenomena are this way is called a Dhamma-follower (*Dhammānusāri*).

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Maximum of Seven More *Bhava* For a *Sotāpanna* and Seven More *Ariya bhava* For a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*

5. It is important to realize from #4 above that a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* will never "die" from the *Ariya* birth, and that no time limit is given. Only upon getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage, that one will have a limited number of births; see below.

- **However, a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* will have only 7 more *Ariya bhava* left (*Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmī Anugāmi, Anāgāmī, Arahant Anugāmi, and Arahant*).**
- Thus, it appears that is what is stated in the *Ratana Sutta* as, "*Na te bhavaṃ aṭṭhamamādiyanti*" (7 types of ***Ariya Bhava*** left) for eight types of Noble Persons (*Ariyā*).

6. The other 9 *suttā* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Okkantika Saṃyutta (SN 25)" go through the same descriptions for *Dhammānusāri* and *Saddhānusāri* in terms of the six types each of *rūpa, viññāṇa, samphassa, samphassajā vedanā, rūpasaññā, rūpasañcetanā, rūpataṇhā, dhātu*, and the five types of *khandha* (i.e., *pañcakkhandha*).

Time Limits for other Noble Persons to Attain *Arahanthood*

7. The time limits for the other Noble Persons are given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Saupādisesa Sutta (AN 9.12)."

- There are five kinds of *Anāgāmis* (see #10 below), and they all have overcome the first five *saṃyojana* of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*, *vicikiccā*, and *silabbata parāmāsa, kāma rāga, paṭigha.*
- Some of them will be born in a *brahma* realm reserved for the *Anāgāmis*, will remove the remaining *saṃyojana* of *rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga*, *māna, uddhacca*, *avijjā*, and attain *Parinibbāna* there.
- Others would have already removed two more *saṃyojana* of *rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga,* and thus will not be born in any realm, and thus will remain in the *gandhabba* state until the *kammic* energy runs out. This is called ***antarāparinibbāna*** ("*Parinibbāna* in between realms"). This was discussed at the forum: "WebLink: Pure Dhamma Forum: Antara Parinibbāna."

8. Then there is the Noble Person with the *Sakadāgāmī phala* (including those *Anāgāmi Anugāmis*). "WebLink: suttacentral: Saupādisesa Sutta (AN 9.12)" states that, "*So tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā rāgadosamohānaṃ tanuttā* ***sakadāgāmī*** *hoti,* ***sakideva imaṃ lokaṃ āgantvā*** *dukkhassantaṃ karoti.*"

- **Translated:** "With the ending of three fetters (*saṃyojanā*), and the weakening of greed, hate, and delusion, a ***Sakadāgāmī*** will **come back to this world only once to *deva* realms**."

Three Types of *Sotāpanna*

9. Then there are three types of *Sotāpanna:*

"*So tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā* ***ekabījī hoti****,* ***ekaṃyeva mānusakaṃ bhavaṃ*** *nibbattetvā dukkhassantaṃ karoti.*"
"*So tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā* ***kolaṅkolo*** *hoti,* ***dve vā tīṇi vā kulāni*** *sandhāvitvā saṃsaritvā dukkhassantaṃ karoti.*"
AND "*So tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā* ***sattakkhattuparamo*** *hoti,* ***sattakkhattuparamaṃ deve ca manusse ca*** *sandhāvitvā saṃsaritvā dukkhassantaṃ karoti.*"

Translated:

"With the ending of three *saṃyojanā*, an ***ekabījī*** will be reborn **just one time in human existence (*bhava*)**, then make an end of suffering."
"With the ending of three *saṃyojanā*, a ***kolaṅkolo*** will be **two or three *bhava*** then make an end of suffering."

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"With the ending of three *saṃyojanā*, a ***sattakkhattuparamo*** has most seven *bhava* among *devas* and humans and then make an end of suffering."

- The fact that they are all *Sotāpannas* becomes clear in #10 below.
- It is also important to note that there is no mention in this *sutta* about the *Sotāpanna Anugāmis*. **This *sutta* is about those who have "seen" *Nibbāna***. A *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* — in the language of *Abhidhamma* — has only transcended the "*anāriya*" level and made it to the "*gotrabu*" stage. In the future, they will attain the *Sotāpanna* stage when they get to the *magga* and *phala citta*. See the end of the post, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs," where *magga phala citta vīthi* is discussed.

Summary in *Puggalapaññatti*

10. The above descriptions are confirmed by "WebLink: suttacentral: Ekakapuggalapaññatti" in *Abhidhamma,* where 54 types of persons are listed. We will mention just those categories that are of interest here.

- *Katamo ca puggalo sammāsambuddho? Idhekacco puggalo pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu sāmaṃ saccāni abhisambujjhati; tattha ca sabbaññutaṃ pāpuṇāti, balesu ca vasībhāvaṃ—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**sammāsambuddho**."*
- *Katamo ca puggalo paccekasambuddho? Idhekacco puggalo pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu sāmaṃ saccāni abhisambujjhati; na ca tattha sabbaññutaṃ pāpuṇāti, na ca balesu vasībhāvaṃ—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**paccekasambuddho**."*

The rest belong to two categories: "*Aṭṭha ariyapuggalā* ***ariyā***. *Avasesā puggalā* ***anariyā***."

Here are the 8 Noble Persons or *ariyā* (*aṭṭha ariyapuggalā*):

Tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ pahānāya paṭipanno puggalo ***sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno (Sotāpanna Anugāmi)***. *Yassa puggalassa tīṇi saṃyojanāni pahīnāni—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**sotāpanno**."*

Kāmarāgabyāpādānaṃ tanubhāvāya paṭipanno puggalo ***sakadāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno***. *Yassa puggalassa kāmarāgabyāpādā tanubhūtā—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**sakadāgāmī**."*

Kāmarāgabyāpādānaṃ anavasesappahānāya paṭipanno puggalo ***anāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno***. *Yassa puggalassa kāmarāgabyāpādā anavasesā pahīnā—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**anāgāmī**."*

Rūparāgaarūparāgamānauddhaccaavijjāya anavasesappahānāya paṭipanno puggalo ***arahattaphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno***. *Yassa puggalassa rūparāgo arūparāgo māno uddhaccaṃ avijjā anavasesā pahīnā—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**arahā**."*

Sotāpanna Anugāmis fall into 2 categories:

Yassa puggalassa ***sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipannassa*** *paññindriyaṃ adhimattaṃ hoti, paññāvāhiṃ paññāpubbaṅgamaṃ ariyamaggaṃ bhāveti—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**dhammānusārī**."*

Yassa puggalassa ***sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipannassa*** *saddhindriyaṃ adhimattaṃ hoti, saddhāvāhiṃ saddhāpubbaṅgamaṃ ariyamaggaṃ bhāveti—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**saddhānusārī**."*

- Note that there is no time limit given for a ***dhammānusārī*** and a ***saddhānusārī.***

Sotāpannas fall into 3 categories:

Idhekacco puggalo tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā ***sotāpanno hoti*** *avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano. So* ***sattakkhattuṃ deve ca mānuse*** *ca sandhāvitvā saṃsaritvā dukkhassantaṃ karoti— ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**sattakkhattuparamo**."*

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*Idhekacco puggalo tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā **sotāpanno hoti** avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano. So **dve vā tīṇi vā kulāni** sandhāvitvā saṃsaritvā dukkhassantaṃ karoti—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**kolaṃkolo**."*

*Idhekacco puggalo tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā **sotāpanno hoti** avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano. So **ekaṃyeva mānusakaṃ bhavaṃ** nibbattetvā dukkhassantaṃ karoti—ayaṃ vuccati puggalo "**ekabījī**".*

- Here, a ***sattakkhattuparamo*** seems to have seven "births" (*jāti*) or "*bhava*" among the humans and *devas*. It is not clear whether it is 7 *jāti* or *bhava*.
- A ***kolaṃkolo*** seems to have two or three births (*kula* means born into a certain caste or clan); but it possible that it could mean two or three *bhava*.
- An ***ekabījī*** has one ***bhava*** as a human.

Anāgāmis fall into 5 categories and they have essentially one existence after death as a human, either born in a *brahma* realm or in the gandhabba state; see #7 above (I will just state the categories):

antarāparinibbāyī, upahaccaparinibbāyī, asaṅkhāraparinibbāyī, sasaṅkhāraparinibbāyī, uddhaṃsoto akaniṭṭhagāmī.

Arahants fall into 2 categories they, of course, are not reborn (I will just state the categories):

ubhatobhāgavimutto, paññāvimutto.

Sotāpanna Anugāmi – At Least a Trace of Understanding of *Tilakkhaṇa*

11. "WebLink: suttacentral: Alagaddūpama Sutta (MN 22)" also provides similar information and provides another description of *Sotāpanna Anugāmis*. At the end of the *sutta*, it describes the types of Noble Persons as above, and at the very end states, "*Evaṃ svākkhāte, bhikkhave, mayā dhamme uttāne vivaṭe pakāsite chinnapilotike yesaṃ mayi saddhāmattaṃ pemamattaṃ sabbe te saggaparāyanā"ti.*"

- **Translated:** "those who have even a trace of faith and liking for me (*saddhāmattaṃ pemamattaṃ; mattaṃ* means a "trace"), are all headed for *deva* realms (*saggaparāyanā*)."
- When one has removed the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, and start comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*, one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*. They are also released from the *apāyā*. See, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyā."

Arahanthood – Not Annihilation But End of Suffering

12. There is also this important verse towards the end of the "WebLink: suttacentral: Alagaddūpama Sutta (MN 22)": "*Yathā cāhaṃ na, bhikkhave, yathā cāhaṃ na vadāmi, tathā maṃ te bhonto samaṇabrāhmaṇā asatā tucchā musā abhūtena abbhācikkhanti: '**venayiko samaṇo gotamo, sato sattassa ucchedaṃ vināsaṃ vibhavaṃ paññāpetī'ti**. Pubbe cāhaṃ, bhikkhave, **etarahi ca dukkhañceva paññāpemi, dukkhassa ca nirodhaṃ**.*"

- **Translated:** "*..Bhikkhus*, I have been baselessly, vainly, falsely, and wrongly misrepresented by some recluses and *brahmins* thus: 'The recluse Gotama is one who leads people astray; he teaches the annihilation, the destruction, the extermination of an existing being.' *..Bhikkhus*, both formerly and now what I teach is suffering and the cessation of suffering."
- Many people today have this wrong perception. It could arise until one gets at least to the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage and starts removing *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*. It is basically the belief that there is an "existing person" that can enjoy things the world has to offer. They do not realize that there is much more suffering in this world. Even though there are short-lived pleasures, there is unimaginable suffering especially in the rebirth process.

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- It is only at the *Arahant* stage that the perception of a "me" (*asmi māna*) goes away; see, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?."

Different types of persons are listed in the "WebLink:suttacentral: Ekakapuggalapaññatti" of the "WebLink:suttacentral: Puggalapaññatti" in Abhidhamma.

6.3.2 Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)

Revised March 31, 2017; August 26, 2017; October 7, 2019; re-written on October 28, 2020

Āsava Removal Is *Nibbāna*

1. *Nibbāna* is reached by "*āsavakkhaya*" or removing *āsava* (cravings). As we will see below, that involves getting rid of *anusaya* (hidden defilements) via the removal of bad *gati* (character/habits.)

- We will tie up a series of posts that I have posted on *gati* and *āsava* with this post. See, "Habits and Goals, and Character (Gati)," "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsava)," "Saṃsāric Habits, Character (Gati), Cravings (Āsava)."
- It isn't easy to find English translations for some of the Pāli words that the Buddha used. But the key is to grasp what is meant by those terms. Once the idea sinks in, that is all that matters. One could even just use the Pāli term and KNOW what is meant by it. It is like learning the meaning of the word "dollar" or "car." Different languages use the same words, but everybody understands what is meant by those words.

Āsava Come Up Due to *Anusaya*

2. *Anusaya* is usually translated as "latent tendencies" or "mental fermentations." *Āsava* are the cravings. The word "*gati*" is hardly mentioned in current texts but is a critical concept in Buddha Dhamma.

- ***Anusaya*** are indeed "mental fermentations" that lie deep down in us. That is comparable to mud sitting at the bottom of a glass of water.
- If that glass of water is disturbed with a straw, some of that mud comes to the surface. That is like ***āsava*** bubbling up when we are disturbed by a strong sense event. When that happens, we display our real character/habits or ***gati* (*gathi*)**.
- In other words, some *gati* and *āsava* lay hidden (sleeping) and are called "*anusaya. "* With a strong enough "trigger," an ingrained *anusaya* can be brought to the surface. *Anusaya* are the hardest to get rid of.

Pada Nirukti for *Anusaya* and *Āsava*

3. In both Pāli and Sinhala, "*saya*" means a storage place: "*jalāsaya*" means a water reservoir; "*āmāsaya*" means the stomach where the food we eat goes to; "*gabbāsaya*" is the womb where the unborn baby is kept and nurtured until it is ready to come out, etc.

- "*Saya*" also means "sleeping" (as in "*sayanaya*" or සයනය in Sinhala). "*Anu*" indicates "food" or "defilements" in most cases. Therefore, "***anusaya***" means "sleeping" or "in storage" with some dominant characteristics.
- **When they are disturbed an *ārammaṇa* (a sensory input), they come to the surface as "*āsava*"** or "**cravings/likings**." The word *ārammaṇa* is explained in detail in "Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience."
- As mentioned above, *āsava* are four main types. Within each class, there can be an infinite variety. For example, "*kāmāsava*" will include *āsava* for sense inputs coming through five physical senses with an endless variety.

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Anusaya Awakened By Triggers (*Ārammaṇa*)

4. When such a trigger awakens an "*anusaya*," then it is out as an "*āsava,*" and one will display it through one's actions. Then, we also say, one has that type of cravings or "*gati.*" These triggers are *ārammaṇa;* See, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event."

- For example, seeing a beautiful woman matching "his *gati*" could trigger *kāmāsava* in a calm person. He may get agitated upon seeing that woman. But he may not be "triggered" by seeing another woman, even if beautiful. That is a bit complex, but I am sure we all know this to be true.
- And if he keeps thinking about that woman, that *anusaya* will ferment and grow (condense). Thus the name "mental fermentations."
- How much one gets "agitated" depends on one's *āsava* and sensory input strength. Rapes, for example, occur when both are strong.

An Analogy for *Anusaya*

5. *Anusaya* is like active gun powder in a matchstick. The matchstick is harmless by itself and will cause no fire. But the POTENTIAL to create a fire is there.

- When the matchstick strikes a rough surface, the heat generated causes the gun powder to ignite and create fire.
- Similarly, a robust sensory input can "awaken" and "fire-up" the sleeping *anusaya*.
- One's *gati* becomes strong with repeated use, and one's *āsava* is dependent on both *anusaya* and *gati.*
- An *Arahant* has removed all types of *anusaya, gati*, and hence *āsava.* No matter how strong a sensory input comes in, he/she will not be "triggered" by it. A matchstick with no active gun powder cannot catch fire, no matter how hard a march strikes.
- An *Arahant* may still have *gati* **devoid of defilements.** They are just habits without *kammic* consequences. For example, there is an account in the *Tipiṭaka* of a young *Arahant* who tended to jump over mud puddles.

Seven Types of *Anusaya*

6. There are 7 types of *anusaya*: *diṭṭhānusaya* (wrong views), *vicikicchānusaya* (tendency to do the unwise), *kāmarāgaanusaya* (temptation for sense pleasures), *paṭigha anusaya* (temptation for hatred), *bhvarāganusaya* (craving for existence), *mānanusaya* (sense of "me"), and *avijjānusaya* (ignorance); see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiya Anusaya Sutta (AN 7.12)".

- There are four broad categories of *āsava*: *Diṭṭhāsava*, *Kamāsava, Bhavāsava,* and *Avijjāsava;* see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Āsava Sutta (AN 6.58)".

Four Types of *Āsava*

7. Āsava are four main types: diṭṭhāsava (diṭṭhi āsava), kāmāsava (kāma āsava), bhavāsava (bhava āsava), and avijjāsava (avijjā āsava).

- *Diṭṭhāsava* is the craving or attachment to wrong views. That is why sometimes it is hard to accept or even consider other viewpoints. Again, there are views on numerous topics: religion, philosophy, politics, and combinations thereof. Comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* automatically leads to getting rid of *diṭṭhāsava*.
- *Kāmāsava* is craving for indulging in sense pleasures via the five physical senses. Within this broad category. Each person will have their own set of cravings—some like music more than food, food more than reading, etc. The combinations are endless.

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- *Bhavāsava* is craving for existence. No matter where in the 31 realms one is born, one always wants to live. Again there are many possibilities. Most prefer *kāma loka* with all five senses. Some who enjoy *jhānic* pleasures may prefer birth in an *arūpa loka* with just the mind, etc.
- *Avijjāsava* is, of course, the root cause for all *āsavas*: not knowing the real nature of this world, i.e., not comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and thus not understanding the Four Noble Truths.

Relationship Between *Āsava* and *Anusaya*

8. The seven types of *anusaya* can give rise to four types of *āsava*.

- *Diṭṭhānusaya* and *vicikicchānusaya* give rise to *diṭṭhāsava*.
- *Kāmarāganusaya* and *paṭighanusaya* lead to *kāmāsava*.
- *Bhvarāganusaya* gives rise to *bhavāsava*.
- *Avijjānusaya* and *mānanusaya* lead to *avijjāsava.*
- One cannot REMOVE the other three *āsava* until one removes *diṭṭhāsava* at the *Sotāpanna* stage.

Kāmāsava Is Absent In *Rūpa* and *Arūpa Loka*

9. What type of *āsava* "can be triggered to come up" depends on the *bhava* one is in.

- In *kāma loka*, all *āsava are* "in play," i.e., can be triggered by a sense event.
- In *rūpa* or *arūpa Brahma loka*, *kāmāsava* remain dormant since there are no enticing *ārammaṇa* in Brahma realms. But unless one is an *Anāgāmi,* one still has *kāmāsava*, and that will "come into play" when one reborn in *kāma loka*.
- **Thus, one will not have *kāma anusaya* bubbling up when one is in *rūpa* or *arūpa* realms. Therefore, one will also not display any "*kāma gati*" that one has while in *rūpa/arūpa* realms.**

Human *Bhava* – Ability to Remove All *Anusaya*

10. As a given sentient being traverses the "*samsāra*" or the "rebirth process," one makes transitions from "*bhava* to *bhava*," but within a given human (or animal) *bhava*, one may be born numerous times as a human (or the same animal); see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Through all these, the physical appearance will change drastically, especially when *bhava* is changed. Thus, it transitions from being a *deva* to a human or from a human to a dog. There is no resemblance to a continued "soul."
- However, our *anusaya* remains with us through the *samsāric* journey. Of course, *anusaya* can change during a given *bhava*. Most changes in *anusaya* occur during human *bhava.* In fact, a human can even remove all *anusaya* and attain *Nibbāna*.

11. That is another reason why the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self." What character or any other quality displayed in a given *bhava* could be very different from another *bhava*. On the other hand, an ever-changing set of *anusaya* remains with a given life-stream.

- That is what I call a "dynamic self": "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream".
- Now let us examine the roots of the words *anusaya* and *āsava (āsaya);* "*āsava*" is a synonym for "*āsaya.*"

Removal of *Āsava* and *Anusaya*

12. These seven types of *anusaya* and four *āsavas* go away step-by-step as one goes through the four stages of *Nibbāna*.

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- A *Sotāpanna* has removed *Diṭṭhāsava*. *Kamāsava* is lessened at the *Sakadāgāmi* stage and removed at the *Anāgāmi* stage. The other two reduce at each stage also and go away only at the *Arahant* stage.
- When *anusaya* and *gati* go away, then, of course, *āsava* disappears without a trace. One will not crave anything. One is then unperturbed by anything. That is the ultimate state of "cooling" or *Nibbāna*.

Gati (Character/Habits) Related to *Āsava* and *Anusaya*

13. *Gati* denotes a mixture of one's character and habits. Of course, one's character depends on one's *gati* and *vice versa*.

- It should be evident that our character (*gati*) is related to *anusaya* and *āsava.*
- All three, *āsava, anusaya,* and *gati,* reinforce each other. One has a particular type of character because of the set of *āsava* and *anusaya* he/she has. On the other hand, none of the three will change unless one's character and habits change. That change is WILLFUL.
- And there is the fourth parameter of habits (called "*gati purudu*" in Sinhala), which lies at the very bottom of the hierarchy. Some people talk rough, even when they are not mad. It is just a habit.
- Getting rid of bad habits and cultivating good habits is the first step in controlling one's *āsava* (temptations) and eventually getting rid of *anusaya*.
- "Immoral *gati*" due to anusaya is what makes the *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* take place and create "bhava" for the *sansāric* process. These "immoral *gati*" are the "san *gati*" in "*tiṇṇaṃ saṅgati phasso*"; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

Removal of Bad *Gati* and Cultivating Good *Gati*

14. There are two critical aspects in dealing with changing one's habits:

- One needs to be mindful of bad habits' negative consequences and the positive consequences of good practices. That is *Satipaṭṭhāna.*
- And, one needs to avoid bad habits WILLFULLY and WILLFULLY engage in ethical and moral practices. That is *Ānāpāna.*
- One would engage in all those activities in *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna.*
- One can use the "search" box on the top right to find relevant posts on *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpāna*. A practical, systematic way to do both discussed in the "Living Dhamma" section.

15. That is the path advocated by the Buddha. One could proceed a little on the Path and achieve a "sense of peace." One could go further to make the future lives better, or one could go all the way and remove all four *āsava,* thus attaining the *Arahantship*.

- That is why "*āsavakkhaya ñāṇa*" or the "way to remove *āsava*" is the critical knowledge that the Buddha developed on attaining the Buddhahood. And that knowledge is in the Four Noble Truths, and the way to achieve "*āsavakkhaya*" is the Noble Eightfold Path.

Bigger Picture

16. We are fortunate to live in a time when science is providing further evidence and ways to understand this process. There is a series of posts in the 'Dhamma and Science" section starting with, "Truine Brain – How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits" and in the "Meditation" section starting with, "Key to ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

- Finally, where are these *anusaya* in "storage"? They are in the *kamma bhava* or the *nāma loka* or the "immaterial world."

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- We have two "worlds": one is the *rūpa loka* that we access with our five physical senses. The other is the above-mentioned *nāma loka.*
- The *nāma loka* has our memories or *nāma gotta* and also *anusaya* that are related to *kamma bija.* This "immaterial world" is accessed with the *mana indriya.* Details at "Our Two Worlds – Rūpa Loka and Nāma Loka" and "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

Next, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsava",…….

6.3.3 The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā

Revised November 19, 2018; February 11, 2020

Introduction

1. The night the Buddha attained the Buddhahood, three unique pieces of knowledge (*tivijjā*) arose in him, namely:

- The unique vision with which he was able to recollect innumerable former human existences (*pubbenivāsānussati ñāna*).
- The ability to see beings passing away and being reborn according to their *kamma* (*cutupapāda ñāṇa*); and
- The unique vision to see how to eliminate all kilesa (āsava) or defilements (*āsavakkhaya ñāṇa*).

Āsavakkhaya Ñāṇa

2. With the attainment of the *āsavakkhaya ñāṇa*, Sidharata Gotama became Buddha Gotama. That was the final step in purifying the mind. That was the fruit of all his efforts, the Path to attaining *Nibbāna* for any being. *Āsavakkhaya* (*āsava+khaya* = cutting off all the *āsavā* or mental fermentations). Thus *Āsavakkhaya ñāṇa* means the knowledge of cutting off *āsavā* and thus freeing the mind from the ability to generate any defilement.

- The term *āsava* comes from "*āsravayata āva*" (ආශ්‍රවයට ආව) in Sinhala or Pāli, which means "came to association with." Thus those habits ("*gati*") that one keeps associating with come even closer. As one continues and feeds those habits through successive rebirths, they become *āsavā*. See, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."
- *Āsava* (in Pāli, Sinhala, and Sanskrit) also means a distillation to get an extract or essence. Some medicinal concoctions are fermented by keeping a mixture of ingredients underground for many months.
- Some habits ("*gati*") we have cultivated (or fermented) over innumerable lives, and that is why they are hard to remove. Only through learning pure Dhamma and persistence in one's efforts, one can break such bad habits and thus eventually *āsava*. There are four types of *āsava*, and each is associated with corresponding bad habits.

Connection to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

3. The doctrine of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, which has twelve factors, namely, *avijjā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa, nāmarūpa, saḷāyatana, phassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, jāti, jarā, maraṇa* became clear to him. Going over this Doctrine of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* in forward and reverse order repeatedly, he attained the Eightfold Noble Path, *Ariya Magga*, which is also known as *Yathābhūta Ñāṇadassana.*

4. *Paṭicca Samuppāda* clarifies how ignorant beings accumulate defilements (and *āsavā*), and get trapped in the round of rebirths (*saṃsāra.*) Those *āsavā* ferment via repeated use of bad habits ("*gati*"). And the Noble Eightfold Path is the way to remove those "*gati*" (and thus *āsavā*) from the mind.

Four Stages of *Nibbāna* Related to the Four *Āsavā*

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5. We all have four major types of *āsavā*, even though there are uncountable minor varieties:

- *Diṭṭhāsava* is the category that is due to all kinds of false beliefs (*micchā diṭṭhi*): for example, if someone does not believe in rebirth, there may be cravings such as "I need to enjoy life to the fullest before I die."
- *Kāmāsava* are associated with sense pleasures.
- *Bhavāsava* is the craving for a particular kind of existence, say as a human, *deva*, or a *Brahma*. Any living being, in any realm, craves for life, to live.
- *Avijjāsava* is all cravings that arise due to ignorance. That is the ignorance of the Noble Truth of Suffering (which is NOT merely suffering itself), and the other Noble Truths.

6. The four types of *āsavā* go away in a step-by-step process as one proceeds on the Path. Even before the *Sotāpanna* stage, one will be reducing them, but those reductions do not hold to future lives.

- When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, all four types of *āsavā* that could trigger "*apāyagāmi*" actions go away from one's mind, i.e., one will never be reborn in the four lowest realms. *Diṭṭhāsava* (those due to wrong views) disappear entirely.
- At the *Sakadāgāmi* stage, *kāmāsava* and *bhavāsava* reduce, and a *Sakadāgāmi* will be born only as a *deva* or above in future lives; *avijjāsava* also reduces.
- *Kāmāsava* completely goes away at the *Anāgāmi* stage. Thus one will never be reborn in the *kāma loka* (including the *deva* realm) again. *Bhavāsava* and *avijjāsava* are also reduce.
- *Bhavāsava* and *avijjāsava* diasppear without a trace at the *Arahant* stage. Thus *āsavakkhaya* becomes complete.

Removal of *āsavā* starts with the removal of bad habits and cultivating good habits; see, "Habits and Goals," "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)," and, "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas."

Is there a Connection Between *Nibbāna* and *Kamma*?

7. Many people have the misconception that "one needs to deplete all *kamma vipāka*" to attain *Nibbāna*. First of all, *kamma vipāka* are results of actions and that have been done previously (either in this life or in previous lives.)

while some of the *kammic* power associated with them can be removed by *metta bhāvanā*, for example, some *kamma bīja* (both good and bad) due to those *kamma* may still be there at the time of the attainment of *Nibbāna*.

- *Mettā Bhāvanā* can remove some of the *kammic* power associated with the previous *kamma.* However, some *kamma Bīja* or *kamma* seeds (both good and bad) due to the past *kamma* may still be there at the time of the attainment of *Nibbāna*. See, "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvana (Loving Kindness Meditation)."
- Even the Buddha had eleven *kamma vipāka* left that resulted in backaches and an ulcer-like ailment close to *Parinibbāna,* among others. To get rid of a *kamma* seeds associated with a given *kamma*, the other party related to that *kamma* seed needs to be able to receive the merits of *Mettā Bhāvanā*. That person needs to have a state of mind with *alobha, adosa,* and *amoha*. But some of those beings may be trapped in the *niraya* for long times and may not even have a moment of "relief" to receive such merits. I will discuss this in a separate post, but the critical idea is discussed in, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How Does it Happen?."

Another Way to Understand

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8. What really happens is the following. With the removal of *āsavā*, the ***akusala-mūla*** *paṭicca samuppāda* with "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*" step stop working. Instead, now ***kusala-mūla*** *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle with "*vedanā paccayā adhimokko*" will operate. There is no "*upādāna paccayā bhavo*" step in the ***kusala-mūla*** *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle.

- Thus when the *Arahant* dies, there is no "*bhava*" grasped by the mind. Therefore, there is no "*jāti*" or birth.
- Thus an Arahant could have many unspent *kamma bīja* (both good and bad) left, but his/her mind has lost the craving (*āsava*) to grasp any of them.

10. "Everything happens due to *kamma*" is a misconception. That is a *Vedic* concept, and is not in Buddha Dhamma; see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." The *āsavakkhaya ñāṇa* is the key to *Nibbāna*.

Next, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?", ……..

6.3.4 Kaṇha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya

June 11, 2018; revised January 21, 2019; July 26, 2020

Kaṇha/Sukka Kamma Same as *Pāpa/Puñña Kamma*

1. ***Kaṇha* (dark)**, ***sukka* (bright)**, and ***kammakkhayāya kamma*** are important terms discussed briefly in the *Kukkuravatika sutta* (in the *niddesa* version). In this post, we will clarify these terms before discussing that *sutta* in the second post published today, "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) – Kammakkhaya." **June 19, 2018**: Siebe has sent me more *suttā* from *Aṅguttara Nikāya* that discusses these terms: AN 4.232- AN 4.238. Thanks, Siebe!

- ***Kaṇha* and *sukka kamma* are nothing but *pāpa* and *puñña kamma*** that were discussed in the post, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."
- *Kaṇha* means "dark" and refers to *pāpa* (or bad) *kamma*; *sukka* means "bright" or "white" and refer to *puñña* (or good) *kamma*. The King of Gods is named "Sakka" because he is engaged in *sukka* (*puñña*) *kamma*.
- Both are different from *kusala kamma*. Intention plays a significant role here; see, "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – What Is "Intention"?"
- This post is critical for understanding the concept of *Nibbāna*, so I am posting it at the "Seeking Nibbāna" subsection.

Kammakkhayāya Kamma Same as *Kusala Kamma*

2. The term *kammakkhayāya kamma* means the same as *kusala kamma*.

- ***Kammakkhayāya kamma* means "*kamma* that will lead to nullify or overcome the effects of existing *kamma vipāka*."** It is important to note that we cannot take the literal meaning of "*kammakkhaya*" as "removing *kamma/kamma vipāka*."
- Note the difference between the words *kammakkhayāya* and *kammakkhaya*.
- ***Kammakkhaya* stage is reached by purifying one's mind by doing "*Kammakkhayāya kamma*" or *kamma* that leads to *kammakkhaya*. These are the same as *kusala kamma*.**

Kammakkhaya Means Cultivating *Paññā*

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3. With a *kamma* done, its energy is going to be there for a long time, until naturally worn out. But one can REMOVE the CONDITIONS under which that *kamma* can bring its *vipāka*. That is what is meant by "*kammakkhaya*."

- For example, Aṅgulimāla killed 999 people. Those actions created *kamma bīja* (energies that could bring appropriate *vipāka*), and some of those energies may still be out there.
- However, within a couple of weeks of meeting the Buddha, Aṅgulimāla attained the Arahanthood. At that point, Ven. Angulimala's mind became pure and would not EVER make suitable conditions for those *kamma vipāka* to be "germinated."
- Just like seeds kept in a cool, dry place for millions of years will eventually become "duds" (will no longer germinate) , Angulimala's *kamma bīja* will one day become real duds.
- Even though Ven. Angulimala's *kamma bīja* were potent (active) when he died, they could not be "germinated in his mind" at his death (i.e., at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment). **Therefore, they had become "effectively duds."** That is what is meant by "*kammakkhaya*."

Without *Upādāna Kamma Bīja* Cannot Bring a New *Bhava*

4. One's mind is where various *kamma bīja* germinate. It is fair to say that ANY average human will have many *kamma bīja* suitable to bring rebirth in the *apāyā* from previous lives, if not from this life. **But just having those *kamma vipāka* does not necessarily mean they will bring *vipāka*.**

- The key here is that a purified **mind** (like Ven. Angulimala's) will not grasp (*upādāna*) bad *kamma vipāka*. Of course, his **physical body** endured *kamma vipāka* until death; we have discussed this in the discussion forum.

Let me take a different analogy to see why a purified mind will not grasp *kamma bīja*. Visualize the mind being a ball with a hook attached to it. The size of the hook is proportional to how corrupt or defiled the mind is.

And we can think about *kamma bīja* as rings of various sizes: rings of a wide variety of sizes ranging from very tiny to large (representing small to large *kamma bīja* that can bring *kamma vipāka*).

- We will keep coming back to this analogy in the future, so please make sure it is understood. That will make it easier to comprehend many other concepts like *āsava*, *anusaya*, and *gati*.

Upādāna is Like a Hook

5. Imagine a highly defiled mind (i.e., with a large hook attached to it.) Also, imagine an area where there are a large number of *kamma bīja* of various magnitudes (many rings of different sizes).

- The hook is likely to pick up a ring of similar size: it cannot pick-up small rings, and it cannot pick-up too large rings.
- In the same way, a highly-defiled mind will pick-up a large *kamma bīja*, and a less-defiled mind will pick-up only a smaller *kamma bīja*.
- **That is the same as saying that one's mind will grasp a bhava (*kamma bīja*) that matches one's *gati*.** One who has killed other humans will grasp a *bhava* in the hell (*niraya*) corresponding to a "large ring." It will not grasp a *bhava* in the human or *deva* realms, which would be too small to be entangled in the large hook (highly defiled mind).
- This is also what is meant by "changing CONDITIONS in one's mind, in #3 above. A fully-purified mind will have no "mental hooks"; that mind's conditions have changed.

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6. **What happens when one follows the Noble Path of the Buddha, is that one's "mental hook" will get smaller in size, in this analogy. That means growing *paññā*.**

- One does this by doing *kusala kamma*. *Kusala* means removing defilements from one's mind ("*ku*" + "*sala*," where "*ku*" is defilements and "*sala*" means "removal").
- A *kusala kamma* does not directly affect the existing bad or good *kamma bīja*. A *kusala kamma* only purifies the mind, and in the present analogy, "wear out (or shrink) the mental hook" that can grasp various good and bad *kamma bīja* rings.
- **Therefore, *kammakkhaya* means shrinking of the mental hook,** in this analogy.
- By the way, the biggest *akusala kamma* is *micchā diṭṭhi*.

Reduction of *Upādāna*

7. Even before reaching the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage, one's mental hook may keep decreasing size, but not that significantly. Of course, the *kamma bīja* or rings will remain almost the same.

- When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, the mental hook will become drastically smaller in one thought-moment (at the *Sotāpanna phala* moment), just by comprehending the unfruitful and dangerous nature of this world, in particular the dangers in the *apāyā*.
- One's *avijjā* will drop by orders of magnitude. That is a difficult point to understand for many. But that can be experienced. One may not realize it at that time, but one will be able to see the change within days or weeks by comparing one's change in behavior.
- The mind of a *Sotāpanna* will no longer be able to catch large rings corresponding potent *kamma bīja* that can give rebirth in the *apāyā*.
- One becomes a *Sotāpanna* by removing the second layer of *micchā diṭṭhi* via comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*.

8. As one goes through the *Sakadāgāmī*, *Anāgāmī* stages, the mental hook will shrink in size. At the *Arahant phala* stage, the hook will disappear with *avijjā* wholely removed, and *paññā* (wisdom) peaked.

- So, you can see that "*kammakkhaya*" does not mean getting rid of *kamma bīja*. One is just reducing one's *āsava* (or *gati*), and thus one's mind will not grasp "bad *bhava*" corresponding to large *kamma bīja*.
- In the case of Ven. Aṅgulimāla, all his rings (including those large ones for killing people) were there at the time of his death. It is just that his mind got purified, and the "mental hook" disappeared. His mind could not grasp any *bhava* in the 31 realms at his death.
- Therefore, wearing out the "mental hook" is the same as reducing *āsava* and *anusaya* and also getting rid of *gati*. As one keeps doing that, at one point, the "mental hook" will disappear (and lead to *āsavakkhaya* or *Arahanthood*).

Kusala Kammā Do Not Remove Existing *Kamma Bīja*

9. ***Khammakkhayāya kamma* (or *kamma* that lead to *kammakkhaya*) or *kusala kamma*** do not directly remove existing *kamma bīja*. They lead to a state of mind where existing *kamma bīja* are UNABLE to bring *vipāka*. That is a VERY IMPORTANT point to understand. Please come back and read this post as many times as needed to comprehend this point (and ask questions at the discussion forum).

- This is based on "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."

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- **As one keeps doing *kusala kamma***, one's wisdom (*paññā*) will grow and will become increasingly capable of comprehending the true nature of this world (the unsatisfactory nature) or *Tilakkhaṇa*. **That will lead to *kammakkhaya* in four stages of *Nibbāna*.**
- ***Kammakkhaya* via *kusala kamma* will lead to the shrinking of the "mental hook" (*āsava/anusaya/gati*) and therefore more and more *kamma bīja* (rings in our analogy) will become "effectively duds"; see #4 and #5 above.**
- In terms of our analogy, the following happens. Even though all the "rings" are still there, more and more of them will not get "entangled" in the shrinking "hook."

10. Therefore, *kammakkhaya* happens at various levels.

- Those that can bring rebirths in the *apāyā* become "effectively duds" at the *Sotāpanna* stage. At this stage, one's mind has clearly understood the dangers of *akusala kamma* that can lead to rebirth in the apāyā. It is a "drastic change in one's mindset", a totally different "world view."
- Those that can bring rebirths in the human realm become "effectively duds" at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage. One would have no doubt that "owning stuff that gives sense pleasures" is totally unnecessary and dangerous.
- Those that can bring rebirths anywhere in *kāma loka* become "effectively duds" at the *Anāgāmī* stage. Now, one knows "deep inside" that sense pleasures ARE dangerous.
- Those that can bring rebirths anywhere in 31 realms become "effectively duds" at the *Arahant* stage.

Puñña and *Pāpa Kamma*

11. **Now let us look at meaning of *puñña* and *pāpa kamma*.** In order to clarify what *puñña* (*sukka*) *kamma* and *pāpa* (*kaṇha*) *kamma*, we need to understand how births in various realms arise.

- There are six roots causes that give rise to *bhava* (and therefore *jāti*) in the 31 realms: *lobha* (greed), *dosa* (hate), *moha* (ignorance) and *alobha* (non-greed), *adosa* (non-hate), *amoha* (without ignorance). It is important to note that *amoha* does not mean *paññā* (wisdom); it just means one is acting without being foolish or morally-blind.
- **When one acts with any combination of the three "bad roots" (*lobha, dosa, moha*), one is doing *pāpa kamma*. They are also called *kaṇha* ("dark") *kamma*.** In these thoughts, only *asobhana cetasika* (bad or dark mental factors) can arise. They are also *akusala kamma*. These lead to births in the *apāyā* (*dugati*).
- **When one acts with any combination of the three "good roots" (*alobha, adosa, amoha*), one is doing *puñña kamma*. They are also called sukka ("bright") *kamma*.** In these thoughts only *sobhana cetasika* (good or bright mental factors) can arise. These lead to births in the "good realms (*sugati*), until one attains the *Arahanthood*.
- A purified mind of an *Arahant* would have maximized *sobhana cetasika*, including *paññā* (wisdom). Then one would not grasp any *bhava* at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, since one has fully comprehended the futility of any existence in the 31 realms.

12. Now, *puñña* (*sukka*) *kamma* generate "good *kamma bīja*" that can give rise to rebirths in the good realms (at and above the human realm). They also can bring "good *vipāka*" during a during a lifetime.

- *Pāpa* (*kaṇha*) *kamma* generate "bad *kamma bīja*" that can give rise to rebirths in the bad realms (those below the human realm, i.e., *apāyā*). They also can bring "bad *vipāka*" during a during lifetime.
- As we discussed in the post, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma," there are also *kamma* (or actions) that lead to both *pāpa* (*kaṇha*) and *puñña* (*sukka*) *kamma bīja*. The Buddha called them "*kanhasukka*" *kamma* and their *vipāka* "*kanhasukka vipāka*" in the *Kukkuravatika sutta*. Such "*kanhasukka vipāka*" give rise to both good and bad *vipāka* in some realms (human, *deva*, and *vinipata* realms), see, "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) – Kammakkhaya."

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- An example is when one prevents a snake from catching a frog. One is doing a *puñña kamma* by saving a frog's life, but one also doing a *pāpa kamma* by preventing snake of its meal.

Kusala/Puñña Kamma Not Possible in *Apāyā*

13. Another critical point to understand is that one will not be able to do any *kusala kamma* and to wear out the "mental hook" when is born in the apāyā (beings in the 4 realms of the *apāyā* are incapable of doing *kusala kamma* and are hardly capable of doing *puñña kamma* too).

- **This is why it is important to do *puñña kamma* and stay away from *pāpa kamma*. This is critically important in order to be born in a good realm and to work towards *Nibbāna*.**
- It is important to contemplate and understand this. Even though *puñña* (*sukka*) *kamma* leads to rebirth, that will be in a "good realm" where one can work towards *Nibbāna*, i.e., do *kusala kamma* and wear out the "mental hook."
- Furthermore, *puñña kamma* set the necessary background (*āyu, vaṇṇa, sukha, bala, paññā*; see, "Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment"). Not all in the human realm have those: if one is born extremely poor, unhealthy, etc., one will not have the right mindset to comprehend Dhamma.

14. The above explanation is a condensed (*niddesa*) version of the *Kukkuravatika Sutta* (MN 57). A *patiniddesa* or a detailed analysis is realized by the this post AND the accompanying post, "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) – Kammakkhaya."

- For an explanation of *niddes*a and *patiniddesa*, see, "Sutta – Introduction."

6.3.5 Dasa Saṃyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process

August 6, 2017; revised February 14, 2018; February 10, 2020

Saṃyojana Are Bonds in The Rebirth Process

1. *Saṃyojana* (or *saŋyojana*) is translated to English as "fetters", which is not a bad translation. Even though "fetter" is not a commonly used word, it means "a chain used to restrain or bind someone."

- *Dasa saṃyojana* are the ten "chains" or "bonds" that bind one to the rebirth process (with saṃsāric bonds.) Thus, one is forced to go through unimaginable suffering in the long run.

2. *Saṃyojana* comes from the three roots ("*san*," "*yo*," and "*ja*" respectively meaning "defilements", "bind", and "birth"). It can be pronounced either as "*saŋyojanā*" or, as is the common practice with many words involving "*san*," as "saṃyojana."

- Therefore, saṃyojana means "bonds that bind one to "*san*" and thus keep one in the rebirth process; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."
- When one systematic breaks these bonds — in four stages — one makes irreversible progress to *Nibbāna* (release from all suffering).
- For an explanation of many words with the root "*san*," see, "List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots."

Root Cause Is Craving

3. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Saṃyojana Sutta (SN 41.1)" clearly states that there is "*san*" or "craving (*chanda rāga*)" MUST be involved in *saṃyojana*: "*Evameva kho, bhante, na cakkhu rūpānaṃ saṃyojanaṃ, na rūpā cakkhussa saṃyojanaṃ; yañca tattha tadubhayaṃ paṭicca uppajjati* ***chandarāgo*** *taṃ tattha saṃyojanaṃ*..."

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Translated: "*saṃyojana* arise not due to eyes just seeing objects (*rūpa*) , but due to **craving that arises due to that seeing**..."

Cravings Are Uncontrollable Due to Wrong Views

4. Many people do not realize that there is an essential step BEFORE one can start tackling *dasa saṃyojana*. This step necessary to enter the Noble Path and start breaking those bonds to the rebirth process. **That is to get rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong views) about the world that we live in.** See, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

- This essential pre-requisite or the pre-condition to "enter the Noble Path" was explicitly discussed by the Buddha in the "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- The reason is that unless one believes in the laws of *kamma* and the rebirth process, there is no way one can start working towards *Nibbāna* (to be released from the suffering-filled rebirth process).
- Striving to attain *Nibbāna* without belief in the rebirth process is a useless thing. **By definition, *Nibbāna* is the release from the rebirth process.** Most people confuse *Nibbāna* with a temporary relief from "day-to-day stresses of life."
- *Nibbāna* can be described in simple or more profound levels; see, "Nibbāna."

Need to Have a "Wider World View"

5. Buddha Dhamma is different from any other religion or philosophy. One first needs to understand the message of the Buddha before one can start on the Path prescribed by him. Many people waste time blindly pursuing things that have nothing to do with the Noble Path to *Nibbāna*.

- To understand the key message of the Buddha, one needs to realize that our world is much more complicated than seen by our eyes. One needs to 'see' with wisdom. This wisdom or "*paññā*" can be cultivated only in steps, with an increasingly pure mind. That means, with less greed, hate, and ignorance of the true nature of this world.
- In the early stage, when one is trying to get rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, one may need to stay away from *dasa akusala* with determination. That may involved even going to the extent of sticking to a set of rituals (saying I will not break the five precepts).
- However, when one becomes free of those strong immoral acts and speech (*pāpa kamma*), which are named the "big eight" in "3. The Second Level – Key to Purify the Mind," in the Meditation section, one should be able to get rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* mentioned above.
- At this stage, one's mind is purified enough (i.e., *paññā* has grown enough) to start grasping the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) to some extent. Of course, it is necessary to understand the correct interpretations: "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

Sammā Diṭṭhi comes First

6. The first step in the Noble Eightfold Path is "*Sammā Diṭṭhi*," which is not "something to be done." It is a **vision** or a "new way of **looking** at how our world works."

- This new way of looking at the world is through the world view that emerges from what is embedded in *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. That is how one breaks the **first three saṃyojana of *sakkāya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā*, and *sīlabbata parāmāsa.***

7. One has to break those bonds in one's own mind. One gains *sammā diṭṭhi* — right view to becoming free of '*san*' — by comprehending the true nature of this world of 31 realms.

Anicca – that nothing in this world can bring a permanent happiness in the long run.

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Dukkha – despite our struggles, we will be subjected to much more suffering than pleasures if we remain in the rebirth process.

Anatta – therefore, one is truly helpless in this struggle to attain "something of essence in this world." That is just an illusion.

Our Tendency to Value Worthless Worldly Things

8. When one values a particular object, one can spend extraordinary amount of effort to get it. A average human has many things in this world (a beautiful/handsome partner, lovely house, nice car, etc.) that are very valuable.

- Many people are willing to commit murder, robbery, lying, cheating, etc. to get those. Then they get into trouble in two ways: If the society catches them, they will pay consequences like going to jail. Even if they manage to avoid "getting caught", there is no way to avoid *kamma vipāka*, i.e., those actions will bring much harsher punishments in this life or in future lives.
- By comprehending the ten types *micchā diṭṭhi*, one will be able to see that one will have to pay for immoral actions without exception, and one that depending on the severity of the actions, one may suffer for millions of years in the four lower realms (*apāyā*). This very first step of getting rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* will be quite beneficial in preventing one from getting into trouble in the future.

9. However, grasping the *Tilakkhaṇa* will lead to getting rid of an even stronger type of wrong vision or *micchā diṭṭhi* about this world, i.e., that there is NOTHING in this world that will bring a level of permanent happiness.

- When one first starts comprehending *anicca* and realizes a glimpse of this truth, one may still not be quite certain of the truth of that. But one will compelled to believe that "it is not WORTH to commit those strong bad *kamma* that COULD lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* (intense greed and strong hate).
- At this beginning stage on the Noble Path, one could see the dangers in being born in the *apāyā*, and one's mind will AUTOMATICALLY start rejecting such actions. This does not happen by sheer will power, but it will be programmed into the mind. In the *Abhidhamma* language, the "*votthapana cittā*" in a *citta vīthi* will make that decision in a billionth of a second.

Sotāpanna stage Realized With That "Correct Vision"

10. So, it is quite important to understand that getting rid of the first three saṃyojana involves NOTHING ELSE but just comprehending **a bit about the true nature** of this world, the *anicca* nature.

- In other words, at this stage, one will lose a significant fraction of HOW MUCH VALUE one will place on ANY MATERIAL THING in this world. There is NOTHING in this world that is worth killing another human being via pre-planning with hate in the mind, for example.
- At this stage, one is a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*, and one will get to the *Sotāpanna* stage without a doubt. One has become one of the eight types of Nobles (*Ariyā*); see, "Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

11. Therefore, getting a release from rebirth in the *apāyā* depends on grasping the dangers of specific highly-immoral actions that are not worth doing because NOTHING in this world can be that valuable. Put in another way, nothing in this world is worth taking the risk of paying back with a rebirth in the *apāyā*.

- The Buddha characterized *dukkha* as "*dukkhaṃ bhayaṭṭhena*," i.e., "*dukha* is another name for danger." The *dukkha* that needs to be understood is not the suffering that one is feeling at the moment (which has arisen due to a past *kamma*.)
- The Noble Truth of *dukkha* explains how such sufferings **can be stopped from arising** by comprehending the dangers of such actions that lead to suffering.

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Removal of *Kāma Rāga* Comes At Higher Stages of *Nibbāna*

12. The next step towards *Nibbāna* involves getting rid of **two more bonds or saṃyojana, i.e., *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*.** That is done in two stages: the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and the *Anāgāmī* stage.

- In a way, these two bonds are harder to break because all through this beginning-less rebirth process, we have spent probably 99% of the time in the *kāma loka*. We are so attached to sense pleasures (*kāma rāga*) that it is almost impossible for an average human to grasp the ***anicca* nature in *kāma loka*.**
- As we discussed above, it is easier to see the adverse consequences of highly-immoral actions that could lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*. And it is also easier to see the dangers of birth in the *apāyā* (the Buddha has described such unimaginable suffering in many *suttā*; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: devaduta Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 130)."

Apāyagāmī Deeds Are Done With Wrong Views

13. It is harder for an average human to see that those things that we value so highly are not only worthless but are dangerous. That is because they can lead to future suffering via *kamma vipāka*.

- Most "moral people" believe that if one lives a moral life without harming others, then one will not be subjected to suffering in the future. **Even if one had comprehended *Tilakkhaṇa* to a level of a *Sotāpanna*, that could still be the impression.**
- That is why Buddha's foremost female lay disciple Visākā attained the *Sotāpanna* stage at age seven and went on to marry and have 22 children. If Visāka thought that the *kāma loka* was also filled with suffering, she would not have done that.

My Experience

14. Therefore, getting rid of the *saṃyojana* of *kāma rāga* (attachment to sensual pleasures) — and thus to be also freed also from *paṭigha saṃyojana* — is a much harder thing. That is why it took me over three years to truly START comprehending the worthlessness of sense pleasures AND the dangers of being attracted to sense desires.

- Even though I knew the criteria for one to become an *Anāgāmī*, I did not realize that I would have to "see the dangers" in staying in the *kāma loka*, to strive for it.
- **I had been doing meditation on getting rid of *kāma rāga* all these years, but the mind has grasped the urgency to do that only in the last month (early 2018.)**
- I had written about the importance of removing *kāma rāga* in the following section: "Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava (Bad Outcomes), Nissarana (Relinquish)." These posts were written before October, 2015, and have been since revised.

15. So, I had known the "theory" part of it. But my *paññā* or wisdom had not been cultivated enough to see the possible dangers of sense pleasures!

- It needed a trigger for my mind to finally realize the "worthlessness" and "dangers" of REMAINING in the *kāma loka*. I will write more about how it actually got triggered, but I am still working on trying to see the dangers of sense pleasures and thereby making a convincing case that all we perceive as "pleasures" in the human and *deva* realms are in fact CAUSES for future suffering.
- The point here is that one needs to keep on striving as long as it takes for the mind to come to a stage to be "triggered" by some event (mine was not a significant event). As long as one keeps striving, it is bound to happen. It came as a shock to me. But I will discuss those details in another post (I am not there yet anyway).

Difference Between *Magga Phala* and *Jhāna*

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16. By the way, it is becoming more clear to me about the difference between *magga phala* and *jhāna*. While *jhāna* can help, *jhāna* are not NEEDED to attain *magga phala*. It is *sīla, samādhi, paññā*, and NOT *sīla, jhāna, paññā*. I will write about this in detail, but I see that many people seem to get discouraged that they cannot get to *jhāna*.

- There may be people with *magga phala* and without any *jhāna*; with *anāriya jhāna* and without *magga phala*; and also with *anāriya jhāna* and with *magga phala*. Those with *Ariya jhāna* MUST be at least an *Anāgāmī*, i.e., one who has REMOVED *kāma rāga* completely.
- The problem is that it is virtually impossible to distinguish between *Ariya* and *anāriya jhāna*. One thing is quite clear: One cannot attain *Ariya* first *jhāna* without REMOVING (*ucceda pahāna*, not just *vikkkambana pahāna*) of *kāma rāga*, i.e., *kāma anusaya* must be removed, not only suppressed.
- But the "*jhānic* effect" is the same in both cases. The body and the mind have very similar sensations.
- If a *Sotāpanna* can get into the first *Ariya jhāna*, then he/she will never be born in the human world again. But we know that a *Sotāpanna* can be reborn in the human realm. Thus a *Sotāpanna* would not have the first *Ariya jhāna*. **Whatever *jhānā* that I had were not *Ariya jhāna*.** I have started revising my old posts on *jhāna*. Please let me know any post that you see need revision.
- I was slowly coming to this conclusion over time; see, "Difference Between jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna." Information in that relatively recent post is correct. I had forgotten to update the old posts. Another point is that it is *Sammā Samādhi* (not necessarily *jhāna*) that takes one to *Sammā Ñāṇa* and *Sammā Vimutti* to becomes an *Arahant* in the Noble Path.

Stopping Rebirths in *Kāma Loka*

17. Let us get back to the main discussion. Once one overcomes those two *saṃyojana* of *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*, one will be free of rebirths anywhere in the *kāma loka* (lowest 11 realms including the human and *deva* realms).

- It is only then one can be said to be become healthy (not subject to illnesses) and also will be free of the three sets of senses of smell, taste, and body touches. It is only the human bodies that are subject to illnesses. A *Sakadāgāmī* would not be reborn in the human realm, and thus will be free of diseases.
- When one attains the *Sakadāgāmī* stage by REDUCING *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*, one could be born only in *deva* realms of the *kāma loka*. At this stage, one would have lost the desire to OWN objects that bring sense pleasures (*vatthu kāma*), but has not yet lost the URGE TO ENJOY sense pleasures.
- As one makes more progress, the two bonds of *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* will be completely broken. One will attain the *Anāgāmī* stage, never to be born in any realm of *kāma loka*.

Breaking Bonds to *Rūpa loka* and *Arūpa Loka*

18. **An *Anāgāmī* would be still bound to the rebirth process via five more bonds or *saṃyojana*: *rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, avijjā*.**

- The first five types of *saṃyojana* are called *orambhāgiya–saṃyojana* or "lower bonds." The higher five are called *uddhambhāgiya-saṃyojana* or "higher bonds."
- If a person has removed the first seven *saṃyojana* but still has the last three of *māna, uddhacca, avijjā*, one's mental body (*gandhabba*) would come out of the dead body at death. One will be in that state until the *kammic energy* for the human *bhava* is exhausted. *Parinibbāna* will happen at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment since one has lost *upādāna* for all 31 realms and thus cannot be born anywhere. So, the *gandhabba* would be in the ***antarā Parinibbāna* state** during that time. That is what is presumed to have happened to Waharaka *Thero*; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."
- As one progresses to higher stages, it becomes harder to remove the higher bonds (from the perspective of lower levels). **As we saw, it is easier for an average human to understand the dangers of the**

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***apāyā*, but harder to see the dangers of *kāma loka*.** I cannot even begin to imagine the dangers of *rūpa* and *arūpa loka*. One has to proceed step-by-step.

- When an *Anāgāmī* removes *rūpa rāga*, he/she would be never again born in any realm in the *rūpa loka*. Similarly, removing the *saṃyojana* of *arūpa rāga* would make one free of birth in the *arūpa loka*.

There is No Safe Realm anywhere In The Thirty-One Realms

19. Once, the Buddha saw that a *Bhikkhu* had started "taking it easy" after attaining the *Anāgāmī* stage, and asked him why he was not striving hard as he used to. The *Bhikkhu* replied that he had attained the *Anāgāmī* stage and thus thought that he was out of real danger.

- The Buddha asked him to consider the following. If one had touched feces and had just wiped it off, one might not see it anymore. But wouldn't that remaining traces still smell bad? The *Bhikkhu* realized that one would not be really free of ALL suffering until one is released fully from all 31 realms. It is harder to see the dangers at higher levels until something happens to make one aware of such "hard-to-see" dangers.
- What I learned from my experience is that even though I was not entirely focused on attaining the next stage, I had been conditioning my mind through meditation. So, when the trigger came, my mind "got triggered"; I saw the dangers in the *kāma loka* virtually "in a flash." Just several months before, last December, I had an even stronger life event (severe back pains), but that did not act "as a trigger" presumably because my mind was not purified enough at that time (i.e., my *paññā* had not been cultivated enough).
- **Whichever stage we are "stuck at," we should continue the effort without getting complacent.** Results will follow (possibly triggered by some unexpected event).
- Sometimes such triggers lead to moments of "insights" ("ahā" moments) directly leading to *magga phala*. There are many such examples in the *Tipiṭaka*.

Summary

20. Finally, the ten *saṃyojana* are removed via different methods:

- *Sakkāya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā*, and *sīlabbata parāmāsa* are removed via "correct vision" or "correct understanding." And that happens when one is listening to a *desanā* by an *Ariya* or a Noble Person.
- *Kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are removed via meditation.
- The five higher *saṃyojana* are removed with wisdom (*paññā*).

6.3.6 The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How the Root Causes are Removed

Revised June 25, 2020 (#1 and #2 revised)

1. One's material world exists because of the six root causes: *lobha, dosa, moha, alobha, adosa, amoha.* Even though we may have bouts of happiness, we suffer much more than imaginable in the rebirth process because of these six causes.

- If there are six root causes, why did the Buddha say, "*rāgakkhayo Nibbanan, dosakkhayo Nibbanan, Mohakkhayo Nibbanan*"? i.e., why are there only three causes to be removed to attain *Nibbāna*? (By the way, *lobha* is a stronger form of *rāga*, thus *rāgakkhaya* means removing *lobha*).
- In fact, one needs to cultivate *alobha, adosa, amoha* in order to remove *lobha, dosa, moha.*
- As *lobha, dosa, moha* are removed gradually, that leads to wisdom (*paññā*).

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- gained in that process automatically reduces *alobha, adosa, amoha* as needed. An Arahant has removed all six; *alobha, adosa, amoha* must be cultivated all the way up to the *Arahant* stage.

2. One outcome of the cultivation of wisdom is to realize that there are two types of *alobha, adosa, amoha.* In other words, one would realize that after following the "mundane path" one needs to comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) to start on the "Noble Path."

- When one acts with "mundane" *alobha, adosa, amoha,* that leads to "good rebirth" meaning rebirths in the "good realms." But it does not lead to *Nibbāna*. As we know, *Nibbāna* means stopping rebirth in ANY realm, not just in "bad realms."
- Once one comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa*, one would have a deeper level of *alobha, adosa, amoha.*
- A *Sotāpanna* starts on the Noble Eightfold Path with that deeper level of *alobha, adosa, amoha.* Wisdom (*paññā*) peaks at the *Arahant* stage. At that point, one would not be seeking rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms with *lobha, dosa, moha* OR *alobha, adosa, amoha.*
- See, "Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi" and "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and references therein.
- Here is another way to see it. When one completes the mundane path, his/her level of *amoha* is not complete. One would still have *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *asmi māna*. At the *Sotāpanna* stage, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* goes away. Then *asmi māna* goes away at the *Arahant* stage.

3. *Lobha* is the extreme of greed.("*lo*" + "*bha*" where "lo" is for the *lokaya* or world and "*bha*" is for "*bihiveema*" (arise or establish) is the main reason how the material world is created and sustained with greed.

- Because of *lobha, kāmachanda* (one of the five hindrances) arises. It is said that "one loses one's mind" when one acts with *kāmachanda (kāma chanda = "kāma" + "icca" +"anda" where "icca" is liking and "anda" is becomes blind; thus kāmachanda means blinded by attachment to sense pleasures).*
- When one blinded by *kāmachanda* and when obstacles arise in the way, one develops *dosa* or *dvesa* ("*dvi*"+"*vesa*" or second manifestation of greed; see, "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)" for the pronunciation key), i.e., hate for whatever gets in one's way.
- And one has *lobha* because one cannot see the truth about this world, i.e., because one has *moha*: Moha comes from "*muva*" + "*hā*" or literally "closed mouth." Here what is meant is that if there is a vessel and if its mouth or opening is closed, then one cannot see what is inside. Thus when one has *moha*, one is ignorant about the true nature of this world, and thus acts blindly and foolishly, just based on the outward appearances.

4. One who has not heard about the Buddha's world view is likely to act with *moha* and thus in turn has both *lobha* and *dosa*.

- However, many people do not have strong versions of *lobha, dosa, moha* because they may have been exposed to Buddha Dhamma in recent previous lives. They are likely to carry over such habits (*gathi*) compatible with *alobha, adosa, amoha.* In fact, ANYONE is likely to have been exposed to Buddha Dhamma somewhere, sometime in the deep past; but the more time lag there is, one is likely to lose those qualities.
- In any case, it is clear that if and when one has *kāmachanda*, one gets blinded by the urge to get possession of whatever the sense object in question at the time. We all have had instances of *kāmachanda* taking over; anyone can possibly remember instances where "the ability to reason out" got lost, at least for a brief time. It is good to contemplate on such a past situation and verify this fact.

5. Long-lasting hateful situations (*dosa*) arise because of *kāmachanda*. Again one can go back and remember such situations. This is why *dosa* (or *dvesa*) is called the second manifestation of greed. At the extreme, *dosa* brings out the second of the five hindrances, *vyāpāda*. This word comes from

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"vaya"+"pada", where "*vaya*" means decline and "*pada*" means to "walk towards." Thus *vyāpāda* means one is on a (morally) declining path.

- When one gets extremely angry, one again loses control and this could be even worse than *kamachanda*; it is possible for one to kill another human being in a moment of rage. And when one habitually gets angry, one could be in a state of *vyāpāda* for longer times, and that could become a "normal" state of affairs if one is not stopped, i.e., become a "*gathi*." We can see people get into the "*vyāpāda* mode" during (political) debates on television, or during arguments.
- All five hindrances arise because of not seeing the futility of craving or hate. This "getting attached to this world" via greed and hate is called *taṇhā*; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance"

6. *Avijjā* (ignorance) and *taṇhā* feed off each other, but it is *avijjā* that one needs to tackle first. This is because unless one's mind sees the dangers hidden behind *taṇhā*, it is not possible to reduce *taṇhā*.

- When one starts learning Dhamma one begins to understand the nature of the wider world of 31 realms where beings move around birth to birth, how beings suffer mostly in the lowest four realms, that all actions have consequences, and why it does not make sense, in the long run, to act immorally to satisfy one's immediate urges (the concept of *anicca*); see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations," and follow-up posts.
- When one truly understands *anicca*, one's *avijjā* starts to reduce first from the strong *moha* stage which contributes to *vicikicchā* (acting without mindfulness); this in turn reduces greed and hate.
- Most people make the mistake of trying to get rid of greed and hate (via breath meditation), and that is NOT POSSIBLE; one needs to engage in the correct version of "*ānāpāna*" meditation; see, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)."
- As long as one has a wrong world view and does not see the danger in having thoughts of excess greed and hate, it is not possible to FORCIBLY get rid of greed and hate; see, "Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless."
- This is why *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or the correct world view comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- When one does the breath meditation, what one is doing is to forcibly SUPPRESS *kamachanda* and *vyāpāda*, and other hindrances.

7. When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one's *lobha* is reduced to the *kāma rāga* level and one's *dosa* reduced to the *paṭigha* level PERMANENTLY; The fifth hindrance of *vicikicchā* is removed, and the other two hindrances reduced. *Paṭigha* is a lower strength of *vyāpāda*: "*paṭi*" + "*gha*" means bonding via friction or dislike; thus *paṭigha* is included in *taṇhā*.

- One can see now why a *Sotāpanna* is incapable of doing extremely immoral acts that can result in a birth in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*); one has removed *vicikicchā* hindrance permanently, and one always acts with mindfulness. This higher level of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or the correct world view is deeply ingrained in his/her mind, and even in a future birth that will not change. But one is still capable of acting with greed and hate to a certain extent.

8. When one attains the next level of *Nibbāna*, the *Sakadāgāmī* level, one permanently REDUCES *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha.*Because of this advancement, one will never be reborn in a realm where the physical body can be subjected to ailments, diseases, and old age. Thus, one will be reborn above the human realm, which is the fifth realm.

9. At the *Anāgāmī* stage, *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are permanently REMOVED. Thus by the *Anāgāmī* stage, one has completely removed any form of *dosa*, the second root cause. One does not get angry or hateful under any circumstance, and the *dosa cetasika* is permanently removed. Since *kāma rāga* is also goes away, now one has no desire to be born in any realm in the *kāma loka*, including the *deva* worlds.

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- Thus an *Anāgāmī* has only *rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga*. This is mainly due to the desire of an *Anāgāmī* to listen (and read) and contemplate on Dhamma concepts; there is no desire left for sense pleasures. Thus the *lobha cetasika* is reduced to a very low level.
- As for the *moha cetasika*, only a low strength remains as *avijjā*.

10. Thus out of the ten *sanyojana* or *sanyoga* ("*san*" + "*yoga*" or bound via "*san*"), *sakkāya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata parāmāsa* (all due to strong *avijjā*) are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- This is an important point: One just needs to comprehend the true nature of this world via understanding *anicca, dukkha, anatta* in order to become a *Sotāpanna*.
- Just with this understanding, one removes *kāmachanda* , *vyāpāda, and vicikicchā*. This is why a *Sotāpanna* is said to be "one with the vision" or "*dassanena sampanno*."
- Once the Buddha took a bit of soil on his fingernail and told the *bhikkhus*, "if all the soil in this Earth can be compared to the defilements one needs to get rid of, a *Sotāpanna* has left in him/her only an amount compared to this bit of soil on my fingernail."
- This may sound astounding to some. But it is critical to understand that most heinous immoral acts are done because of one not having *Sammā Diṭṭhi* at least to a significant level.
- Of the remaining *sanyojana (sanyoga*), *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are reduced at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage, and removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage. The rest of the *sanyoga* (*rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, and avijjā*) goes away at the *Arahant* stage.

11. In the *kāma loka*, we experience a form of *olarika sukha* (or primitive form of coarse sensations), where sense faculties and corresponding sense objects are dense. As the attachment to pleasures from "dense matter" decreases, rebirth in the "denser worlds" is progressively eliminated. One exception is the *peta* realm where the bodies are not dense, but that is done to impart an enhanced mental suffering.

- At the *Sotāpanna* stage one is permanently released from the coarse forms of suffering in the lowest four realms. After the *Sakadāgāmī* stage, rebirths do not occur even in the human realm where the relatively dense bodies still are subjected to physical pains and diseases. An *Anāgāmī* is born only in the *suddhavasa rūpa loka*, where there are only fine bodies with vision, hearing, and mind only. An *Arahant* will never be reborn anywhere in the 31 realms which have "some connection to matter"; see, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."
- Thus at the passing away of an *Arahant*, the mind is released from any attachment to the material world consisting of the 31 realms; no more suffering from physical pains, mental pains, or death. One has attained the state of *amaraneeya* (no death).

12. Another way to analyze the steps to *Nibbāna* is to look at how the 12 *akusala citta* cease to arise stage by stage. See, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta."

13. Therefore, the four stages of *Nibbāna* can be characterized in different ways. These include hindrances, *sanyoga* (or *saṃyojana*), "density of matter", *akusala citta*, and many other ways. They are all inter-related and self-consistent.

14. Even before the *Sotāpanna* stage, one can start feeling the *nirāmisa sukha*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?," and "Nirāmisa Sukha."

- *Nirāmisa sukha* can increase considerably if one can get to the *Ariya jhānā*.
- It is not necessary to attain *Ariya jhānā* to become a *Sotāpanna*, but *Ariya jhānā* can be attained only if one is already a *Sotāpanna*; see, "How does one know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?" (this became clear to me only recently and I have verified it in a *desanā* from the Thero).
- Thus, if one can get to *Ariya jhānā* one can confirm the attainment of the *Sotāpanna* stage. And it is possible to distinguish *Ariya jhānā* from *Anariya jhānā* easily since *Ariya jhānā* are immune to external

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influences or even forced defiled thoughts; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhaṅga."

6.3.7 Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anattā so Important?

The correct meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* are explained under the top menu "Key Dhamma Concepts."

1. *Anicca, dukkha, anatta* describe the true nature of "this world" of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Nowhere in the 31 realms can one maintain anything to one's satisfaction over the long term (*anicca*); thus one gets depressed, unfulfilled, and distraught (suffering or *dukkha* is the net result). Thus one becomes helpless (*anatta*).

2. A good analogy is someone attempting to fill a leaky vessel at home by carrying water to it from a nearby river. He makes a trip back from the river, fills the vessel and is glad to see that it got filled halfway. But soon enough he sees that water is running out and thus needs to make another trip to the river to bring more water.

- If he spent a bit of time examining the vessel, he would have discovered the leak, and could have fixed it. We are too much involved in the struggle to maintain an illusory happiness, and we do not take enough time to contemplate whether it makes sense to struggle against a system that is INHERENTLY unsuitable to provide lasting happiness.

3. Before the retirement, I was basically working seven days a week. I had deadlines to meet and responsibilities to fulfil and there was no time to even think whether I should take some time off and contemplate the sensibility of such a hectic life.

- Whatever vacation time that I had, I wanted to plan a "relaxing vacation." But I did not realize that I was spending more time planning the vacation and then spent whatever the energy that I had on sightseeing etc. When I got back from the vacation, I was exhausted from the trip itself. The early retirement decision was the best decision that I ever made in my life.

4. If this existence is inherently flawed in the sense that it is not capable of sustaining stability at all, then all the struggles that we make are in vain. The Buddha discovered that everything in "this world"undergoes change (see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"). It is INHERENTLY impossible to achieve a lasting happiness.

- Now the question is how do we know whether this axiom in Dhamma is correct? This is where it takes a bit of time to look at the evidence. I have done a lot of work within the past several years and hopefully this website will help you cut down on that research.
- Actually scientists also now acknowledge that the universe is "running down", and we need to constantly spend energy to keep chaos and instability out of the way to maintain some sort of stability (in Buddha Dhamma this is called "*saṅkhāra dukkha*"); see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."

5. After looking at the evidence, if one decides to spend a bit more time to carefully examine the three characteristics (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), one may see that there is some truth to it. This will set one off on the Dhamma Path.

- If there is nothing substantial or long lasting to be had by harming other living beings, stealing from them, lying to them, indulging in excess sense pleasures, or not being intoxicated with power, money or position, one's life will automatically change for the better.
- The five precepts or eight precepts are NOT to be just mechanically followed. The mind needs to SEE the benefit of following them.

6. This is why one MUST spend some time examining the evidence for the validity of Buddha Dhamma. The first stage of *Nibbāna*, *Sotāpanna* stage, is attained just with the clear understanding of the true nature of "this world", i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

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- When one realizes the futility of the struggle for long lasting happiness in a world that is inherently not capable of providing it, one will automatically start moving away from clinging to "things in this world." For example, one will say to oneself, "what is the point of stealing this from another person? What long lasting happiness can be gained from it? Rather my mind will be in an agitated state if I do that."
- There is no need to force oneself to obey the precepts. Moral behavior (*sīla*) will automatically follow the true understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Then, when one starts feeling a bit of *nirāmisa sukha*, there is no turning back, because one can see for oneself the benefits of a moral life.

7. Thus *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (*san* + *ma* + *diṭṭhi* = vision to get rid of defilements) is none other than the true comprehension of the three characteristics: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

- When one gains a bit of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (vision), it will try to prevent one from having defiled thoughts (*Sammā Saṅkappa*), uttering false speech (*Sammā Vaca*), doing wrong things (*Sammā Kammanta*), pursuing wrong lifestyles (*Sammā Ajiva*). One will also make efforts (*Sammā Vayama*) to be on the Path, which will lead to be constantly be mindful (*Sammā Sati*), thus leading to *Sammā Samādhi* (peaceful and focused state of mind).
- But the important distinction between, say "good speech" and *sammā vaca* must be understood in the context of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. **One abstains from "wrong speech" not merely because one does not want to face bad consequences; one abstains from it because one can ALSO see the futility in it. Same holds for all eight. This is worth a lot of contemplation.**
- This is why the Buddha said, "*Dhammo ha ve rakkati dhammacarī*", or, "once one sees the Dhamma, Dhamma will guide, protect, and direct."
- Thus, gaining *Sammā Diṭṭhi* via contemplating on *anicca, dukkha, anatta* will automatically direct one on the Noble Eightfold Path. This is why removing *micchā diṭṭhi* via true understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* is so important.

7. When one proceeds in this manner, one will attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*, as these three basic concepts take hold in the mind. At that point, the mind will automatically reject doing things that will result in rebirth in lower four realms.

- Those are the four greed-based *cittā* that arise due to *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong vision), and the delusion-based *citta* that arises due to defiled *viññāṇa* (*vicikicchā*). This is why a *Sotāpanna* is prevented from a rebirth in the lower four realms forever; see, "Akusala Citta- How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta."

8. When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one may still have greed, hate, and delusion left in him/her. But a *Sotāpanna* KNOWS about them, and KNOWS how to get rid of them. Then it is just a matter of time before getting rid of those defilements and attaining the other three stages, culminating in ultimate peace and permanent happiness, *Nibbāna*.

Next, "The Sotāpanna Stage", …….

6.3.8 How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta

Anicca, dukkha, anatta describe the true nature of this world with 31 realms. Thus one needs to comprehend these "three characteristics of nature" in order to "see" the path to *Nibbāna* before starting to follow it.

1. Before one starts on a journey one needs to decide why one should take the journey, exactly where one is going to, and the correct path towards that destination. Thus it is worthwhile to examine why the Buddha said our goal should be to move away from this world towards *Nibbāna*, why he said that, why one should believe that to be true, and what the correct path towards that goal is. The Buddha himself recommended that approach:

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- One starts on the Noble Eightfold Path with *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, which means the needed "vision" on why, what to expect at the end , and an idea about the path to achieve it.
- Out of the twelve *akusala cittā*, five are permanently removed when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage: the four greedy *cittā* that arise with wrong view ("*diṭṭhi sahagatha*"), and the delusion *citta* based on *vicikicchā*. All five of these *cittā* arise because one does not know the true nature of the world; all *kamma* that lead one to rebirth in the *apāyā* are done with these five *cittā*. Thus when they are removed by partially completing *Sammā Diṭṭhi* at the *Sotāpanna* stage, one is permanently prevented from accumulating kamma that destines one to a rebirth in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*).
- Furthermore, any such *apāyagāmī kamma* seeds previously accumulated are prevented from proving a potent enough *nimitta* at the moment of death; thus birth in the *apāyā* is automatically prevented.
- Looking at it from another angle, out of the 10 *samyojanas* (those that binds one to *saṃsāra*), three are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage: *sathkaya diṭṭhi* (the idea that all actions one does with the six sense bases to achieve *amisa sukha* are beneficial), *vicikicchā* (distorted mindset), and *silabbata paramasa* (the idea that *Nibbāna* can be attained just by following precepts, without purifying one's mind). All three are due to not having *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, or not knowing the true nature of the world: *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*
- In the *Sabbasava Sutta*, there are seven recommended methods for removing defilements for anyone starting on the Path. The first item on the list describes how one can get rid of a bulk of defilements just with correct vision of "this world", i.e., "*dassanena pahathabba*"; this is what was discussed above.
- Once one understands the true nature of "this world" and understands how to remove the rest of the defilements, then the other six steps are taken, of which "*bhavanaya pahathabba*" (i.e., removal by meditation) comes last. Today, most people start meditating without clearly understanding what to meditate about.

2. Thus, first one needs to understand why we need to escape from "this world."

- The three characteristics of "this world" (see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta") tell us that we can NEVER achieve AND maintain whatever we desire (characteristic of *anicca*), thus we mostly end up with suffering (*dukkha*), and thus one is not in control and becomes helpless (*anatta*). The Buddha merely DISCOVERED this true nature of the world. Many people take Buddha Dhamma to be pessimistic, but Buddha was just a messenger.
- Moreover, the Buddha gave us an optimistic message too. For those who are willing to examine the true nature of the world, there is a better version of happiness that comes from moving away from "this world", i.e., by voluntarily giving up craving for things in this world. This is the *nirāmisa sukha* of *Nibbāna* (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?), which increases as one starts on the Path and becomes complete and PERMANENT at the Arahant stage. Even if one does not get to the first stage of *Nibbāna*, the *Sotāpanna* stage, one could experience this *nirāmisa sukha*, and may help shorten the path to Nibbāna in the upcoming lives.

3. Therefore it is CRITICAL to understand *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, before we proceed further here. If you have not done so, please spend some time critically examining and contemplating on these concepts described under many posts on this website, in particular, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta," "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and the links following that on "Sansāric Time Scale," and "Evidence for Rebirth," and "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca. Dukkha, Anatta so Important?." It may be even helpful for many to scan through many other posts before reading those posts.

- That is a lot of reading. But "this world" of 31 realms is very complex. Please keep re-reading all posts until you understand the message. Most of these concepts have been hidden for thousand years, and have been badly distorted, especially *anicca* and *anatta*. **Think about the fact that all biological matter is constituted from just four bases of DNA, and all computer codes are based on two units, 0 and 1.** Thus, one could see how complex the "whole existence" with 31 realms is when there are 28 types of *rūpa*, 89 types of *cittā* and 52 types of *cetasikas* are involved!

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4. The main conclusion from *anicca, dukkha, anatta* is "*asarattena anatta*," i.e., "*anatta* in the sense of it is fruitless to crave for anything in this world." Thus the Buddha said, "*anissitoca viharathi, na ca kinci loke upadiyathi*," i.e., "There is nothing in this world that is fruitful, there is nothing to be craved."

- People "behave badly" in order to "get what they perceive to be valuable." All immoral acts are done to "get what we want." We crave for something and greed arise, and then when we don't get what we wish for, we get angry and hate arises. We first think bad thoughts (*mano saṅkhāra*), then follow through with bad words (*vacī saṅkhāra*), and bodily action (*kaya saṅkhāra*). We do all this because we do not have an understanding of the true nature of the world, i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and related facts: knowledge of the rebirth in a wider world of 31 realms with suffering. Thus we do all other bad acts with established wrong views (*niyata micchā diṭṭhi*); see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

5. Now let us see what happens when one starts learning the true nature of the world including *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and ALSO the consequences of immoral actions: Then one thinks, "Is it worthwhile to steal from someone to get what I want, which in the end will do me more harm than good (because those will not provide any permanent happiness, AND one has to pay the price of an immoral action if not in this life but in upcoming lives?)."

- Same for any other immoral act: to hurt someone by, uttering false, slandering, harsh, or frivolous speech; stealing, killing, or engaging in sexual misconduct (hurting other parties involved). AND all those start with covetousness, ill-will, and all those are done because of established false views that fruitful things can be had in this world by hurting others without any bad consequences for oneself.

6. Thus when one is about to think of doing such a bad deed or having bad thoughts, this "clear vision" or *sammā diṭṭhi* will help get rid of such thoughts and instead think, "this person is in the same boat, struggling to survive in a world setup for failure." Thus instead of bad thoughts one will have thoughts of fellowship and compassion for other beings.

- Also one will be working to learn more Dhamma and will be constantly thinking about Dhamma concepts like *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; the joy from deeper understanding will provide incentive to dig deeper on concepts that are not clear. Thus *Sammā Diṭṭhi* leads to the next step in the Noble Eightfold Path: *Sammā Saṅkappa*.

7. With such a mindset one will avoid the four forms of bad speech (lying, slandering, vicious talk, vain talk), because one realizes that such acts will only lead to loss of peace of mind as well as hurting others. Thus one will start living with *Sammā Vaca*; also see, "Right Speech – How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma."

8. Similarly, one will clearly see that there is no point in engaging in immoral bodily acts (killing, stealing, and sexual misconduct) in order to get some temporary satisfaction, which in the end will come back to haunt oneself with magnified bad consequences. This will AUTOMATICALLY guide one to act in a moral fashion, i.e., one will have *Sammā Kammanta*.

9. In standard texts, it says one will not undertake the five lifestyles that are to be avoided:

(a) Dealing and killing animals for meat trade.
(b) Dealing in poisons.
(c) Dealing in weapons and arms.
(d) Dealing in slave trade and prostitution.
(e) Dealing in intoxicants or liquors and drugs.

- *Sammā ajiva* is more than that. Thus one's lifestyle will automatically change to not only moral living, but also to avoid any kind of act which will be harmful to oneself and/or others. One will take care of one's responsibilities towards one's family and the society, because otherwise one will get in deeper debt, and will not have the mindset to contemplate; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

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- **Following the Path is much more than just abandoning everything and becoming a bhikkhu or just following some guidelines or precepts. It needs to be done with wisdom gained through learning Dhamma.** This is *Sammā Ajiva*.

10. As one feels the benefits of such a lifestyle, one will start feeling the *nirāmisa sukha* (see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?)." Then one will be motivated to stay on that Path, and also to learn more about the Buddha Dhamma and to contemplate more on the Three Characteristics (one is said to have a complete understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* only when one reaches the *Arahanthood* or full *NIbbana*). This renewed effort is *Sammā Vayama*.

11. The above six factors will make one's mind purified and one will start "seeing" better. One will start working with "*yoniso manasikara*" (clear vision). It is more than clear thinking; even a master thief plans his work with clear thinking (on the wrong side).

- Here what it means is one always looks at any issue with *anicca, dukkha, anatta* in the mind: that it is not possible to maintain things to our satisfaction in the long run; that the more we attach either via greed or hate, the more we will suffer; that it is unwise to do immoral things for temporary happiness to become helpless at the end. This is *Sammā Sati*.

12. When one starts meditating (and this does not have to be last; one can start slowly from the beginning), **one will be easily able to get to *Sammā Samādhi***, focused attention (*ekaggata*). The more one proceeds on the Path (i.e., the more the mind becomes purified), easier *samādhi* starts to grow in oneself.; one starts feeling a "lightness" even when not doing formal meditation.

- If one works on developing *jhānā*, one will be able to get to *Ariya jhānā*. Whether one will be using meditation on the Three Characteristics, *Satipaṭṭhāna*, or any other other type of meditation, that will eventually lead to the four levels of *Nibbāna*.

13. It is important to realize that "*Sammā*" in all these eight steps means "*san*" (adding things to perpetuate the suffering/rebirth process) + "*ma*" (remove or get rid of). Thus *Sammā Diṭṭhi* is the vision (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) that helps removing "*san*"; *Sammā Saṅkappa* are the thoughts that help remove '*san*"; *Sammā Vācā* is the kind of speech that helps remove '*san*," etc.

- Thus, one adheres to the eight steps through the UNDERSTANDING of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and not merely for the sake of following some guidelines or precepts. One understands the futility of continuing this rebirth process.

Next, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta", ……

6.3.9 Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless

1. As long as one considers something to be valuable, it is not easy to give it up, It does not matter what ANYONE ELSE says. One will go to much effort and expense to make sure it stays with oneself.

- But if one's own mind sees that something is useless and worthless, then what is the point of keeping it? One will gladly get rid of it.
- One's perception of the "world out there" and "what is valuable and what is not" depends on one's mind. Even though we look at a pile of feces with disgust, a dog or a pig may eat it with relish. And a dog does not have any cravings for gold or money.
- While some people gain pleasure by torturing animals, most are disgusted by such acts. It depends on the level of understanding. A purified mind will see things in a better perspective.

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2. The common thinking about Buddhism goes like this: "The Buddha said that this rebirth process is full of suffering, and to stop the rebirth process we need to give up everything in this world to detach from it. But that is not easy to do. I like the stuff that I have and I enjoy life. May be I can attain *Nibbāna* in a future life."

- That is not a correct interpretation of what the Buddha said. The Buddha did say that "this rebirth process is full of suffering." He never asked anyone to give up anything that they had. His only advice was "learn the true nature of this wider world of 31 realms that is characterized by *anicca, dukkha, anatta* and realize the dangers in staying in it."
- If one truly understood the true nature of the world one's own mind will see the futility of hanging onto worldly things. *Nekkhamma* or "giving up" is not done forcibly, IT JUST HAPPENS when one comprehends the true nature of "this world."

3. If one understands the above few paragraphs, then one knows more about Buddha Dhamma compared to 90% of the "Buddhists." Even many *Theravāda bhikkhus* say, "May you attain *Nibbāna* after enjoying future lives in *Deva* realms", or "May you have much worldly pleasures and attain Nibbāna when the next Buddha [*Maitreya* (Sanskrit), *Metteyya* (Pāli), *Maithree* (Sinhala)] appears in the world". They apparently do not comprehend the dangers in staying in the rebirth process.

- This is in sharp contrast with Buddha Gotama's last words, *"appamadena sampadeta"* or "strive diligently and comprehend "*san*" (and attain *Nibbāna*)", because this rebirth process is wrought with unimaginable dangers. Even if we live perfectly moral lives, we do not know what kind of kamma that we have done in past lives, and thus there is no way to guarantee a good rebirth unless one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage and makes those worst *kamma bīja* ineffective.
- This life of about 100 years is just a "blink of an eye" compared to trillions of years in future lives (unless one attains *Nibbāna*); but it is also unimaginably precious because we very rarely get a chance to be born human and most living beings are in the lowest four realms; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

4. Buddha Dhamma is all about PURIFYING one's mind so that the mind can grasp the true nature of this world. The only actions one needs to take are to live a moral life, gradually adhere to a lifestyle that avoids the ten defilements (*dasa akusala*), AND learn Dhamma, in particular truly understand *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Everything else will fall into place.

- When one purifies one's mind, it becomes clear that the things that one believes to be valuable are not valuable at all, AND such cravings can bring so much suffering in the future. But one cannot take that advice coming from even a Buddha and act on it forcibly; ONE'S MIND HAS TO SEE IT.
- One may take many precautions to safeguard a "gem" that one thinks has much value. But if the gem is assessed by an expert and is found to be worthless, then one will no longer have the same "attachment" for the "gem" and may throw it away. But until the perception is there in the mind that the "gem" is valuable, one will not part with it.

5. There is another aspect of this forcibly giving up. In addition to the fact that one will be under stress if one tries to do that, one may be accumulating bad *kamma vipāka* if one acts irresponsibly. For example, if one decides that he needs to become a *bhikkhu* and abandons his kids and wife, that is an unwise thing to do.

- We have to act mindfully and with wisdom, making sure that we do not hurt ourselves, our families, or anyone else. Buddha Dhamma is all about the mind, and not about mechanically doing meaningless rituals. As we discussed in several posts, it is the intention and the enthusiasm for doing good, that really matters.
- One can progress all the way up to the *Anāgāmī* stage of *Nibbāna* as a "householder", i.e., while fulfilling one's responsibilities as a husband/wife, parent, etc. While one should certainly give to charity, one needs to make sure that there is enough left to support one's family. And it is not possible to contemplate or meditate if one has to worry about the next meal or a place to stay.

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6. As one makes progress, giving up will happen automatically **at the level of one's understanding**, and as needed. One does not have to make plans in advance about what to give up or anything like that: *"Dhammo ha ve rakkati dhamma cari"*, or "Dhamma will guide and protect those who follow the Path." As the mind becomes clear of the hindrances, one will make better decisions, and will not hurt anyone in the process.

7. About 20 years after the Buddha attained Enlightenment, he had to start adding "*vinaya* rules" for the *bhikkhus*. When Buddha Dhamma started flourishing, many unscrupulous people started to enroll as *bhikkhus* to enjoy "a good life." The Buddha admonished that such *bhikkhus* accumulate much bad *kamma* by getting indebted to those people who make offerings out of saddhā.

- Vinaya ("*vi*"+"*naya*" where "*naya*" means debt) means stay free of debts. The *bhikkhus* can do that by diligently pursuing Nibbāna and also by explaining Dhamma to those people, while making sure not to abuse their privileged life where they are honored for these very acts.

8. Getting to debt is bad for lay people too. All our current responsibilities have their origins in the past where we became indebted to others. It may take a while to comprehend this, but we are really paying off debts to even our kids. And if we do not do a good job of it, we WILL have to do it in future lives. Any other relationship is the same way; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

- One time a *bhikkhu* started sharing his food from the alms round with his parents, and other *bhikkhus* complained to the Buddha. The Buddha asked why he did that he said his parents had become beggars and that is why he did that. The Buddha praised that *Bhikkhu* and officially endorsed it as a vinaya rule, that bhikkhus can take care of their parents if the need arose. Even as a *Bhikkhu*, one is obliged to take care of one's parents.

9. When someone gets help from another, it is the obligation of the receiver to show his/her gratitude for that kindly act, by doing a pattidana or "giving merits" to that person; see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How does it Happen?." If the receiver becomes able to pay back in kind, that should be done too.

- When we deal with people in everyday life, we are engaged in paying back debts even unknowingly. Thus it is a good idea to fulfil one's responsibilities to the best of one's ability. This applies to most everyday things we do. Our employment responsibilities needs to be done to the best of our ability. When we do not fulfil our responsibilities anywhere, we stay indebted and accumulate more debt with interest.
- When doing transactions, we need to make sure that everyone is compensated adequately; otherwise, such debts will have to be paid in the future. Again, intention and the "state of mind" are key factors: We may be able to fool other people, but we cannot fool our own minds.
- We have enemies because we have had conflicts with them before. And someone has to break that vicious cycle. This is why the *Dhammapada* verse, *"na hi verena verani...."* says: "Hatred never ceases through hatred, but through love alone they cease." This is an eternal law.

10. Beings in the lower four realms DO NOT HAVE an advanced mental state to affect their future even short term, i.e., in this life; they are simply paying off debts and paying for their immoral acts in the past . They just "go with the flow" spending *kammic* energy that has been accumulated; unless they are fortunate to receive the benefits of a "good kamma beeja" from the past (when they were in higher worlds) at the time of death, they are stuck in the lower realms.

- On the other hand, HUMANS CAN totally change their future, within this lifetime (mundane progress), but also affect the future lives: If one wants to avoid the *niraya* (hell) one needs to remove the causes that could cause rebirth in *niraya*, i.e., deep hate. If one wants to avoid rebirth as a hungry ghost (*peta loka*), then one need to remove causes for that, i.e., excessive greed. If one does not want to be reborn an animal one needs to remove both greed and hate. To avoid birth as an *asura*, one needs to take care of oneself, and not depend on others.

11. Buddha Dhamma is a complete theory on existence. EVERYTHING can be explained in a systematic way. If everyone can grasp the basic message of the Buddha, our world will be much safer place.

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- When a tree is growing all we need to do is to water it, provide nutrients, and generally take care of it; the fruits from the tree will come out naturally. No amount of praying or wishing is going to get the tree to give more fruits. In the same way, when we follow the Path correctly, everything else will "fall into place." There is no need to pray or to make wishes or do anything else.
- This world, for all its drawbacks, plays by the rules. Things just do not happen; they happen due to causes. When one understands the causes for bad outcomes, one can work to stop such causes and make sure bad outcomes NOT TO ARISE in the future; this is the meaning of the "*nirodha*" (="*nir*" + "*udā*," where "*nir*" is stop and "*udā*" is arising; thus "stop from arising").

12. The real message of the Buddha is that spending one's whole life in making mundane progress is really insignificant in the *sansāric* time scale; **why spend all that time to achieve a high status, earn a billion dollars, or anything else mundane if one has to leave all that behind within 100 years?** We have done this over and over countless times. This rebirth process can run into many more trillions of years into the future and this larger world of 31 realms is wrought with unimaginable dangers.

- The ultimate solution is to stop the rebirth process (eliminate causes for future rebirths), and to release the mind from the material body that leads to much suffering.
- Thus the key message of the Buddha was to "attain the suffering-free *Nibbāna* by eliminating the causes for rebirth: greed, hate, and ignorance."
- But that message itself can only be grasped via purifying one's mind to a certain extent by learning about the true nature of the wider world of existence: *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*

Also see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas," "Nibbāna – Is It Difficult to Understand?," and "What are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."

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6.4 Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna

The first stage of Nibbāna — the Sotāpanna stage — is also called the Stream Enterer in English and Sovān in Sinhala.

- The Sotāpanna Stage
- Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire
- Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage
- Anuloma Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Sotāpanna Stage
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyās
- Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala
- Sotāpatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna
- Sammā Ditṭhi – Realization, Not Memorization
- How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?
- Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana
  - Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana – Introduction
  - How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha
  - Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha
  - Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
  - Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa
  - What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex
  - Kāma Āsvada Start with Phassa Paccaya Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā
- Sakkāya Ditṭhi is Personality (Me) View?
- Akusala Citta – How Does a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta
- What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?
- Udayavaya Ñāṇa
  - Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Ñāṇa – Introduction
  - Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāṇa
  - Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa
  - Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Importance of the Cittaja Kaya

Topics belonging to other section:

- Micchā Ditṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage – (in the "Mental Body – Gandhabba" section).
- 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage (in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).

Also, see the following posts in the Abhidhamma section for more details (these could be helpful even if you have not studied Abhidhamma):

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○ Why do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi is Key

○ Key to Sotāpanna Stage – Diṭṭhi and Vicikicchā

6.4.1 The Sotāpanna Stage

Revised February 24, 2020; August 15, 2020

It is imperative to learn the correct Dhamma from an *Ariya* in order to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage (one of the four requirements). See, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala." We will discuss a simile for attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage in that regard. We will briefly discuss *Sabbāsava Sutta* to show the importance of first removing wrong views first.

A Simile for *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (attaining the *Sotāpanna* Stage)

1. Suppose a man lives in an area that is normally full of sense pleasures. But there are occasional flooding, droughts, and also Earthquakes. When such calamities occur, he gets distraught, and thus, his mind is not at ease most of the time.

- Yet, he has accumulated some wealth, and in the back of his mind, he believes that "everything will be OK" in the long run.

2. Then one day, an old friend (who has been on travel for many years) comes back and tells him that the reason he left was to find a better place to live. The friend says that he did some research and found out that this land is inherently unstable. Then within several years is going to be destroyed in an Earthquake.

- Furthermore, he says that he found a place that is very prosperous place and that there are no worries about flooding, drought, or Earthquakes there. But it is a long journey to that place.

3. The man tells the friend that he had heard about such wonderful places from other people before. He had followed them at times, but every time came back after trekking for some time because he could not see any benefit. Plus, he says, "how do I know what you say is right? I know that everything is not perfect here, but can you show evidence for your theory that there is going to be a big Earthquake? Also, how can I believe you that this place you found is so wonderful?"

4. The friend shows him all the evidence that he had gathered why this area is unsuitable for living in the long run. He also shows evidence about the prosperity of the new place and also describes to him the travel path.

- The evidence is compelling, and the man decides to follow the friend's advice of the friend and see where that leads to. This is analogous to becoming a *Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi*.

5. The man spends a lot of time reading about and contemplating on all the evidence that he received. Then he begins to realize that what the friend is saying is true. He decides to take an exploratory trip on that path and makes suitable preparations, as suggested by the friend.

- Once in a while, he wonders whether all these preparations will be a waste of time. But as he keeps on assessing the evidence, he becomes more and more convinced that he needs to take that trip.

6. He starts on the trip and is encouraged by seeing some "landmarks" that the friend told him about. Even though once in a while he thinks about all the "pleasures" he could have had if he stayed home, these "landmarks" give him encouragement to go further and then reaches one of the four "major stopovers" that the friend told about.

- Once he gets to that destination, he becomes totally convinced about the truth of his friend's conclusions. Now there is no going back for him. This is the *Sotāpanna* stage.

7. Thus it is very important to first find out all about what the goal is (*Nibbāna*), correct instructions to get there (the Path), and, most of all, why it is not profitable or wise to stay home (i.e., to stay in "this world").

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The last one is the critical one to comprehend first because unless one sees the dangers of the status quo, one will not be motivated to take action (to start on the Path).

8. Realizing the inherent instability of "this world" is the true understanding of the Three Characteristics: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. He realizes that there is no point in the current struggle in trying to make permanent peace in a place ("this world",) which is inherently not set up to provide that relief (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"). And that *Nibbāna* means ultimate, permanent peace of mind. Just this realization leads to the "point-of-no-return," the *Sotāpanna* stage.

9. One day the Buddha asked Ven. Sariputta to clarify what is meant by "*sota*" and "*Sotāpanna*." Ven. Sariputta said, "*sota*" is the Noble Eightfold Path, and a "*Sotāpanna*" is one who follows the path correctly. To follow the Path, the first one needs to have a map or the layout of "our existence."

- What we observe with our limited sensory faculties is only a very small part of a much more complex world; we are beginning to see a bit more of that wider world with the technological advances made by science. But it is still an insignificant fraction of the whole picture.
- The whole picture is very complex, but we do not need to learn all about it (but if one has time, one could learn *Abhidhamma* and learn minute details). The Buddha has condensed the very essence of the existence in this wider world by its Three Characteristics (*Tilakkhaṇa*): *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. When one comprehends those characteristics, one can "see" what lies ahead, and what to do about it.
- **Thus one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage with just *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, which is the correct view of the wider world.**

10. After attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, he KNOWS what needs to be done and HOW it is to be done. Then he diligently follows the Path and attains the next three stages, culminating in *Nibbāna*.

The Way to the *Sotāpanna* Stage

The key here is that without knowing about the Buddha's world view (31 realms of existence and the suffering in the four lower realms, see "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma"), one does not comprehend the "*sansāric* suffering." **Most suffering is incurred when one is born in any of the four lowest realms**. This is important because it is possible that (especially young and wealthy people) may not experience that much physical and mental suffering in this life. And in order to have faith in the Buddha's world view, one needs to spend some time examining the evidence for it.

1. When one clearly sees why it is not fruitful to stay in "this world" of 31 realms, he/she has understood the true nature, the three characteristics *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, of "this world."

- *Sammā Diṭṭhi* is the realization that there is nothing "substantial" to be had by staying in "this world." This clear vision leads to the conclusion that there is no point in doing immoral things (those that cause rebirth in the four lower realms).

2. We strive to gain or own "things" in this world because we perceive that we can achieve happiness eventually; this is *sakkāya diṭṭhi* or *sathkāya diṭṭhi* (both "*sakka*" and "*sath*" mean "good" or fruitful, and "*kāya*" means "*kriya*" or actions. *Diṭṭhi* means wrong view. Thus, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* means our wrong view that our actions to acquire "things" or to "seek happiness" are good and fruitful.

- When one truly understands *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, this wrong view is removed. One realizes that nothing we do can lead to permanent happiness "in this world."

3. Furthermore, for one who has clearly seen *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the mind does not allow serious wrongdoings (*vici* + *ki*+*ichcha* = liking for wrong actions or things) that could lead to birth in the lower four realms.

- There is no doubt regarding the "world vision" that he/she realized. Thus *vicikicchā*, or the liking for unfruitful and harmful actions, is removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage.

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4. Therefore, one just needs to contemplate on the true nature of the world. It is done by purifying the mind, and cannot be done just by following certain rituals, such as just obeying precepts on certain days.

- Thus the idea of "*sīlabbata parāmāsa*" or "*Nibbāna* can be attained by following rituals" goes away at the *Sotāpanna* stage. One realizes what the Buddha said by "*saṃvaraṭṭena sīlaṃ*." It is that "*sīla*" or moral behavior is achieved by the constraint of eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind. That must be monitored at ALL TIMES, not by "observing precepts" for a day or even several days.

5. For one who has become "*dassanā sampanno*" (one with true and clear vision), the mindset changes not by following formal procedures. The change of mindst comes by understanding the futility of breaking any precepts or wrongdoings. Even if one does a wrong act, the mistake is realized, and one takes care to avoid it.

6. Please keep in mind that this is not to discourage people from observing precepts as a formality. This is a good thing to do for those who are starting on the Path. It is also a good habit to instil in children. It is customary in Buddhist countries for whole families to go to the temple and observe "*pañca sīla*" (five precepts) or "*aṭṭhaṅgika sīla*" (eight precepts) on *Poya* (Full Moon) days.

Key Points from the *Sabbaāsava Sutta* (MN 2)

The key to attaining *Nibbāna* is to remove the *āsavā* (residue from the fermentation of bad thoughts/habits over many *saṃsāric* births). In the *Sabbāsava Sutta*, the Buddha listed seven steps to remove the *āsavā* and to purify the mind, thus paving the way to *Nibbāna*. These seven steps are listed below:

1. Removal by clear vision ("*dassanā pahātabbā*," where *dassana* is vision and *pahātabba* is removal). This is a clear understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

2. Removal by the restrained use of the sense faculties ("*saṃvarā pahātabbā*," where *saṃvara* is the disciplined use of the sense faculties: not to over-indulge in the senses).

3. Removal by good and frequent associations ("*paṭisevanā pahātabbā*," where *sevana* is an association: for example, with good friends and good deeds).

4. Removal by tolerance and patience ("*adhivāsanā pahātabbā*"). For example, even if one is tempted to steal because one is hungry, one should contemplate the consequences of stealing. There are ways to earn a living.

5. Removal by staying clear of "bad influences and environments" ("*parivajjanā pahātabbā*"). One needs to avoid bad friends, bad locations for living (due to floods, bad neighbors, etc.), avoiding unsuitable times to go out, etc.

6. Removal by getting rid of certain things ("*vinodanā pahathabbā*"). One needs to get rid of bad thoughts that come to mind, such as excessive sensory pleasure, hate, etc.

7. Removal by meditation ("*bhāvanā pahātabbā*"). When one has a clear vision in #1, it becomes apparent what to contemplate.

The clear vision is the first on the list. Just like one should not undertake a journey without learning about the destination, the path, and the reason for the journey, one needs to start getting rid of *āsavā* by first having a clear vision of the Buddha's world view (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma") and understanding what these *āsavā* are and how they arise. More on this topic will be discussed in the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section.

- There are four *āsavā*: *kāmāsava* (craving for sense pleasures), *diṭṭhāsava* (cravings due to wrong views) , *bhavāsava* (craving for existence), and *avijjāsava* (cravings due to ignorance).

The *Sotāpanna* removed the *diṭṭhāsava* through clear vision. Once one understood the true nature of "this world" by contemplating on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, one would not commit any immoral acts to gain

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anything in "this world." See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta - Wrong Interpretations." This alone saves one from future rebirths in the lower four realms.

- A *Sotāpanna* still has the other three *āsavā* left. Those are removed mainly by the meditation on the *Satta Bojjhaṅga* (seven *Bojjhaṅga*.)

The other five steps listed in the *Sabbāsava Sutta*, as one can clearly see, are common sense things to do. They need to be followed at any stage. Actually, anyone can use those steps to enhance the quality of life and to remove any bad habits. For example, alcohol or drug use, to eating too much. A clear vision of why those are bad, and why they need to be stopped is an important step.

- The *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* covers all seven steps in a somewhat different fashion. The *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā* (not the breath meditation version) plays a major role here.

Next, "How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path Starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta", …….

6.4.2 Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire

Attaining the first stage of *Nibbāna* (*Sotāpanna* stage) will remove suffering in the *apāyā* forever, which could be more than billions or even trillions of years. This is not an exaggeration since we have been in this rebirth process from an untraceable beginning; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." Thus any achievement in this life of 100 years is no match.

- Most people think that Buddha Dhamma is a pessimistic "religion." It is neither a religion nor is pessimistic. Let us discuss these two issues a bit first.

1. Buddha Dhamma describes the true nature of "this world", which is far more complex than most people think.

- A religion makes a promise that if one abides by its tenets/doctrine and lives this life accordingly, then one will be rewarded accordingly. In most religions, one is promised birth in heaven for eternity if this is kept.
- But a basic tenet in Buddha Dhamma is that this life of about 100 years is just a blip compared to the countless lives one has had in the past. **Even if we live a perfect life during these 100 years, that does not guarantee one anything about the future lives,** because we may have done *kamma* in PREVIOUS LIVES that could give rebirth in even the lowest four realms, the *apāyā*, including the *niraya* (hell).
- The only way to GUARANTEE that one will NOT be reborn in the *apāyā* is to negate the causes (*lobha, dosa, moha*) that could give opportunities for all such bad *kamma vipāka* to come to fruition. And that is possible only via attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage. Even though attaining the *Arahant* stage of *Nibbāna* via complete removal of *lobha, dosa, moha* (and thus the ten *sanyojana* or fetters) will do that too, attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage does not require all that. It just requires one to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta* to the extent that only three *sanyojana* (fetters) are removed.
- Removal of three (or ten) *sanyojana* cannot be achieved via following set rules/precepts. **One needs to purify one's mind so that the true nature (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) of this complex world of 31 realms is understood.** That is why Buddha Dhamma is not a religion per standard definition.
- On the other hand, if one just wants to take what is helpful to lead to moral life and use Buddha Dhamma as a religion, there is nothing wrong with that. That would be much better than living an immoral life. As one proceeds, it is possible that Dhamma will become more clear, and that may provide the incentive to "dig deeper."

2. Now to the second issue: Because the Buddha emphasized the "suffering in this world", many think that Buddha Dhamma is pessimistic. The Buddha did not say that this current life is necessarily filled with suffering (even though it has more suffering than people realize); rather, most suffering is encountered in the lowest four realms of the 31 realms. **Thus, this reality of suffering is to be understood in the context of this wider world view.** The Buddha just discovered this true nature of the (more complex) world.

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- Furthermore, he showed how to be free from this inevitable suffering in future births, and to attain permanent happiness, *Nibbāna*.

3. Please re-read the above material on those two key points. It is important to look at this "wider world view" when trying to make an assessment of what we should strive for in this life. This analysis leads to a whole new perspective if there is evidence to believe the "wider world view" of the Buddha with repeated rebirths in 31 realms that include the four *apāyā* with unimaginable suffering.

- Does it make sense to spend 60 years of a 80-100 year life to accumulate wealth and fame, if one is to lose most of one's sensory enjoyments over the last few decades (and possibly have a major disease or memory loss)?
- Does it make sense to accrue unimaginable suffering in the *apāyā* in future births by committing any of the *dasa akusala* (ten defilements) to make money, get a promotion, to live in a big house, get a prestigious position, etc (for less than 100 years)?
- The realities of old age, disease, and death hold true for a king, emperor, a billionaire, or a famous film star just the same as for an average person. At the old age, all these achievements actually become a mental burden because one constantly thinks about the "good old days" and become depressed of not being able to enjoy the sensory pleasures just because the whole sensory system is breaking down.
- Here is a video that summrizes what I tried to explain the above paragraph :

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Aging Stars of the Golden Age

4. And this predicament is true for ANY being in ANY realm, unless at least the Sotāpanna stage is attained. A *deva* or a *brahma* could enjoy millions of years of pleasurable lives, but WILL end up in the *apāyā* at some point in the future unless at least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* is attained. There are several incidents mentioned in the *Tipiṭaka* where the Buddha emphasized how important is the *Sotāpanna* stage compared to any existence in the 31 realms:

- One time the Buddha was crossing a paddy field with 500 *bhikkhus* where many cattle were grazing, and smiled. A Buddha (or an *Arahant*) does not smile frequently, so Ven. Ānanda asked the Buddha why he smiled. The Buddha said, " each one of these has been the king of the *devas* at some in the past." Ven. Ānanda asked why that is a reason to smile. Then the Buddha said, "All these 500 *bhikkhus*, who are *Sotāpannas* or above, will never be born an animal. That is why I smiled."
- Another time the Buddha and Ven. Ānanda were walking and saw a piglet by the roadside, and the Buddha again smiled. Asked why, he said, "This piglet had been a princess in a life way back; she cultivated *anāriya jhānā*, attained the highest (eighth) *jhāna* and had *abhiññā* powers. She was born in the highest *brahma* world, but now she is just an animal. On the other hand, those who have attained the *Sotāpanna* stage in my *sāsana* will never be born in the *apāyā*."

5. Many people do not believe in rebirth. But having a belief is not going to help if it is a wrong view. Considering the possible dire consequences IF one gets this world view wrong, it makes a lot of sense to spend some time and to critically examine the evidence for rebirth in particular (see, "Evidence for Rebirth"), and the wider world view of the 31 realms in general (see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma").

6. The *niyata micchā diṭṭhi* (established wrong views) is one of the stronger ones of the *dasa akusala* that could lead to birth in the *apāyā*; the key word there is "*niyata*," or "established", i.e., one firmly believes, for example, that there is no rebirth process. One could avoid this by at least having an open mind, and NOT rule out those possibilities. Even a *Sotāpanna* may not be truly convinced of some aspects of the wider world view (but not rebirth): for example, he/she may not have any strong conviction on the existence of *deva* worlds, or may not even think about such matters.

- Another point to consider is how the standard world views have changed over time since the Buddha revealed his Dhamma about a very complex world with no discernible beginning. Philosophers since that time (Socrates was a contemporary of the Buddha) put forth many world views that have been discarded one by one: WebLink: WIKI: Astronomy and cosmology

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- Within the past 100 years, the Buddha's world view has gained much support from science and that pace is accelerating with the new string theories as well as quantum mechanics. With all this impressive advances science has made, it cannot account for 96% of the mass of the universe; see, WebLink: NASA: Dark Energy, Dark Matter and WebLink: WIKI: Dark matter. This is beacuse there is so much that we cannot "see" with our eyes or even with the current scientific instruments; see, "Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions."
- There are good reasons to believe that more of these currently hidden aspects of the universe will be revealed in the future by science. Just imagine that even a hundred years ago, scientists believed that the universe had only a few galaxies and that it was stable. Now we know that there are billions of galaxies in our universe, that there could be numerous universes, and all those universes are not stable, i.e., they are born and will perish in the future.
- Until recently, the humans also had the wrong impression that the Earth is at a special place in the universe. But now we know that it is an insignificant "speck of dust" in a vast universe; see the video in "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

7. Please spend some quiet time contemplating on these issues. These posts are not for reading pleasure; these are issues that have far more serious consequences than making a billion dollars. Some of my friends tell me that I should "tone down" the content because many people are turned off by the "realities of the world."

But my goal is not to have a huge readership. Rather, if I can convey the true message of the Buddha for even a few people I would have accomplished my goal. There is ONLY ONE set of natural laws and we cannot alter them, just like we cannot alter the laws of motion: If a car is headed to a brick wall, the car needs to be stopped or the consequences will not be good. Let me give a few examples of how the Buddha assessed this situation:

- Some *brahmins* complained to the Buddha that he was not spending enough time on debating them, but would spend a lot of time with even a few of his disciples. The Buddha asked this question: "Suppose a farmer has three paddy fields: one is extremely productive, another is OK but requires considerably more time to yield a good harvest, and the third field is of such a poor condition it is impossible to get any harvest. Which field would the farmer put his efforts on? He will first take care of the most productive field, totally disregard the third field, and spend whatever extra time he has on the second field. It is the same way with me. I want to help those who are interested and capable of learning my Dhamma. Debating with those who have closed minds is a waste of time."
- One day the Buddha and Ven. Ānanda walked for many miles to a village to deliver a discourse. Everybody gathered and the Buddha was sitting there for a couple of hours without starting the discourse. Finally, a farmer who had lost a cow and was out in the forest looking for it found the cow, went home, took a bath, ate, and came hurrying to the event. The Buddha started the discourse right after he came in. When they were walking back after the discourse, Ven. Ānanda asked the Buddha why he kept everyone waiting until that one farmer came in. The Buddha said, "Ānanda, I walked all this way to give the discourse because of that farmer. I saw that he was capable of grasping the Dhamma, and he did attain the *Sotāpanna* stage."

8. The Buddha said, "This Dhamma is different from anything the world has ever seen." And that is true. It takes time to grasp the complexity of this world, much of which is hidden from us (and only a Buddha is capable of finding them; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction"). There is no need to rush and embrace everything; one needs to spend time contemplating on the validity of Buddha Dhamma.

- There are many introductory but critical posts in the section, "Moral Living and Fundamentals." **That section is actually more about the basic concepts of Buddha Dhamma.** I would encourage even those who are familiar with "Buddhism" to peruse that section, because without the correct basics one cannot grasp more advanced concepts. And I am certain that 90% of "Buddhists" are not even aware of some of these basic concepts. Please comment on anything at this site and don't hesitate to point out any incorrect concepts.

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9. We can, in a way, compare this situation with the situation a parent faces with a teenager. The teenager wants to go out and have a good time with the friends. But the parent says, "do not just think about the immediate pleasures. If you do not study well and get good grades at school, you will not have a good job when you grow up."

- It is the same here. We are trapped in a "rat race" to just keep up with day-to-day pleasures and activities. The Buddha's message is that there is a much longer time frame to think about.
- This life is just a drop of water compared to the huge ocean that is the *sansāric* journey of rebirths. It is imperative to take some time and contemplate on the "bigger picture." We may not get another chance of a human birth for millions or billions of years; this is NOT an exaggeration.

10. But the best part of the Buddha's message, which has been lost for over thousand years, is that the *nirāmisa sukha* is better than any sense pleasures. We are under the illusion that sense pleasures are to be pursued. If one can taste the happiness from staying away from sense pleasures, one will NEVER value the sense pleasures. Those who have experienced even *anāriya jhānic* experiences, will have some idea of such *nirāmisa sukha*.

- It is a feeling of huge release more than a pleasure in the sense of consuming a tasty food, for example. And it is not temporary, especially if one can get to the *Sotāpanna* stage. Then that "base level" of relief is never lost, even in future births.
- When one starts on the Path by comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the sense of peacefulness, the release from stresses, is clearly felt; and that gives an incentive to stay on the Path even before attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- The best part is the realization that one will never be born in the *apāyā*. Any king, emperor, billionaire, is not assured of that; on the contrary, the efforts to attain such temporary status may CAUSE one be born in the *apāyā*, if one engaged in *dasa akusala* to attain them.
- As Carl Sagan pointed out in the video in "The Pale Blue Dot……..," it is worth while to contemplate "where are all those kings and emperors who gained fame through the suffering of so many people?." They are likely to be in the *apāyā* suffering for millions of years to come.

Next, "Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage", ……..

6.4.3 Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage

Revised September 7, 2016; #6 revised on December 2, 2016; September 28, 2018

There are many myths and misconceptions on who a *Sotāpanna* is, and what needs to be done to become a *Sotāpanna*. Here we discuss some of these misconceptions.

1. When I was growing up in Sri Lanka, I was under the impression that a *Sotāpanna* could fly through the air, and an *Arahant* could vanish and reappear as he/she wished. These were the "mythical" status assigned to *Sotāpannas* and *Arahants*. I guess that is due to the fact that such attainments are perceived these days to be impossible to be attained on the one hand and also a clear idea of what those attainments mean has been lost.

- One is unlikely to identify a *Sotāpanna* or even an *Arahant* if one has even been associating with that person.
- It is true that the attainment of even the *Sotāpanna* stage is not a trivial matter. And one cannot expect it to be trivial; see, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire."
- A *Sotāpanna* is incapable of doing only six things: Killing mother, killing mother, killing an *Arahant*, injure a Buddha, *Saṅgha bheda* (teaching *adhamma* as Buddha Dhamma), having *niyata micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahudhātuka sutta (MN 115)."

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2. The attainment of supernormal powers such as flying through the air or to vanish and reappear is possible even by developing *anāriya jhānā*. Most of such attainments are lost at death (even though the ability to get them back will be easier if one is reborn human again).

- Attainment of various stages of *Nibbāna* are accomplished by cleansing one's mind and it has nothing to do with developing supernormal powers. Even though it will be much easier for an *Arahant* or a *Sotāpanna* to develop such powers, by the time one attains such levels of purity of the mind they are not enamored anymore with such supernormal powers. Most of the *Arahants* who had supernormal powers at the time of the Buddha had developed those before encountering Buddha Dhamma. For example, Ven. Sāriputta and Ven. Moggalana were *vedic brahmins* who had developed all *anāriya jhānā* and already possessed such powers before they met the Buddha.

3. Various stages of *Nibbāna* are attained by systematically removing the 12 types of *akusala citta* (immoral thoughts) or, put it in a different way, by removing the ten *saṃyojana.* There are other ways to describe those conditions too; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."

- The *Sotāpanna* stage is reached via removing the four *lobha citta* that are based on *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong vision), and the *moha citta* of *vicikicchā.* It is important to note that the remaining 7 *akusala citta* including the two *dosa-mūla citta* are still with a *Sotāpanna*.
- **The four *lobha cittā* that a *Sotāpanna* removes are the ones that are responsible for *vyāpāda*,** which is the strong version of anger that makes one eligible for rebirth in the *apāyā;* see, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." The two *dosa-mūla citta*, which gives rise to milder versions of anger, are removed only that the *Anāgāmī* stage.
- Furthermore, *kāma rāga* (craving for sensual pleasures) is included in the other four *lobha-mūla citta* that are "*diṭṭhi vippayutta*" or "not associated with wrong views." Thus craving for sensual pleasures is also removed only at the *Anāgāmī* stage.
- **Therefore, attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage — while not trivial — is not as hard as many people think if one has a *tihetuke uppatti*.** However, it is not possible to determine who has *tihetuka* or *dvihetuka paṭisandhi*; most people belong to those two categories. One with *dvihetuka paṭisandhi* cannot attain *magga phala* or *Ariya jhāna* in this life, but still can make progress towards *Nibbāna;* see, "Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi."
- On the other hand, many people are focused on trying to get rid of the perception of "self." That is not something that can forced; it just HAPPENS at the *Arahant* stage. It is not possible to make that perception go away before that.

4. Turning to another myth, NO ONE ELSE can discern what *magga phala* one has attained: *Sotāpanna* or a higher stage of *Nibbāna*. Only a Buddha has that capability. Let me give an example to illustrate this point:

- One time, Ven. Sāriputta was giving instructions to a *bhikkhu*. The Buddha came along and told Ven. Sarputta that the *bhikkhu* had already attained the *Arahantship* and thus there is no need to give instructions to him. It turned out that the *bhikkhu* in question did not say anything to Ven. Sāriputta out of respect for him.
- Now, Ven. Sāriputta is only second to the Buddha in this *Buddha Sāsana*. He and Ven. Moggallāna were the two chief disciples: Ven. Sāriputta was second in knowledge to the Buddha and Ven. Moggallāna was second in psychic powers to the Buddha.
- Thus, if Ven. Sāriputta was not able to discern whether that *bhikkhu* was an *Arahant*, it is NOT possible for anyone living today to determine the stage of *Nibbāna* (*Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant*) of any other person.
- One could be of any race or even religion and still be a *jāti Sotāpanna* (and, even that person may not be aware of it). If one had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage in previous life, he could in principle, be born

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anywhere in human or *deva* realms. Buddha Dhamma describes nature's laws; it applies to everyone the same way.

- Those people who attained various stages of *Nibbāna* during the early years had different religious beliefs. They sat down to listen to the Buddha and by the time the discourse was over, they had attained various stages of *Nibbāna*. Some people came to debate the Buddha and left as *Sotāpannas*. One does not need to formally become a "Buddhist" to realize the true nature of "this world."

5. This is why one has to be very careful when dealing with other humans, and not to offend anyone intentionally. It is very important to have at least some knowledge of the different weights of *kamma*; see, "How to Evaluate Different Weights of Kamma."

- Some people worry about inadvertently killing insects while cleaning the house, but do not think twice about saying a lie or a hurtful thing to a human. That is getting things backwards.
- The severity of the *kamma* depends on the "level of the being" that it is directed at. It is EXTREMELY difficult to get a human life; thus a human life could be millions times worth compared to any animal life. A *Sotāpanna* is at a more than thousand-fold higher level compared to a normal human, and the subsequent levels are even higher.
- There is no being in the 31 realms that is at a higher level compared to an Arahant. That is why killing an *Arahant* is a *Anantariya pāpa kamma*, i.e., it will bring extremely bad *vipāka* in the very next life. And it is not possible to say whether a given person is an *Arahant* by looking at that person, or even associating with him/her for a short time.

6. How does one discern whether one has attained, say, the *Sotāpanna* stage?

- A *Sotāpanna* does not attain *Ariya jhānā* coincident with the *phala* moment. There one's "lineage" (*gotra*) is changed from a normal human to a *Sotāpanna* at the *gotrabu citta*. A similar *citta vīthi* runs in attaining a *jhāna*, but in a *jhāna* one's lineage is changed only to a *jhānic* state at the *gotrabu* moment; see, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."
- However, if one who just became a *Sotāpanna* had developed any *anāriya jhāna* previously, then that *jhāna* could be easily converted to an *Ariya jhāna* with some practice. Unlike an *anāriya jhāna*, an *Ariya jhāna* cannot be broken even if one forcefully tries to generate a sensual/hateful thought. Thus, for someone who has had *jhānic* experiences this may be a clue.
- Also, if one can get into the fourth *Ariya jhāna*, that means one is at least a *Sotāpanna;* probably an *Anāgāmī.*
- Another way is to contemplate whether one is capable of doing any acts that could lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* (the four lowest realms). If one has ingrained characteristics or habits (*gathi*) of an animal, then it is likely that person will be born animal of that character. If one has extreme hate, and is capable of plotting to bring harm to other people, then that person may be destined to the *niraya*. If one does not have any of such extreme greed, hate, and ignorance, then one may be free of the *apāyā*, i.e., one is likely to be a *Sotāpanna*.
- However, unless one is subjected to extreme pressures, it may not be possible to discern whether one has removed such "*apāyagāmī gathi*." It is easier to live a moral life when one has enough resources and when nothing unexpected happens. But there are instances when perfectly "moral people" commit murders in a moment of rage.
- The *Sotāpanna* stage is attained purely via attaining *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, and removing 5 of the 12 possible *akusala cittā*: 4 *lobha cittā* associated with *micchā diṭṭhi* and the *vicikicchā citta* that arises out out ignorance of the true nature of "this world." All these 5 citta are removed via just comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* to a certain extent; see, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Cittas."
- Thus if one has any ESTABLISHED (*niyata*) wrong views (see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"), then it is unlikely that one is a *Sotāpanna*. Attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage is not possible until

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one sees the "unfrutiful nature" of existence anywhere in the 31 realms; and that is not possible if one has **ruled out** rebirth or the existence of other realms; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

- Also see, "How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?" for more details.

7. Many people believe it is necessary to meditate a lot to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage. While it is beneficial to meditate, one can in principle be a *Sotāpanna* without doing any FORMAL meditation. I have given some examples from the time of the Buddha in #4 above; however, such cases are rare these days.

- There are basically two steps to get rid of *lobha, dosa, moha* or to attain *Nibbāna*: "*Dassanena pahathabba*" (removal by vision or the "ability to see") comes first; that is what is necessary to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- However, in order to accomplish "*Dassanena pahathabba*" or "to see clearly", one needs to realize what the Buddha meant by "suffering", which comes in two types. This is described in detail — starting with the first type of suffering that can be eliminated in THIS LIFE — in the "Living Dhamma" section.
- Various stages of *Nibbāna* are attained as *lobha, dosa, moha* are removed in stages. One attains the *Sotāpanna* stage via "*dassanena pahathabba*" i.e., one removes those 5 *akusala cittā* associated with "wrong views" via discerning the true nature of "this world of 31 realms", i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- Then, a *Sotāpanna* can remove the remaining 7 *akusala citta* in three stages via meditation, i.e., "*bhavanaya pahathabba*" and attain the higher stages *Nibbāna*.
- Of course, it is good to meditate before the *Sotāpanna* stage; it will be beneficial to calm the mind and to contemplate on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. But the "*bhāvanā*" or meditation that is needed for the *Sotāpanna* stage cannot be restricted to formal meditation because moral conduct or "*sīla*" sets the necessary environment for the mind to "clearly see" by reducing *pancanivarana*; see, "Living Dhamma."

Next, "Why a Sotāpanna is better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire", …….

6.4.4 Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna

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Here we discuss the difference between a *Sotāpanna* and one who is striving for the *Sotāpanna* stage. The latter is on the right path (a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*).

Who Belongs to the *Saṅgha*

1. The word *saṅgha* nowadays refers to the *bhikkhus*. Yet *saṅgha* is "*saŋ*" + "*gha*", or those who have either gotten rid or are on the way to getting rid of "*saŋ*." By that definition, one does not have to be a *bhikkhu* to belong to the *saṅgha*; see, "What is "Saŋ"?."

In the salutation to the *saṅgha*, they are referred to as "*attha purisa puggalā*." See. "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha." Here, "*attha*" is eight, "*purisa*" does not mean male, but one with higher virtues and "*puggalā*" is a person. Thus there are eight types of people belonging to the *saṅgha*. Who are the eight?

- There are four who have started on the Noble Path/fulfilled the conditions for the four stages of *Nibbāna*: *Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi Anugāmi, Anāgāmi, Arahant Anugāmi, and Arahant*. Four of those are in the *Anugāmi* stages (working toward a given stage,) and the other four have reached the respective stage.
- **A special case of *kamma* and *kamma vipāka* happens for these Noble *kammā* (efforts toward a given stage.) Once "what needs to be done" is fulfilled, the *vipāka* follow in the very next *citta* within a billionth of a second.** Thus when one gets into the *Sotāpanna magga* stage, for example, one receives the *Sotāpanna phala* in the very next *citta*. Thus one becomes a *Sotāpanna* in two consecutive thought-moments.

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- However, when one starts grasping the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugami* (one on the way to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage), and thus one becomes free of the *apāyā*. In later commentaries, they are also called "*Chula Sotāpanna*" or a "junior *Sotāpanna*."

Abhidhamma Explanation

2. The *citta vīthi* for a *magga phala* is discussed at the end of the post, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs":

B B B "BC BU MD P U A G Pa Fr Fr" B B B

(**B**) *Upaccheda* (Arrest *Bhavaṅga*), (**MD**) *Manodvara Avajjana* (Mind Averting), (**P**) *Parikamma* (Preparation), (**U**) *Upacāra* (Colse Proximity), (**A**) *Anuloma* (Conformity), (**G**) *Gotrabu* (Change of Lineage), (**Pa**) Path (*magga*), and (**Fr**) Fruit (*phala*).

- A *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* is getting closer to the "change of lineage" or G. The earlier stages of P, U, A, may be reached gradually. Once that level of comprehension is complete, one makes that transition (G), completes the *lokuttara kamma*, and immediately receives the *phala*.
- In a strict sense, it may be better to call one a *Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi* (one trying to get to the *magga citta*) rather than *Sotāpanna Anugāmi.*
- The eight Noble Persons (*Ariyā*) listed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhama Puggala Sutta (AN 8.59)" and in "WebLink: suttacentral: Puggala Sutta (AN 9.9)." In both *suttā*, *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* is listed as "*sotāpatti phala sacchikiriyāya paṭipanno*." One on the way to become an *Anāgāmi* is "*anāgāmi phala sacchikiriyāya paṭipanno*," etc. In the second *sutta*, a average human is a "*puthujjano*."

The Eight Noble Persons

3. Thus it is clear that "*attha purisa puggalā*" consists of the eight *Ariyā* (Noble Persons) listed in #1. They are *Sotāpanna Anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī Anugāmi, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī Anugāmi, Anāgāmī, Arahant Anugāmi,* and *Arahant*.

- A critical point to note is that the change from being an "average human" (*puthujjana*) to the Noble Person (*Ariya*) status. **That transition happens at the "*gotrabu*" ("*gotra*" is the clan or lineage,) before the *Sotāpanna magga/phala* transition.** See, "*Citta Vīthi* for Attainment of *Magga Phala"* section at the end of the post, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs." Also, see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyā."
- The types of *āsavā* eliminated at each stage discussed at, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā."
- How *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*, and also the ten fetters (*saṃyojana*) removed at each stage discussed at, "Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages."
- Both a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* and a *Sotāpanna* would have "Sotapatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna."

The Stages of *Magga Phala*

4. A *Sotāpanna* is someone who has seen *Nibbāna*, not the full *Nibbāna*, but a glimpse of it. One becomes a *Sotāpanna* when one removes *avijjā* (ignorance) about the actual status of affairs in "this world of 31 realms." With that understanding, his/her mind is purified to the extent that it will not allow him/her to do an immoral act that could lead to a birth in the four lower worlds (*apāyā*). Not only that, but one will also not "latch onto" a *kamma vipāka* resulting from such a robust immoral act in the past. Thus a *Sotāpanna* will never be born in an *apāya* again.

The other three stages have similar "demarcation thresholds."

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- A *Sakadāgāmī* will be never again be born in the human or lower four realms. He/she can still be born in the *deva* worlds (i.e., in *kāma loka*.) But those *devas* do not have "flesh and blood" bodies that lead to physical discomforts and diseases. In the *deva loka*, beings only have subtle bodies that are not subject to old age and diseases.
- An *Anāgāmī* has overcome any desire to be born anywhere in the *kāma loka*, i.e., the 11 lowest realms. He/she has no *kāma rāga* (desire for sense pleasures) or *paṭigha* (hate).
- An *Arahant* has no desire to be born anywhere in the 31 realms, and thus will never be reborn "in this world." He/she has attained full *Nibbāna*, full release.

It Is a Step-by-Step Process

5. One has first to hear the true message of the Buddha before one can fulfill the conditions to attain the *Sotāpanna magga* stage. Thus, he/she needs to go beyond the mundane eightfold path; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

- **In particular, a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* (or *Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmika* or *Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi*) has heard about *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (*Tilakkhaṇa*), or the "true nature of this world with 31 realms." Of course, those concepts must come from a Noble person, and has grasped the basic idea.**
- That is why the association with a "*kalyāṇa mitta*" or "*kalyāṇa Mitra*" (basically a "Noble friend," i.e., an *Ariya*) is a pre-condition for attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage; see, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."
- Once becoming a *Sotāpanna anugāmi*, one is a Noble Person (one of the *attha purisa puggala*), and thus is free from the *apāyā*, see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyā."

Difference Between *Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi* and a *Sotāpanna*

6. Let us take a simile to see what this "demarcation" between *Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi* and a *Sotāpanna*.

- Suppose that a precious treasure is known to be at the peak of a mountain. But it is not generally known where that mountain is. That is pretty much the status of Buddha Dhamma today. Most people know that it is valuable, but they do not know what the correct version is, and there are a lot of different versions.
- As the Buddha said in his first sermon, "my Dhamma has not been known to the world before." Thus one needs a Buddha or a true disciple of Buddha to show him/her what *Nibbāna* is and how to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage. That is an essential and a critical point.
- Suppose someone gets directions to the correct mountain with the treasure. Then he/she knows which country to go to and which geographic location in that country the mountain is. **This person is like one who is on the path to becoming a *Sotāpanna, i.e., a Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi.*** He/she knows exactly where to go and has a detailed map. And he/she has to get it from a Buddha or a true disciple of a Buddha. A true disciple is one who has at least seen the mountain (a *Sotāpanna*), if not been to the top (an *Arahant*).
- Now he/she makes the journey to country and to the region where the mountain is. On the way to there, he/she can verify the landmarks given by the "friend" (an *Ariya*). Similarly, a *Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi* spends time contemplating the newly learned concepts of *anicca, dukkha, anatta, paṭicca samuppāda*, etc.
- Thus with confidence, the person gets closer and closer to the mountain, and some point starts seeing the mountain. **At that point, the person has "crossed the boundary" to become a *Sotāpanna*.** He/she has seen a glimpse of *Nibbāna* for the first time. Now he/she can complete the journey without any help, even if the physical map is lost (i.e., even in a future life).

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An Analogy

7. Going back to the simile of the mountain with treasure, different versions of "Buddhism" correspond to identifying the mountain to be in different geographic locations, all over the world. So different groups of people are making trips over long distances and with much effort to get to various mountains. All these are in remote places, and the journey is hard.

- A lot of people are wasting their time and effort by targeting a "wrong mountain." So, how does one know which "mountain" or version to pick? That is why it takes some effort to weed out the wrong/inconsistent versions Buddha Dhamma; see, "Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?."

Grasping the *Anicca* (Unfruitful) Nature of This World

8. In technical terms, one gets to the *Sotāpanna magga/phala* when one understands *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (the three characteristics of this world or *Tilakkhaṇa*) to a minimum level, where one begins to realize that there is nothing in "this world" that can provide meaningful and unconditioned happiness.

- When one comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta* to the extent that one can "see" this concept, **one is said to have the "*anuloma ñāṇa*."** Here, "*anu*" means "through the understanding of *Tilakkhaṇa*," "*lo*" means "craving for worldly things," and "*ma*" means "removal," and thus "*anuloma*" means "removal of craving for worldly things to some extent via the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*."
- We came across "*anu*" also in "*anupassanā*"; see, "4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?." In a previous post, I also discussed how "*lobha*" comes from "*lo*" + "*bha*" or "immersed in craving for worldly things."
- Thus it makes a huge difference if one incorrectly interprets *anicca* as "impermanence" and *anatta* as "no-self"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

9. Suffering is prevalent in the lower four realms (*apāyā*). We can see at least one of those, the animal realm. Let us discuss one way to contemplate on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, using an example from this life itself.

- When one is young it seems like one can get anything one wants by working hard. But we all have seen how our parents or grandparents or even famous people spent the old age suffering with various ailments, and finally dying helplessly.
- They may have "accomplished" many things. But they spent their whole lives working hard to achieve those and then they have to leave it all behind.
- One may have a beautiful body when young, but for how long? We can see how those old movie stars age now. Some of them commit suicide because it is depressing to remember the "good old days" when one had all the attention in the world, but now it all seem to be slipping away.
- That is *anicca* and *anatta*. No matter how much we try, whatever we gain in this world lasts only a short time (in the *sansāric* time scale), and one becomes helpless in the long run. At some point, one realizes this and becomes distraught.

One Creates One's Own Future Suffering

10. When one comprehends the true nature of this world, such sad thoughts do not arise. People who follow the Path, and even those who have wisdom from previous lives (*gati*) can realize that "all things in this world" are subjected to this arising/destruction process. Beings come to existence and die. But those existence are "created" by oneself. See, "Origin of Life – One Creates One's Own Future Lives."

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- That understanding itself leads to an ease of mind. A stronger version of this "ease of mind" is the "*anuloma shānthi*" that one experiences when attaining the "*anuloma ñāṇa*" (pronounced "anuloma gnana").
- The key to attaining the "*anuloma ñāṇa*" is to realize the fleeting nature of anything in this world. The next post discusses this.

Anuloma Ñāṇa and *Sammatta Niyāma*

11. With the "*anuloma ñāṇa*", one realizes that permanently getting rid of suffering is not possible anywhere in the 31 realms. It can be achieved only by attaining *Nibbāna.* By this time one has felt the *nirāmisa sukha*, and thus one needs to cultivate, "*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ…*", the release one has felt, and the value of *Nibbāna*. Then one truly embarks on the Noble Eightfold Path and is said to get to "*sammatta niyāma*," and to *Sotāpanna phala.* ["'*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho Nibbānan'ti.*" AN 9.36 : Jhānasutta, AN 10.6 : Samādhisutta, AN 3.32 : Ānandasutta, AN 11.8 : Manasikārasutta, AN 11.7 : Saññāsutta, AN 10.60 : Girimānandasutta] [It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all *saṅkhāra*, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; *Nibbāna*]

- Therefore, it is critical to realize BOTH the unfruitful nature of this world with "***anuloma ñāṇa***," AND to realize the value and cooling down due to *Nibbāna*, i.e., "***sammatta niyāma***."

12. Thus it is critical to understand that *Nibbāna* is "*nicca, sukha, attha*," after realizing that this world is "*anicca, dukkha, anatta*." A *Sotāpanna* has understood both.

- Anything in this world (except *nama gotta*) is a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), i.e., it comes into being due to **causes**, stays in existence for a time, and then inevitably is destroyed. This arising of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) is called "*udaya*" in Pāli, and the destruction is called "*vaya*." Thus, "*udayavaya ñāṇa*" is the knowledge about that process.
- *Nibbāna* is the only *asaṅkhata*. Removing all **causes** leads to *Nibbāna*.
- **Many people have even attained the *Arahanthood* without actually having heard about these terms like "*udayavaya*" or "*anuloma*."** Thus it is imperative to realize that just having read about these concepts does not get one anywhere. One needs to "see" the *Tilakkhaṇa* or the unfruitfulness of craving for *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (through *saṅkhāra*) by true meditation or contemplation.
- Thus a *Sotāpanna* has the *udayavaya* (sometimes called *udayabbaya*) *ñāṇa*; see, "Udayavaya Ñāna."

Next, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala", ……

6.4.5 Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyā

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A human who attains a *magga phala* will never be reborn in an *apāya* (one of the four lowest realms). An *Arahant* will not be reborn in any realm. An *Anāgāmī* will be reborn only in a *Brahma* realm. A *Sakadāgāmī* only in deva realm. A *Sotāpanna* only in *deva* or human realm. It is not that clear whether a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* is also free of the *apāyā*. Here, we discuss the evidence from the *Tipiṭaka* that is indeed the case.

Eight Types of Noble Persons

1. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Patipanna Sutta (SN 48.18)" describes the eight types of Noble Persons:

"*Pañcimāni, bhikkhave, indriyāni. Katamāni pañca? Saddhindriyaṃ … pe … paññindriyaṃ—imāni kho, bhikkhave, pañcindriyāni. Imesaṃ kho, bhikkhave, pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ samattā paripūrattā arahaṃ hoti, tato mudutarehi arahattaphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno hoti, tato mudutarehi anāgāmī*

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hoti, tato mudutarehi anāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno hoti, tato mudutarehi sakadāgāmī hoti, tato mudutarehi sakadāgāmiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno hoti, tato mudutarehi sotāpanno hoti, tato mudutarehi ***sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno*** *hoti. Yassa kho, bhikkhave, imāni pañcindriyāni sabbena sabbaṃ sabbathā sabbaṃ natthi, tamahaṃ 'bāhiro puthujjanapakkhe ṭhito'ti vadāmī"ti.*

Translated:

"*Bhikkhus*, there are five *indriya* (faculties): *Saddhindriya, vīriyindriya, satindriya, samādhindriya, paññindriya*. One who has fully cultivated them is an *Arahant*. One who developed them less is an *Arahant Anugāmi*. One who has even less is an *Anāgāmī,.. Anāgāmī Anugāmī, ..Sakadāgāmī, ...Sakadāgāmī Anugāmi, ...Sotāpanna, ...****Sotāpanna Anugāmi***. Those who have not yet begun to cultivate the five faculties are ignorant humans (*puthujjanabhūmiṃ*) who are unaware of the true nature (*Tilakkhaṇa*).

- One on the way to become an *Anāgāmī* is "*anāgāmī phala sacchikiriyāya paṭipanno*," etc. One on the way to become a *Sotāpanna* (or ***Sotāpanna Anugāmi***) is "***sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya paṭipanno***."
- The eight Noble Persons (*Ariyā*) are also listed in other *suttā* too including "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhama Puggala Sutta (AN 8.59)" and in "WebLink: suttacentral: Puggala Sutta (AN 9.9)."

Sotāpanna Anugāmi is *Dhammānusārī* or *Saddhānusārī*

2. An important way of classification of the Noble Persons (*Ariyā*) relevant to our topic is given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Tatiyasankhita Sutta (SN 48.14)":

"*Pañcimāni, bhikkhave, indriyāni. Katamāni pañca? Saddhindriyaṃ ... pe ... paññindriyaṃ—imāni kho, bhikkhave, pañcindriyāni. Imesaṃ kho, bhikkhave, pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ samattā paripūrattā arahaṃ hoti, tato mudutarehi anāgāmī hoti, tato mudutarehi sakadāgāmī hoti, tato mudutarehi sotāpanno hoti, tato mudutarehi* ***dhammānusārī*** *hoti, tato mudutarehi* ***saddhānusārī*** *hoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave, paripūraṃ paripūrakārī ārādheti, padesaṃ padesakārī ārādheti. 'Avañjhāni tvevāhaṃ, bhikkhave, pañcindriyānī'ti vadāmī"ti.*

Translated:

"*Bhikkhus*, there are five *indriya*: *Saddhindriya, vīriyindriya, satindriya, samādhindriya, paññindriya.* One who has fully cultivated them is an *Arahant*. One who developed them less is an *Anāgāmī,.. Sakadāgāmī, ...Sotāpanna, ...****dhammānusārī****, ...****saddhānusārī****, .*"

3. From #1 and #2 above, we can see that a ***Sotāpanna Anugāmi*** is either a ***dhammānusārī*** or a ***saddhānusārī***.

- This is confirmed in the following *sutta*, which also confirms that one MUST start comprehending the *anicca* nature to become a ***Sotāpanna Anugāmi***.

More on *Dhammānusārī* or *Saddhānusārī*

4. From the "WebLink: suttacentral: Cakkhu Sutta (SN 25.1)":

"*Cakkhuṃ, bhikkhave,* ***aniccaṃ vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi****; sotaṃ aniccaṃ vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi; ghānaṃ aniccaṃ vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi; jivhā aniccā vipariṇāmī aññathābhāvī; kāyo anicco vipariṇāmi aññathābhāvi; mano anicco vipariṇāmī aññathābhāvī. Yo, bhikkhave, ime dhamme evaṃ saddahati adhimuccati—ayaṃ vuccati* ***saddhānusārī,*** *okkanto sammattaniyāmaṃ, sappurisabhūmiṃ okkanto, vītivatto puthujjanabhūmiṃ; abhabbo taṃ kammaṃ kātuṃ, yaṃ kammaṃ katvā nirayaṃ vā tiracchānayoniṃ vā pettivisayaṃ vā upapajjeyya; abhabbo catāva kālaṃ kātuṃ yāva na sotāpattiphalaṃ sacchikaroti.*

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*Yassa kho, bhikkhave, ime dhammā evaṃ paññāya mattaso nijjhānaṃ khamanti, ayaṃ vuccati: '**dhammānusārī**, okkanto sammattaniyāmaṃ, sappurisabhūmiṃ okkanto, vītivatto puthujjanabhūmiṃ; abhabbo taṃ kammaṃ kātuṃ, yaṃ kammaṃ katvā nirayaṃ vā tiracchānayoniṃ vā pettivisayaṃ vā upapajjeyya; **abhabbo ca tāva kālaṃ kātuṃ yāva na sotāpattiphalaṃ sacchikaroti**'.*

Yo, bhikkhave, ime dhamme evaṃ pajānāti evaṃ passati, ayaṃ vuccati: 'sotāpanno avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyano'"ti.

Translated:

"*Bhikkhus*, ***cakkhu* is of *anicca* nature, will cease to exist and is subject to unexpected change during its existence** (same for *sota, ghāṇa, jivhā, kāyo, mano*).

– One who has conviction and belief that these phenomena are this way is called a faith-follower (***saddhānusārī***). He/She is one who has entered the Noble plane (*sammattaniyāmaṃ*), has entered the realm of Noble Persons (*sappurisabhūmiṃ*), transcended the realm of the humans who are unaware of the true nature (*puthujjanabhūmiṃ*). He is incapable of doing any deed by which he might be reborn in hell, in the animal womb, or in the realm of hungry ghosts. **A *saddhānusārī* is incapable of dying (separating) from that Noble birth until he realizes the *Sotāpanna* stage (and thus eventually getting to the *Arahant* stage).**

One who, after pondering with wisdom, has accepted that these phenomena are this way is called a Dhamma-follower (***dhammānusārī***)… (The rest is the same as for a *saddhānusārī*).

One who knows and sees that these phenomena are this way is called a *Sotāpanna*. He is never again to be born in the *apāyā*, headed for the *Arahanthood*."

- It is to be noted that 11 *suttā* (AN 25.1 through AN 25. 10) state the same in various ways.

Sotāpanna Anugāmi Would Not "Die" From *Ariya* Birth

5. Therefore, from the above *suttā,* we can make the following deductions:

- A *Sotāpanna* is never again to be born in the *apāyā* and is headed for the *Arahanthood.*
- A *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* is either a *dhammānusārī* or a *saddhānusārī.*
- In #4 above: "**A *saddhānusārī* (*or a dhammānusārī*) is incapable of "dying" (separating) from that Noble birth until he realizes the *Sotāpanna* stage**". That does not mean a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* will attain the *Sotāpanna* stage within that lifetime. Once "born as a Noble Person" one will not die from that **Noble birth**, i.e., one WILL get to the *Arahant* stage without ever getting a rebirth in the *apāyā.*
- So, a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* may be born many times a human until getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage (may even have many human *bhava*, each with many human *jāti*).
- Once getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage, there would be only seven maximum number of "*bhava*" left, within which one WILL attain the *Arahant* stage.

Who Have *Avecca Pasāda*?

6. Another *sutta* that provides more information is "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamasaraṇānisakka Sutta (SN 55.24)." It is a long *sutta*, and a reasonably good translation at, "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Sarakāni Sutta: Sarakāni (Who Took to Drink)."

Here are the relevant verses, which again describe the types of Noble Persons:

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(1). "Mahānāma, take the case of a person **endowed with unwavering devotion (*avecca pasāda*)** to the Buddha (***heva kho buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti***,) the Dhamma, the Saṅgha, and has attained the ***Arahanthood***. By the destruction of the defilement he has by his realization gained the release, the release through wisdom, in this very life, and abides in it. The man is entirely released from the hell-state, from rebirth as an animal. He is free from the realm of hungry ghosts, fully freed from the downfall, the evil way, from the *apāyā*.

(2). "Take the case of another man. He has **unwavering devotion (*avecca pasāda*)** to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha. He has wisdom but has not yet gained full release, but has destroyed the five lower *samyojanā* (**an *Anāgāmi***). Upon death, he will be reborn spontaneously in a brahma realm where he will attain *Nibbāna* without returning from that world. That man is also entirely released from the apāyā.

(3). "Take the case of another man. He has **unwavering devotion (*avecca pasāda*)** to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha. He has wisdom, has not yet gained release. By destroying the first three *samyojanā* and weakening *kāma rāga*, *paṭigha*, and *avijjā*, he is a Once-returner (***Sakadāgāmī***), who will return once more to this *kāma loka*. That man is entirely freed from the *apāyā*.

(4). "Take the case of another man. He is **endowed with unwavering devotion (*avecca pasāda*)** to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha. He has the wisdom but not gained release. By destroying three fetters, he is a Stream-Winner (***Sotāpanna***), not subject to rebirth in *apāyā*, assured of *Nibbāna*. That man is entirely freed from the *apāyā*.

Sotāpanna Anugāmi Does Not Have *Avecca Pasāda*

(5). "Take the case of another man. He **does not have unwavering devotion (*avecca pasāda*)** to the Buddha (***na heva kho buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti***,) the Dhamma, the Saṅgha. He has not yet gained wisdom and has not gained release. **But he has the following things to some extent**: the faculty of faith, of energy, of mindfulness, of concentration, of wisdom (*saddhā indriya, viriya indriya, sati indriya, samādhi indriya, paññā indriya*). He understands with insight, **at least moderately**, dhamma of the *Tathāgata*. **That man does not go to the realm of hungry ghosts, to the downfall, to the evil way, to states of woe.**

(6). "Take the case of another man. He does not have **unwavering devotion (*avecca pasāda*)** to the Buddha, the Dhamma, the Saṅgha. He is not joyous and swift in wisdom and has not gained release. **But he has the following things to some extent**: the faculty of faith, of energy, of mindfulness, of concentration, of wisdom (*saddhā indriya, viriya indriya, sati indriya, samādhi indriya, paññā indriya*). He understands with insight, **at least slightly**, dhamma of the *Tathāgata*.. **He too will not go to the *apāyā*.**

Sotāpanna Anugāmī is Also Free of *Apāyā*

7. Note that in #6 above, for **each of the four *magga phala*:**

"*Ayampi kho, mahānāma, puggalo **parimutto** nirayā parimutto tiracchānayoniyā parimutto pettivisayā parimutto apāyaduggativinipātā.*"

"..That man is **entirely free**… from the *apāyā*."

- **For the last two types (*Sotāpanna Anugāmi*):**

  "*Ayampi kho, mahānāma, puggalo **agantā** nirayaṃ agantā tiracchānayoniṃ agantā pettivisayaṃ agantā apāyaṃ duggatiṃ vinipātaṃ.*"

  "..That man **does not go to** the *apāyā*".

- Taken together with the statements in the *suttā* discussed above, that definitely means the following. **A *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* is also effectively released permanently from the *apāyā*.**

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What is *Avecca Pasāda*?

8. A key phrase in many of the *suttā* is *avecca pasāda.* It is frequently translated as "unwavering devotion" as in the above translation. But it has a deeper meaning.

- *Pasāda* means a combination of "trust, faith, reverence."
- That comes when one understands the deeper meanings in Buddha Dhamma. In particular, when one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*, one can begin to see the unfruitfulness AND danger in trying to seek happiness in this world of 31 realms.
- **Then one starts losing cravings ("*ava*" + "*icca*") for worldly things.** We remember that *anicca* is "*na icca*"; see, "Anicca – True Meaning." [***avecca*** :[adv.] certainly; definitely; absolutely; perfectly; having known.]
- Therefore, *avecca pasāda* or "unwavering faith" is connected to realizing the *anicca* nature or the "unsatisfactory nature" of worldly things. That craving for worldly things leads to suffering (*dukkha*). And that in the end that leads to one becoming helpless (*anatta*), especially when born in the *apāyā*.
- One establishes *avecca pasāda* or "unwavering faith" in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha, when one starts to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa.*

Four qualities of a *Sotāpanna*

9. Four qualities of a *Sotāpanna* are in all *suttā* in the WebLink: suttacentral: Sotāpatti Saṃyutta (SN 55.1 ~ 55.74) of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (SN). The "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmacariyogadha Sutta (SN 55.2)" has a concise statement about the qualities or qualifications of a *Sotāpanna***.**

"***Catūhi,*** *bhikkhave,* ***dhammehi samannāgato*** *ariyasāvako* ***sotāpanno*** *hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo.*

Katamehi catūhi? Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako ***buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti*****:** *'itipi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā'ti.* ***Dhamme*** *... pe ...* ***saṅghe*** *... pe ...* ***ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti*** *akhaṇḍehi ... pe ... samādhisaṃvattanikehi. Imehi kho, bhikkhave, catūhi dhammehi samannāgato ariyasāvako sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo"ti.*

Translated:

A *Sotāpanna*, never again to be born in the *apāyā,* **has acquired four qualities**:

(1). He has ***avecca pasāda* in the Buddha**, i.e., he understands the following verse. "*'Itipi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā'ti.*"

(2). He has ***avecca pasāda* in the Dhamma**, i.e., he understands the verse. "*Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhī'ti.*"

(3). He has ***avecca pasāda* in the Saṅgha**, i.e., he understands the following verse. "*Suppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho, ujuppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho, ñāyappaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho, sāmīcippaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho, yadidaṃ—cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭha purisapuggalā, esa bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhiṇeyyo añjalikaraṇīyo anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassā'ti.*"

(4). He has the ***Ariyakantha sīla*** of the noble ones. It comes with penetrating wisdom and is unbreakable. It leads to *samādhi.*'

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"***Ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato*** *hoti akhaṇḍehi acchiddehi asabalehi akammāsehi bhujissehi viññuppasatthehi aparāmaṭṭhehi samādhisaṃvattanikehi.*"

"***Ariyakantehi*** [with agreeable to the *Ariyā*] ***sīlehi*** [with ethical conduct] ***samannāgato*** [endowed with] [endowed with noble's ethical conduct] *hoti akhaṇḍehi* [unbroken] *acchiddehi* [impeccable or faultless] *asabalehi* [spotless] *akammāsehi* [unmarred] *bhujissehi* [liberating] *viññuppasatthehi* [praised by sensible people] *aparāmaṭṭhehi* [not mistaken] *samādhisaṃvattanikehi.*"

Recital Is Not Enough

10. We note that those first three verses are the same as those in the supreme qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha; see, "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha."

- Therefore, those verses are not just for recitation. They must be recited with UNDERSTANDING before any serious meditation session.
- From #4 and #5 above, we see that one gets a "Noble birth" when attaining the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage. A *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* is one of the "*attha purisa puggalā.*"

The four qualities of a *Sotāpanna* discussed in, "Sotāpatti Aṅga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna." [***aṅga*** : [nt.] 1. a constituent part; 2. a limb; 3. quality.]

6.4.6 Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala

Revised March 22, 2016; Revised on September 22, 2017, June 28, 2019

1. In many *suttā*, including WebLink: suttacentral: Sotāpattiphala Sutta (SN 55.55) and WebLink: suttacentral: Dwitiya Sariputta Sutta (Saṃyutta Nikāya 55.5), the four requirements for someone to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* are stated: "*Cattārome, bhikkhave, dhammā bhāvitā bahulīkatā sotāpattiphalasacchikiriyāya saṃvattanti. Katame cattāro?* ***Sappurisasaṃsevo, saddhammassavanaṃ, yonisomanasikāro, dhammānudhammappaṭipatti***."

- Association with "*sappurisa* (*sath* + *purisa* or "Noble friend", i.e., an *Ariya*)", sometimes called a "*kalyāṇa mitta*" in Pāli or "*Kalyāṇa Mitra*" in Sanskrit.
- Listening to Dhamma discourses (while reading is enough to get to *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage, listening is necessary to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, see #3 below).
- Act with *Yoniso manasikāra* (basic idea of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* and *paṭicca samuppāda*).
- *Dhammanudhamma patipadā* (following the Noble Path, which is beyond the mundane path; see, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

When someone starts fulfilling the above conditions one becomes a *Sotāpanna magga anugāmi* (or *Sotāpanna magga anugāmika*); see, "Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

- During this process, one removes three of the ten *sanyojana* (or *saṃyojana* or fetters). The ten fetters are those that bind one to the cycle of rebirth; see, "Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages."

2. First it is imperative to understand what was meant by the Buddha when he said, "my Dhamma has not been known to the world" (other than during the time of another Buddha). Most people follow what they deem to be "Buddhism." In most cases, this is the version passed down from the previous generation or the version that one read about in a book. I strongly advise reading the following posts and spending some time thinking about this issue:

"What is Buddha Dhamma?"

"Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and the discussion at, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

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- As discussed in those posts, one becomes a *Sotāpanna magga anugāmi* after making progress on the mundane (*lokiya*) eightfold path. That is when one really embarks on the Noble Eightfold Path.
- As I tried to point out in many posts, when one is on the mundane path, one abstains from immoral deeds out of fear of bad outcomes. **But when one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), one starts avoiding immoral deeds because one sees the futility of such deeds:** What is the point in hurting others in order to acquire sense pleasures that in the end do not provide any lasting happiness?

3. **September 22, 2017:** Previously, I had stated that one could learn about *Tilakkhaṇa* by reading these days. That is still true and one could become a *Sotāpanna anugāmi* by reading.

- However, recently I came upon a *desanā* by the Waharaka *Thero* which stated that a *Sotāpanna anugāmi* **attains the *Sotāpanna* stage** only while listening to a *desanā* by an *Ariya* (Noble person, i.e., one with at least the *Sotāpanna* stage).
- Apparently, a *Sotadvāra citta vīthi* of an *Ariya* (during a *desanā*) has the necessary *javana* power to act as a trigger. I am trying to find a *Tipiṭaka* reference, and I would appreciate receiving it from anyone who has that information. I will edit this post to include that reference when I find it.
- **July 15, 2019**: I still have not seen a definitive *Tipiṭaka* reference regarding this issue. However, all *suttā* on the conditions for attaining *Sōtapanna* stage list ***saddhammassavanaṃ*** (*saddhamma* + *savanaṃ* or "listening to Dhamma") as one condition, as in #1 above. Since written texts were not available at the time of the Buddha, this is not definitive as a condition.
- However, Waharaka *Thero* has mentioned that listening to a recorded *desanā* should count, per his opinion.

4. When one contemplates about the above, one realizes that one first needs to find out WHY the Buddha said "this wider world of 31 realms" or "our existence (not only in this life but in the 31 realms)" is filled with suffering; what we perceive as sense pleasures keep us bound mostly to the *kāma loka* and very often to the four *apāyā*. That is the First Noble Truth.

- The Buddha also said that **if one really comprehends the First Noble Truth, then one will automatically comprehend the other three.** Thus it is the basic vision or the first inkling of "*Sammā Diṭṭhi*" that is most critical.
- One gets on the Noble Eightfold Path with a very rough idea about this vision, i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Now one is a *Sotāpanna Magga Anugāmi*. As one comprehends these basic characteristics of our world **while listening to a *desanā* by an *Ariya***, one will get to the *Sotāpanna* stage by attaining the *Sotāpanna magga* and *Sotāpanna phala* virtually simultaneously (in the same *citta vīthi*); see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."
- When one gets to *Sotāpanna* stage, one comprehends the First Noble Truth, and thus all four Noble Truths to some extent; one has "seen" *Nibbāna*. Now, one does not need any help to get to *Nibbāna* (to "fully experience it"), because one sees the whole Path, and knows how to get there.

5. With that in mind, it is easier to grasp why the Buddha emphasized the importance of those four conditions. **First, since Buddha's message is unique, the true message has to come from a Buddha or someone "who can be traced back to the Buddha."** The following is an analogy given in the *suttā*.

6. The Buddha can be compared to a great tree, standing tall and firm. All other humans can be compared to "climbers" that need a tree to "climb up." Such climbers do not have strong enough stems so they cannot stand erect on their own. They need the support of another plant or a stick to stand. Those plants are called climbers. Climbers have tendrils to hold the supporting plant or stick. Following are some examples.

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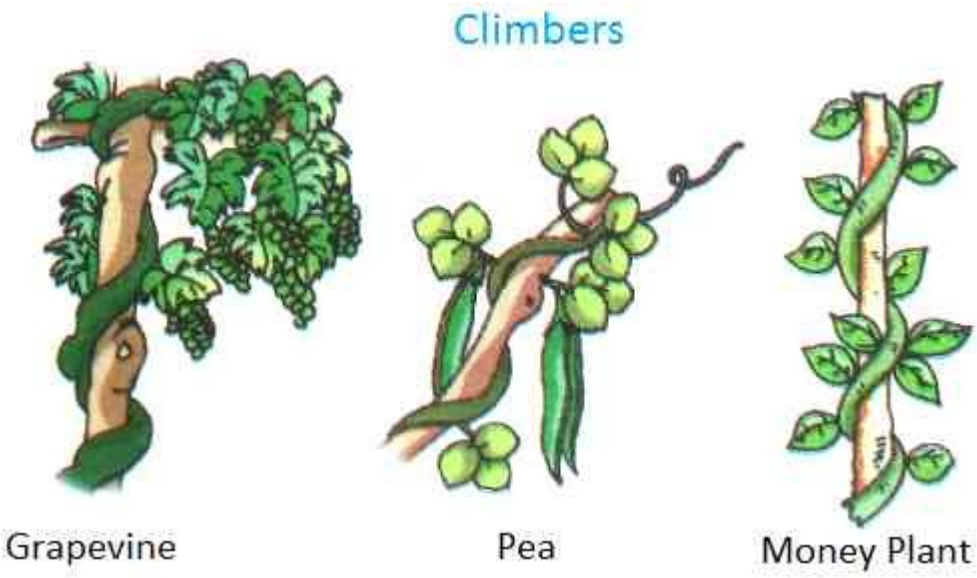

- Let us think of a forest where there are numerous climbers but only one tree and no other supports such as sticks. The only way for a climber to "climb up", and thus not destined to its demise on the ground, is to get hold of that tree.
- Only those climbers that are close to the tree can get hold of it and climb. But now others can get hold of them and climb too. Thus, as more and more climbers start climbing, the "access area" grows.
- Therefore, if we can find a climber that is climbing up, we can ALWAYS trace it back to the original tree. **In the same way, an *Ariya* or a Noble person (a *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī,* or *Arahant*) can ALWAYS be traced back in lineage to the Buddha.**
- Because the message is unique, it has to come from the Buddha himself or someone who can be traced back to the Buddha. One cannot attain even the *Sotāpanna* stage without hearing the true message; if one has attained it, then he/she knows the message. Someone aspiring to become an *Ariya* MUST hear the message from another *Ariya;* see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

7. Now we can see the logic of the first two conditions. One has to learn Dhamma (the correct version), AND thus it has to come from an *Ariya* (Noble) person.

- The phrase "*Kalyāna Mitra*" is actually Sanskrit; in Pāli it is "*kalana mittā*" (pronounced "miththā"), for "a friend who helps to remove defilements" ("*kāla*" is for "dirty" or "blackish" as in "dirty water" and "*na*" is for "removing").
- Many people take "*Kalyāna Mitra*" to be a "good friend" in the conventional sense. But it is being more than just "good"; *one needs to know the message of the Buddha in order to convey it to others.*
- And of course one has listen to this correct message or read about it, and then GRASP it.

8. One time Ven. Ānanda, who was the personal assistant to the Buddha for many years at the end, approached the Buddha and said, "*Bhante* (Venerable Sir), I have been thinking that the future of the Buddha *Sāsana* (doctrine) must be dependent at least 50% on the *kalyāṇa mittā*." [*kalyāṇamittā*]

- **The Buddha replied, "Ānanda, do not say that. The Buddha *Sāsana* will be dependent 100% on the *kalyāṇa mittā*."** Now we can see why. [WebLink: suttacentral: Samyutta Nikāya 3.18 Good Friends - Kalyāṇamittasutta]
- If that lineage is broken, then that is the end of the Buddha *Sāsana.* The words may still be there, but there will be no one to explain the true meanings of the key words, including *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*
- However, the Buddha has stated that his Buddha *Sāsana* will be there for 5000 years, so we are only half-way through. Within that time there would be periods of "famine" where *Ariyā* will be few in numbers. But there will also be times when Buddha *Sāsana* will shine with numerous *Ariyā* in the world.

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- The key here is once-in-a-while, a "*jāti Sotāpanna*" is born who has fulfilled his *pāramitas* to bring back the message of the Buddha, like Venerable Mahinda did about 600 years after the Buddha. They are not only *jāti Sotāpannas*, but have the "*patisambhidā ñāṇa*" to figure out the true meanings of key Pāli words, such as *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and *paṭicca samuppāda*.
- I believe this is such a time. It is still too early to discuss the details, but there many *Ariyā* in Sri Lanka and even in other countries, thanks in large part to Waharaka Thero: "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."
- And there are many "climbers" all over the world who have already started "climbing up" with the help of that established "climber." I am encouraged by emails from many who are reading this site, on the joy they feel in comprehending the "pure Dhamma."

9. The third condition is to "act with *yoniso manasikāra*." Here "*yoni*" means "origin", "*so*" means "oneself", and "*manasikāra*" here means "with this in mind."

- In the *Vibhangapakarana* (Book 2, p. 234), ***ayoniso manasikāra*** has been described as "perceiving *anicca* as *nicca, dukkha* as *sukha, and anatta* as *atta*." Thus acting with ***yoniso manasikāra*** requires comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- To state that very briefly, if one believes that there are things in this world that can provide happiness in the long run, then one is acting with ***ayoniso manasikāra.*** To act with ***yoniso manasikāra*** is to see the unfruitfulness of these struggles to attain something that is not attainable, and thus to work diligently towards at least the *Sotāpanna* stage because this life is so short.
- But a more direct can be seen when one can see the "origins of various births or *jathi*" (i.e., rebirths). "*Yoni*" in Pāli and Sinhala means the birth canal; thus ***yoniso manasikāra*** means the "understanding of origins": One with *yoniso manasikāra* knows the causes that lead to births in various realms, i.e., "*bhava*" and "*jathi*" are according to one's *gathi*; see, "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control."
- With that understanding, one will be motivated to cultivate "*gathi*" to be able to make good decisions, either automatically, or at least by contemplating on it. In other words, one will be able to make better judgements about morality, and to act with *paññā* (wisdom).
- Even more importantly, one will be able to automatically avoid those deeds that can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*.
- Thus "*yoniso manasikāra*" has a more deeper meaning than just "appropriate attention." In particular, a *Sotāpanna* comprehends "*pati + icca*" leads to "*sama+uppada*"; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

10. When one is meeting the first three conditions, one is set to fulfill the fourth, "*dhammanudhamma patipadā*." Here "*dhammanudhamma" is "dhamma + anu +Dhamma"* where *"anu"* means "according to." The second *"Dhamma"* is the Buddha Dhamma; the first is the "*dhamma"* that one follows. "*Patipadā*" is "procedure." Thus it means following the procedures laid out in the true and pure Buddha Dhamma.

- When one learns the true Dhamma from an *Ariya* (Noble) person, one begins to comprehend:
  (i). what is really meant by suffering (*dukkha*),
  (ii). that suffering arises due to the *anicca* nature, and thus
  (iii). one does not have any refuge anywhere in the 31 realms (*anatta*).
- Then one realizes that in order to seek the only refuge (*atta*) of *Nibbāna*, one needs to act with *yoniso manasikāra* and follow the "*dhammanudhamma patipadā*."
- In the series of four WebLink: suttacentral: Anudhamma Sutta (Samyutta Nikāya) (use the arrows at the bottom to navigate to next 3 *suttā*), *dhammanudhamma patipadā* is described as living with a clear vision of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature of the *pañcakkhandha (rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa).*

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11. As pointed out in "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma," *dhammanudhamma patipadā* or the "Dhamma Path" starts with mundane *sammā diṭṭhi*, or how to sort out immoral from moral. Then one gets rid of the *moha* (deep delusion) that covers the mind, and the mind will be ready to grasp *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

- When a "moral mind" is exposed to the true Dhamma, the second stage or the *Sotāpanna magga/phala* results at some point.

12. Let us take an example to illustrate this concept.

One does not intentionally cut oneself, because one can see the dangers in that. In the same way, moral people stay away from immoral acts because they can see the consequences of such immoral acts.

- But there are people who enjoy cutting themselves up (even though rare); they can be compared to those who commit highly immoral acts because of their *moha*.
- We can thus see why it is comparatively easy to get on the mundane eightfold path.

13. The *lokuttara* eightfold Path is harder to see. This is why a Buddha or someone who has learned the message of the Buddha is needed to convey that.

- If there is a party and people are enjoying good food and drinks that laced with poison. The poison is deadly but it takes time to digest and bring out its bad effects. So everyone is enjoying the food and having a good time.
- And then someone comes and says, "this food is laced with poison, the more delicious the food is more poisonous it is."
- Most people just ignore that message. They cannot comprehend why this person is "trying to ruin the party." But a few people ask for more information and try to find out whether what this person is saying is true or not.
- Like that it is hard for most people to take the "long term perspective" and investigate whether it is really true that "it is not only fruitless, but also dangerous" to be attached to the sense pleasures of this world.

14. It is hard in the beginning to grasp this message. Even when one starts seeing the message (as one gets to the *Sotāpanna magga anugāmi* stage), initially it is hard to instill discipline. A good analogy here is it is harder to resist scratching an itch, even though one may realize that it is not a good idea because one will then make that a wound. The tendency is to "enjoy the scratching." In the same way, even when one starts seeing the dangers of the rebirth process, initially it is still hard to resist the sense pleasures.

- The solution is to "put some ointment in the itch to calm it down"; in the same way, one can calm down the strong urges by reading/listening and contemplating Dhamma (thinking about consequences).
- And one should initially focus on the "big itches", and not try to take care of all "minor itches." As one gets relief from the "major itches" one can see the benefits and is motivated to follow the same procedure for other "itches" as well. Similarly, following the Path (especially the *Sotāpanna magga anugāmi* stage) is a gradual process. One needs to tackle the "bigger offenses" or get rid of the "worst habits (*gathi*)" first.

Of course, one needs to have removed *micchā diṭṭhi* in order to even become a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*: "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

Next, "How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?", ……..

6.4.7 Sotāpatti Aṅga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna

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1. *Sotāpatti aṅga* or the four qualities of a *Sotāpanna* are discussed in many *suttā* in the "*Sotāpatti Saṃyutta"* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* and also in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*. A few examples are: WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmacariyogadha Sutta (SN 55.2), WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamasāriputta Sutta (SN 55. 4), WebLink: suttacentral: Veḷudvāreyya Sutta (SN 55.7), WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhamagiñjakāvasatha Sutta (SN 55. 8), WebLink: suttacentral: Nandiyasakka Sutta (SN 55.40), WebLink: suttacentral: Gihi Sutta (AN 5.179). [***aṅga*** : [nt.] 1. a constituent part; 2. a limb; 3. quality.]

- I was surprised to see that these four qualities of a *Sotāpanna* have not been discussed much in the current literature.

2. The four qualities (or characteristics) of a *Sotāpanna* — who has attained the *Sotāpanna phala* — must not be confused with the **four conditions that must be fulfilled to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.**

- Those four conditions are discussed in, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."
- Those four conditions to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage are also called *Sotāpatti aṅga* sometimes; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiyasāriputta Sutta (SN 55.5)." On the other hand, the four qualities of a *Sotāpanna* are also listed as *Sotāpatti aṅga* in the WebLink: suttacentral: Nandiyasakka Sutta (SN 55.40).
- Therefore, one must pay attention to which context the term *Sotāpatti aṅga* is used: whether to refer to the four conditions or the four qualities.

3. The four qualities of a *Sotāpanna* are stated succinctly in the WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmacariyogadha Sutta (SN 55.2). The Buddha asks: "*Catūhi, bhikkhave, dhammehi samannāgato ariyasāvako sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo. Katamehi catūhi?*"

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, the *ariyasāvaka Sotāpanna*, who is free of the *apāyā*, has four qualities. Which four?"

Then the Buddha gives the answer: "*Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako* ***buddhe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti****: 'itipi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā'ti.* ***dhamme aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti****... pe ...* ***saṅghe aveccappasādena samannāgato hoti****... pe ...* ***ariyakantehi sīlehi samannāgato hoti*** *akhaṇḍehi ... pe ... samādhisaṃvattanikehi. Imehi kho, bhikkhave, catūhi dhammehi samannāgato ariyasāvako sotāpanno hoti avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo*"*ti.*

Translated: "A *Sotāpanna* has reverence/faith (***pasāda***) in the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha, that comes via losing deep-rooted cravings for things in this world (***avecca***). He is thus established in the ***ariyakānta sīla*** **(moral conduct of the Noble Persons)** that cannot be broken to make him/her do *apāyagāmi* actions (*kamma*). These are the four qualities or defining characteristics of a *Sotāpanna* who is a free of the *apāyā*."

- First, we note that the "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha" are listed in this *sutta*. Only the nine qualities of the Buddha are listed above in red. In the full *sutta*, the qualities of the *Dhamma* and *Saṅgha* are also fully listed.

4. In order to fully understand this description of a *Sotāpanna,* we need to understand the meanings of two key words: ***aveccappasāda*** and ***ariyakānta sīla.***

- I have not seen *aveccappasāda* discussed in English texts; where it is mentioned, it is described as "unwavering confidence." But the reason for that unwavering confidence is itself hidden in that word. **This is called "*pada nirukti*," i.e., the meaning of the word is in the word itself.** Let us discuss that hidden meaning now.

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5. Humans — who are not yet *Ariyā* — highly value the sense pleasures. Most are even willing to do immoral actions in order to get more sense pleasures. Even those "moral people" are addicted to enjoying sense pleasures that are attainable by moral means without hurting others.

- However, that "moral conduct" is not guaranteed to hold. Even the most moral person WILL BE tempted to do an *apāyagāmi* action under sufficiently "enticing" or "tempting" conditions. When such a strong sense input (temptation) comes, one who has not comprehended *Tilakkhaṇa* (in particular the *anicca* nature) WILL commit an *apāyagāmi* action at some point (in a future life, if not in this life).
- **This is why all of us have not been able to escape the *samsaric* journey or the suffering-filled rebirth process up to now.**
- This is hard for many to even believe. They think their morality cannot be "broken." However, every now and then we hear such "moral people" committing heinous acts that we never thought they were capable of. The "unbreakable morality" can be attained only by seeing the unfruitfulness/dangers in sense pleasures.
- **This is the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma:** It is possible to make one's mind to NEVER commit an *apāyagāmi* action (at the *Sotāpanna* stage), and to NEVER commit a single *dasa akusala* at the *Arahant* stage.

6. Furthermore, without a Buddha explaining to us, it will be impossible to comprehend the wide-spread suffering in the wider world of 31 realms by ourselves.

- How many of us have watched (and enjoyed) television programs where a deer is eaten alive by a tiger? How painful is that experience for the deer? How much pain a fish will feel tangling by a hook that pierced its mouth and also not being able to breathe?
- The problem is that our minds are programmed to think that animals are not living beings who can feel pain. But ALL living beings experience pain as well as perception (recognition) and many other mental qualities that we do.
- In the *Abhidhamma* language, feelings (*vedanā*), perception (*saññā*) are UNIVERSAL mental factors (*cetsika*) that arise with ALL thoughts of ANY living being.
- **Suffering is everywhere.** If we pay attention, we can see so much suffering even among humans. It is just that we are not aware of much of the suffering in the wider world of the 31 realms. There is unimaginable suffering in the other three lowest realms in addition to the animal realm.

7. However, the reasons (or causes) for such suffering cannot be really understood without investigating (and then be convinced of) the laws of *kamma* that REQUIRES the rebirth process.

- This is why one cannot really comprehend the deeper aspects of Buddha Dhamma without first getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* or the wrong views about this world of 31 realms.
- One who has not removed the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* will have *avijjā* at the highest level, which is called *moha*. Therefore, even a prestigious scientist can have *moha*; it has nothing to do with "book knowledge." When one gets rids of those, one gets down to the *avijjā* level; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."

8. Once getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, one can start to "see" (not with eyes, but with wisdom) that **the real cause for suffering is *taṇhā* (getting attached) that arise due to *iccā* (our liking for sense pleasures).** Furthermore, *taṇhā* has origins in "*iccā*" or cravings.

- Again, this is the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma. Whereas a normal human cannot imagine a "happy existence" without sense pleasures, an *Ariyā* sees the opposite: unfruitfulness and dangers in sense pleasures.

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- **The key to comprehending the *dukkha sacca* (First Noble Truth) and *Tilakkhaṇa* is to see the suffering that is hidden sense pleasures. The worst kind of suffering arises when one does immoral things to access sense pleasures; that is what a *Sotāpanna* first realizes.**

9. When one starts to realize the truth at the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage, one starts experiencing a different kind of "happiness", which is the *nirāmisa sukha*.

- **The real cause of this *nirāmisa sukha* is the abstinence from sense pleasures.** Again, this is hard to explain, and needs to be experienced.
- With that comes the realization of the value of a Buddha, and an unbreakable faith in him and a reverence for him. This is called *aveccappasāda* in the Buddha.

10. Now we can see the true meaning of *aveccappasāda*: "*ava*" means to overcome, *iccā* is liking or craving. These two words, when combined, rhyme as "avecca." Now, "*pasāda*" is reverence/faith. When the two words "*avecca*" and "*pasāda*" are combined, it rhymes as "*aveccappasāda*."

- It must be a truly exceptional person to discover such an unimaginable cause for the suffering in this world, and to find the way out of that suffering (by removing *taṇhā* or"*iccā*" for worldly pleasures).
- **This unbreakable faith/reverence for the Buddha — that comes from comprehending the dangers of "*iccā*" for worldly pleasures — is called "*Buddhe aveccappasāda*."**

11. Of course, one will simultaneously have "*Dhamme aveccappasāda",* an unshakeable faith in the Dhamma, the teachings of the Buddha, that allowed one to be free of the *apāyā*.

- Furthermore, one will not be able to learn this unique Dhamma of the Buddha without the *Saṅgha*, those *Ariyā* who have transmitted the true and pure Dhamma up to now. One could spend a lifetime learning "fake Dhamma", and will not be able to grasp the message of the Buddha. We are fortunate to be learn the correct Buddha Dhamma, only because of the *Saṅgha*, who have faithfully and correctly transmitted the *Tipiṭaka* over all these years.
- That realization leads to "***Sanghe aveccappasāda",*** reverence/faith in the *Saṅgha*.
- It is important to note that *bhikkhus* are not necessarily included in the *Saṅgha*. Only those eight Noble Persons (*attha purisa puggala*) are included in *Saṅgha;* see, "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha."
- However, *bhikkhus* should always be treated with respect. They represent the *Buddha Sāsana*. As I understand, even a lay *Ānāgāmi* should bow to any *bhikkhu*.

12. Finally, now one's moral conduct is unbreakable FOREVER, even though future births. No matter how tempting the external sense input is, one will NEVER do an *apāyagāmi* action (*kamma*).

- **This unbreakable moral conduct of a *Sotāpanna* is called "*ariyakānta sīla*."** *Kānta* ("*ka*" +"*anta*") is the "cooled mindset" achieved via removing the two extremes ("*anta*") the Buddha rejected: excess sense pleasures and excess hardship or extreme austerity.
- *Ariyakānta sīla* is established only in *Ariyā* who have comprehended this unique message of the Buddha, about how suffering arises in this wider world of 31 realms and how that future suffering can be stopped and a permanent state without suffering (*Nibbāna*) can be attained.

13. This is the "unique vision" or *Sammā Diṭṭhi* in the Noble Eightfold Path. A *Sotāpanna* is able to see the truth of this "previously unheard" Dhamma.

- Thus, when a *Sotāpanna* comprehends this "hidden truth" about the real nature of this world, he/she will **begin to see the danger in getting attached to** sense pleasures (however, a *Sotāpanna* will not be able to stay away from normal sense pleasures; only the correct vision about the dangers in sense pleasures is registered).

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- That "drastic change in vision" will automatically generate faith and reverence in the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha*, thereby generating ***aveccappasāda*** for them.
- This is why the Buddha, *Dhamma*, and the *Saṅgha* are called the Triple Gems, and are worthy of homage; see, "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha." We will discuss this in the next post.

6.4.8 Sammā Diṭṭhi – Realization, Not Memorization

May 13, 2018; revised June 20, 2020

1. *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (or comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*) is the necessary first step to start on the Noble Eightfold Path. If one has gained *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (i.e., if one is a *Sotāpanna/Sotāpanna Anugāmi*), one would have understood the Four Noble Truths and can "see" (not with eyes, but with *paññā*) the path to *Nibbāna*:

- One has "seen" that there would be much suffering in future lives (especially in the *apāyā*), if one gets too much attached to worldly things by assuming that they can provide lasting happiness (this is the comprehension of the *anicca* nature).
- The reason for such future suffering is immoral actions, speech, and conscious thinking (*kāya* and *vacī saṅkhāra* done with ignorance or *avijjā*). This is why the first step in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."
- That one can stop future suffering from arising by controlling one's *kāya* and *vacī saṅkhāra* or to stay away from *dasa akusala*.
- And the way or path to accomplish that is the Noble Eightfold Path.

Those are the Four Noble Truths.

2. We can analyze it in a different way by first discussing what is meant by *Nibbāna* and also *Sotāpanna*.

- The *Nibbāna Sutta* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* clearly describes *Nibbāna* as, "..***ragakkhayo, dosakkhayo, mohakkhayo*** — *idaṃ vuccati nibbānanti*." [SN 38.1 Nibbānapañhāsutta] That means *Nibbāna* is attained via removing greed, hate/anger, and ignorance from one's mind.
- However, the step-by-step procedure to attain *Nibbāna* involves four steps, which remove four types of ***āsavas*** or **mental fermentations** that contaminate a mind; see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā": *Diṭṭhāsava, kāmāsava, bhavāsava,* and *avijjāsava.*

3. It is important to understand what ***āsavas*** or **mental fermentations** are, how they accumulate, and how they lead to grasping of a new *bhava* at the moment of death.

- Let us take an example. When one keeps doing immoral things based on greed (hurt others, steal, sexually misbehave, etc in order to satisfy that greed), then one's mind accumulates "*āsavas* of greedy type." "Mental fermentations" is a good translation for *āsava*; **it implies that the longer that one keeps them, they get more rotten.**
- Another way to say that is to say one is cultivating "greedy *gati*."
- This can be compared to adding rotten things to a pool of water. Contamination gets worse with time. Still, the dirt may settle down at the bottom of the pool, and the water may look relatively clean.
- However, when the water in disturbed, say by stirring with a long stick, some contaminants will come to the surface; that is *anusaya*. How much comes to the surface (*anusaya*) depends on how hard the water is stirred, i.e., how strong the sense input is. Furthermore, if there is a lot of dirt there, even the slight stirring can bring dirt up to the surface.

4. ***Āsavas* or mental fermentations are like mud at the bottom of the pool.** When a mind has built up a lot of *āsavas* accumulating deep inside, it is easier for them to come to the surface (i.e., for cravings to come to the mind) when one gets a corresponding sense input (seeing an attractive person, for example). This is

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called the *anusaya*. So, how one responds in a given situation depends on those three parameters (*gati, āsava, anusaya*), which are interconnected: "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava."

- Removal of these four types of *āsavas* (which is the same as removing corresponding *gati*) leads to the removal of 7 types of *anusaya*: *diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, kāma rāga, paṭigha, bhava rāga, māna, avijjā*; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."

5. **The most important of the four *āsavas* is the *diṭṭhāsava*.** All other *āsavas* are influenced by the wrong views one has. With the removal of *diṭṭhāsava* at the *Sotāpanna* stage, 99+% of all "mental junk" or "mental fermentation" disappear from the mind.

- **This is why the Buddha said that a *Sotāpanna* has removed an amount of defilements comparable to the soil in the whole Earth. Remaining defilement due to all three other types of *āsavas* is comparable to the amount of soil picked up by one's thumb.**
- Therefore, one needs to get a clear idea of what is meant by *Nibbāna* and to see why that necessarily means getting out of the rebirth process. The rebirth process is filled with so much suffering in the *apāyā*. The Buddha said that any given living being spends most of the rebirth process in the *apāyā*.

6. Therefore, the first, and most important step towards attaining *Nibbāna* is to remove *diṭṭhāsava*, at which time the 2 types of *anusaya* and the 3 types of *saṃyojana* are also removed; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna":

- With the removal of *diṭṭhāsava* leads to the removal of *diṭṭhi anusaya* and *vicikiccā anusaya*.
- Simultaneously, the three *saṃyojana* (*sakkāya diṭṭhi, vicikiccā, silabbata parāmāsa*) disappear.
- We will discuss these in the next post.
- They are all removed by the "right vision." It is called "*dassanena pahātabbā*" or "removal via right vision."

7. The hardest part to understand is what is meant by the "right vision." We have discussed at length at this website that it involves the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*): That one cannot achieve long-lasting happiness by pursuing enticing things in this world, that one will be subjected to suffering in the long run if one does that, and therefore, such an approach will lead to one becoming helpless (especially when one is reborn in the *apāyā*).

- That is the basic "right vision" that must REGISTER in one's mind. The truth of that needs to accepted by the mind.
- Just reading about this, and memorizing it is not enough.

8. Let us take an example to illustrate this point. There are people who do not believe in rebirth. That is a "wrong *diṭṭhi*" or "wrong vision" according to the Buddha. But if one's mind does not see that rebirth must be valid, just by reading about it is not going to change that impression in that mind.

- One should look at the evidence for rebirth with an open mind; see, "Evidence for Rebirth." One should contemplate on the fact that nothing happens without causes, i.e., *kammā* will have *vipāka*. That in turn leads to the conclusion that rebirth must be valid.
- This is why getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* MUST happen before one can comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa* and become *Sotāpanna*. This was discussed by the Buddha in the "Mahā Chattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

9. One issue that I do not quite understand is there are some of those people who do not believe in rebirth but want to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage and even the *Arahant* stage! They don't realize the contradiction?

- By definition, one wants to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage in order to avoid births in the *apāyā*. So, if one does not believe in rebirth, why does one believe that it is possible to be born in the *apāyā*?

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- We must also remember that even those of us who believe in rebirth, has been in this rebirth for a time which has no traceable beginning. Therefore, we must have also held such wrong views in the past. It is not easy to get rid of these 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*.

10. In any case, we still need to have more clarification on what happens when one truly comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa*.

- I think one good analogy is if one is wearing — say a blue-tinted glasses — all the time, then no matter how hard one tries, one WILL see the world see white objects as blue and other objects also distorted to appear with different colors.
- Removing a *diṭṭhi* (or wrong vision) is like taking off those tinted glasses. It happens when one's mind comes to a certain stage of understanding. This is cultivating *paññā* (wisdom).
- The only way to remove those "tinted glasses" is to contemplate on the teachings of the Buddha, and also to engage in *puñña/kusala kammā* that provide the conditions for the mind to comprehend those teachings.

11. A key factor that most people disregard is how much of a difference it can make in one's mindset when one stays away from *dasa akusala* and engages actively in *kusala/puñña kammā*. One's mind becomes clear and sharp, one will be able to comprehend deeper concepts easily; see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."

- Then one will be able to get rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* and then make the transition to the Noble Path by starting to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*; see, "Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, sīla, Samādhi."
- Comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* is different than learning mundane subjects like geometry or even mathematics. It can be difficult or relatively easier depending on how much "preparations" (*dāna, sīla, bhāvanā*) one has made in this life and also in previous lives; see, "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā" and "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma."

12. As we discussed above, the key step in getting to the "right view" is for one's mind to see the truth in the world view of the Buddha: **That our world is much more complex than what we experience with our senses.** That there are more realms of existence, that suffering is worst in those *apāyā*, and that unless we get rid of "*apāyagāmi gati*" one can end up in the *apāyā*.

- Those "*apāyagāmi gati*" are closely related to *diṭṭhāsava*, which arise and accumulate due to ignorance of the Buddha's world view or the real nature of the world (*Tilakkhaṇa*).
- Furthermore, at the dying moment, the mind can grasp such an *apāyagāmi* sense input (*ārammaṇa*).
- As we have discussed before, those things happen AUTOMATICALLY, based on one's *gati (āsava)*. That is an important point to understand. Unless one is a *Sotāpanna*, those possibilities cannot be ruled out.

13. Another related key issue is the following. It does not matter not how many bad *kammā bīja* one has accumulated (some of which accumulated in previous lives and we are not even aware of them Rather what is important is whether one's mind will grasp a *bhava* (*upādāna*) in a given realm. That depends only on the level of *paññā* (wisdom) that one has cultivated and THEREFORE what kind of *gati* one has.

- **It DOES NOT matter how many *kammā bīja* suitable to give rebirth in the *apāyā* are there. If one has removed "*apāyagāmi gati*" by cultivating *paññā* to the *Sotāpanna* stage, then one's mind would not grasp such *bhava*.**
- If one's mind has removed all *gati* that can lead to rebirth in any realm, then one's mind would not be able to grasp any *bhava*, and thus one would attain *Parinibbāna* at the dying moment.
- For example, Aṅgulimāla killed 999 people but was able to attain the *Arahanthood* within a week or so. Those bad *kammā bīja* were still there, but his mind would not grasp (*upādāna*) them. See, "Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."

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14. When one gets to *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (i.e., when one becomes at least a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*), one's *gati* have changed permanently. Since the next birth is according to one's *gati*, one will not be born into a family with *micchā diṭṭhi*. This is how it is guaranteed that one will have only 7 more *bhava* left.

- One may grasp *Tilakkhaṇa* by focusing on one of them. But that will lead to comprehension of all three, and even more characteristics like the *asubha* (unfruitful) nature. They are all inter-related.
- Of course, there are different levels of *Sammā Diṭṭhi* and it will be completed only at the *Arahant* stage.

15. Finally, there is no need to worry about whether one has attained a certain stage of *Nibbāna*. One should concentrate on following the Path. The Buddha said that if one follows *Satipaṭṭhāna*, one would attain at the least *Anāgāmī* stage within seven years (some earlier.) Of course, one must have a *tihetuka birth.*

- If one does not have a *tihetuka paṭisandhi*, the effort will not go waste but will help attain *Nibbāna* in a future life. See. "Paṭisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gati."
- He said that if a farmer plants seeds and takes good care of those plants, they will provide a good harvest. It is pointless to check each and every day to see whether the harvest is ready. It will happen in due time.

6.4.9 How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?

Revised March 23, 2017; May 15, 2018; September 22, 2018; August 12, 2019; February 11, 2020

One can determine for oneself whether one has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage. It becomes clear to oneself that one has removed the characteristics (*gati*) suitable to be born in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*).

Sotāpanna Is the First Goal

1. The most precious thing sought by a *Bhauddhayā* (or a practicing Buddhist) is the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna;* see, "Why a Sotāpanna is better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire."

- It is the *Arahanthood* that is the ultimate goal. A *Sotāpanna* will become an *Arahanthood* within seven *bhava*.
- Seven *bhava* is many more than seven births, because, within a given *bhava*, there can be many births. See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."
- Thus it is essential to know how to figure out whether one has attained that stage. Other than that person himself/herself, only a Buddha can say whether a given person has achieved *magga phala*; see, "Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage."
- As we discussed in that post, even Ven. Sariputta (who is only second to the Buddha in Dhamma knowledge) could not do that. Some people today claim they know whether another person has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage (and make money doing that).

2. A *Sotāpanna* is one who has seen the way to *Nibbāna*. He/she still has more work to do, but can see a glimpse of *Nibbāna* from far. The way to *Nibbāna* has become apparent.

- In another post, I described a simile. A traveler, who, looking for particular mountain to get to the top of it, can finally see an outline of it at a distance. He/she still has to travel to the base of the mountain and climb up. Most of the hard work was to find the location of that mountain and to get close to it. See, "Sotāpanna Anugami and a Sotāpanna" and "The Sotāpanna Stage."

Nibbāna Is the Stopping of the Rebirth Process

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3. In Buddha Dhamma, the ultimate goal is to stop the rebirth process anywhere in the 31 realms of this world. **That corresponds to realizing that there is only suffering to be had by staying in this rebirth process.** In particular, one has to comprehend the dangers of rebirths in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*.)

- The ONLY WAY to come to this realization is to comprehend the true nature of this world of 31 realms: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. And that is NOT impermanence, suffering, and "no-self"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."
- Instead, it is to realize the unfruitfulness of striving to reach the mirage of happiness in this world of 31 realms, and thus convince oneself that one is truly helpless in this cycle of rebirths.
- Therefore, one must work diligently to stop future suffering by "giving up the cravings for anything in this world" and strive to reach the only oasis in this desert of the cycle of rebirths or *Nibbāna*. That is to release the mind from the burdens of the material world.

Comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* will change one's outlook of life

4. Once that idea sinks in, one's attitude, behavior, and outlook on life will change forever.

- Let us take an example. Once a child learns the way to add two numbers, there is no way that the child will ever forget that. There will be no second guessing. If an adult, even a teacher, tells that child that "two plus three is six", there is no way that that child will ever agree to that.
- Attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage is like that. Deep down, one will KNOW the dangers of the rebirth process. That any happiness whether due to health, wealth, or fame, is of NO VALUE in the long term. He/she has truly understood the value of the Buddha Dhamma, and that **faith (based on understanding)** will prevail through future rebirths.
- That is not a "magical effect." A living being is a continuous flow of *kammic energy*; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream." Thus what happens at the *Sotāpanna phala* moment is to change the "*gathi*" of that lifestream irrevocably. **One would have permanently shed any "*gathi*" suitable for a hell-being (with *gathi* of strong hate), a *peta* (intense greed), an *asura* (freeloading mentality), or an animal (a mixture all those; "*thirisan*" or all three "*san*").**
- One way to assess is to see how much of one such "*gati*" have changed for the better. (Over the time period that one has started working towards the *Sotāpanna* stage). One should be able to see **significant** changes. For discussions on "*gati*", (or "*gathi*"), please use the "Search" box on top right.

"Seeing" the True Nature of This World

5. Let us take another example. When we look in a mirror and see our image, we KNOW that it is not another person or oneself, but merely a image. We don't need to think twice to realize that.

- But have you seen a dog barking at its reflection in a mirror or in water? A dog thinks it is another dog, and barks at it. A dog would not know the reality of a reflection.
- In the same way, an average human thinks very highly of his/her material wealth. One is willing to "do whatever it takes" to achieve such material things, titles, recognitions, etc.
- But a *Sotāpanna* would instinctively know the unfruitfulness of such struggles. He/she may still be enjoy sense pleasures (and thus may still likes to eat tasty food or engage in sexual activity, for example). However he/she will not willingly go to extremes, such as engaging in sexual misconduct having affairs outside the marriage or being excessively greedy.
- A *Sotāpanna* has reduced *lobha* to *kāma rāga* and *dosa* (or *dvesha*) to *paṭigha*. In other words, greed or hate that was due to total covering of mind by the five hindrances would be reduce to "attachments" and "dislikes"; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."

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- The most important thing is that he/she will NEVER do any act that is immoral enough to lead to rebirth in the lowest four realms. We all KNOW that our reflection in a mirror is not real and thus will not try to talk to that reflection. Similarly, a Sotāpanna INSTINCTIVELY avoids doing anything that is profoundly immoral. He/she does not need to think about consequences of such acts, etc.

Jhāna Can Be a Distraction

6. One could be a *Sotāpanna* (or even an *Arahant*) without being able to get to any *jhāna* beforehand. Many people in the time of the Buddha attained the *Arahanthood* upon listening to a *desanā*. *Upacara* and *anuloma samādhi* are sufficient for one to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage. Also, *jhāna* and *magga phala* are two different things; see, "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

- That becomes clear when we look at the possible rebirths of a *Sotāpanna*. A *Sotāpanna* could be reborn at or above the human realm.
- But if one has attained the first *anāriya jhāna* then one WILL be born in the *Brahma* realm. Thus a *Sotāpanna* with even any *anāriya jhānā* WILL NOT be reborn human.
- A *Sotāpanna* can attain *Ariya jhānā* with practice.
- By the way, if one is not a *Sotāpanna* but has attained *anāriya jhānā,* he/she will also be born in a *Brahma* realm. But the difference is that he/she is not free from rebirths in even the lowest four realms.
- What I described above is consistent with the extension of 89 *cittā* to 121. The "additional 40 *cittā*" come about when attaining the four stages of *Nibbāna* for people at various (*anāriya*) *jhāna* levels; see, "The 89 (121) Types of Citta." However, these are technical details that may not concern most people. I just wanted to show consistency.

Ariya and *Anāriya Jhāna* Experiences Are the Same

7. We also need to keep in mind that the *jhānā* experience is the same for *anāriya jhānā* as for *Ariya jhānā*. They are mental states of the *rūpāvacara* and *arūpāvacara* realms; they still belong to this world of 31 planes.

- There were *yogis* even before the Buddha who could attain *anāriya jhānā* to the eighth and also cultivated powerful *abhiññā* powers. *Ceto vimutti* (or *ceto vimukthi*) with *anāriya jhānā* is not the same as *magga phala* with *paññā vimutti*. In the former defilement are suppressed. In the latter, they have been removed.
- Of course, having even *anāriya jhānā* makes it easier to do *vipassanā* (comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*) and attain *magga phala*.

Ariya and *Anāriya Jhāna* Are Very Different in Essence

8. Just SUPPRESSION of *akusala* thoughts and craving for sensual pleasures (*kāma rāga*) can lead to *anariya jhāna.*

- On the other hand, the attainment of *Ariya jhāna* requires the removal of craving (*anusaya*) for sensual pleasures (*kāma rāga*). Thus one needs to be an *Anāgāmi* to attain even the first *Ariya jhāna.* See, "Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala."
- Here is a *desanā* from the Waharaka Thero describing the difference between *jhāna* and *magga phala* (it is in Sinhala, but I have extracted the essence in this post for others):

  WebLink: Waharaka Thero - Difference between Magga Phala and Jhāna in Sinhala

Changes One Can See For Oneself

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9. Even before reaching the *Sotāpanna* stage, one will notice changes in one's behavior and attitude towards not only other humans but all living beings. All those will gradually change as one starts following the Path.

- But there will be significant changes after attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage. That change may not be noticeable in a day. It could take weeks or a few months to see some critical differences in one's lifestyle when one looks back.
- The tendency to get together with a lot of people will be reduce. One will be spending more and more time learning Dhamma and contemplating on concepts that are still not entirely clear. Finding more about the real nature of this world is immensely enjoyable.
- One will also start noticing things that one had not noticed before. One will see clear instances of people's "self-induced" suffering as they try to enjoy life by "partying harder," but only getting exhausted in the process.

Should One Declare One's Attainments?

10. Then there is this question. Is it appropriate or even allowed by the Buddha for someone to declare the *magga phala* one has attained?

- What is stated in the *Tipiṭaka* is following. If one declares that one has certain *magga phala* falsely intending to gain respect, money, publicity, etc., that is a bad *kamma.* A conventional *bhikkhu* becomes "*pārājika*," loses the priesthood automatically, and thus could be born in the *niraya* for doing that.
- Declaration of a *magga phala* is not banned. "A person attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage may declare it if he/she wishes to do so." in particular for the benefit of others. In the WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta* (DN 16), "*Katamo ca so, ānanda, dhammādāso dhammapariyāyo, yena samannāgato ariyasāvako ākaṅkhamāno attanāva attānaṃ byākareyya: 'khīṇanirayomhi khīṇatiracchānayoni khīṇapettivisayo khīṇāpāyaduggativinipāto,* ***sotāpannohamasmi*** *avinipātadhammo niyato sambodhiparāyaṇo'ti.*"
- Most people who attain *magga phala* do not declare it; it is not a bragging point. It is the same with *jhānā*. Many people start off developing *jhānā* to attain supermundane (*abhiññā*) powers, but once they get there, they have already seen the fruitlessness of even those powers.
- In particular, when one develops *abhiññā* powers to be able to see previous lives, one become so disgusted with what one (and others) had gone through in past lives. One does not seek to look back much further.

Tipiṭaka Examples/Accounts

11. Now let us discuss some episodes from the *Tipiṭaka* to clarify some of the points made above.

- Visāka (one of the chief female lay disciples of the Buddha) had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage at a young age. But she remained at that stage even without developing any *jhānā* or higher *magga phala* until death at age 120. The Buddha stated that she would be reborn many times (as I remember 11 times) as human.
- Similarly, the wealthy businessman Anathapindika, who built the very beautiful and expensive monastery *Jetavanaramaya,* attained the *Sotāpanna* stage upon hearing his first *desanā* from the Buddha. He died and was reborn in the Tusita realm (one of the six *deva* worlds). Since those *deva* worlds also belong to the *kāma loka*, it is clear that he never attained an *Ariya jhāna*.
- Mahānāma was a wealthy person who was related to Prince Siddhartha's family. The Buddha told him that he had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage. However, when he was engaging in his business activities, he often got frustrated and angry with his servants and yelled at them. After such an episode of outburst, he would think, "if I am still able to become angry like this, I must not have attained the *Sotāpanna* stage yet." So, he would go to see the Buddha, explained what happened, and ask whether the Buddha was

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sure about the declaration. He still had doubts about his attainment of the *Sotāpanna* stage until the Buddha confirmed it for the third time; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhama Mahānāma Sutta (SN 55.21)."

- **The key is that there is a difference between hate (*dosa*) and getting angry (*paṭigha*); *paṭigha* is removed only at the *Anāgāmī* stage.**

More Accounts From *Tipiṭaka*

12. Then there was the Sarakani *brahmin*, who also belonged to a "high caste." He used to consume alcohol and get drunk on a regularly. His relatives, who were *vedic brahmins*, disowned him from their lot, saying that he was unworthy to be one of them. He also attained the *Sotāpanna* stage, but could not give up the habit of drinking even after achieving that. When he died, Mahānāma (mentioned above) asked the Buddha where Sarakani was reborn. The Buddha said Sarakani had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage and has been reborn a *deva*. Sarakani's relatives laughed out loud contemptuously upon hearing this and declared, "if Sarakani was a *Sotāpanna*, then we all should be *Arahants*." When Mahānāma reported this back to the Buddha, the Buddha said those ignorant *brahmins* would just go by outward appearances. **That description is in the *Sarakāni sutta* (Do a Google search to fine several translations of the *sutta*).**

- Of course, that episode does not imply that one could keep doing immoral activities and still attain the *Sotāpanna* stage. What we need to understand is that drinking alcohol by itself is not one of the *dasa akusala* (ten immoral actions), but heavy consumption could lead to it. Sarakāni probably continued with his long-time habit to some extent, but was unlikely to have "got drunk." **A *Sotāpanna* removes only strong greed (*lobha*). *Kāma rāga* or attachment to sense pleasures is removed only at the *Anāgāmī* stage.**
- In the *Mahanama sutta* (delivered to Mahanama mentioned above), the Buddha described the *sīla* (moral conduct) of a *Sotāpanna*: "*panatipata pativirato hoti, adinnādāna pativirato hoti, kamesu miccacara pativirato hoti, musāvāda pativirato hoti, surameraya majjapama dattana pativirato hoti*." It is essential to realize the deep meanings of "five precepts"; see, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them."
- In the above "*pativirato hoti*" does not mean "will not" but rather "will not do with liking." After all, a *Sotāpanna* (unless had attained *Ariya jhānā*) is not yet released from the higher realms of the *kāma loka*, only from the lowest four realms.

Asmi Māna Removed Only at the *Arahant* Stage

13. **Some people try to remove the sense of "me" or sense of "self" to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage, but that is removed only at the *Arahant* stage.**

- As long as one is bound to the 31 realms, a sense of "self" will be there. **These "*gati*" are removed in stages, starting with "*gathi*" suitable for rebirth in the *apāyā as discussed in #4 above*.** Even an *Anāgāmī* has a sense of "self" left, though most of his/her attachments for sense pleasure would not be there. One cannot pass a college exam without having graduated from high school.
- One has to advance systematically through stages; see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas" and "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."
- As long as one is bound to the 31 realms or "this material world," it is not correct to say there is a "self" or there is "no-self"; they are both wrong and extreme views; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- Any meditation with the wrong concepts of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* "will not grow." One should be able to "feel" one's meditation "grow" if one is doing correct types of meditation; see, "13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage."

Only a Buddha Can Know Another Person's Attainments

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14. Finally, only a Buddha could discern whether another person has attained *magga phala*. However, there are many instances of people declaring their attainments by themselves when that declaration helped a noble purpose.

- All those who participated in the first four Buddhist Councils (Dhamma *Saṅgāyanā*) were *Arahants*, according the *Tipiṭaka*. Thus all those many thousands of *Arahants* who attended those four *Saṅgāyanā* must have declared the *Arahantship* by themselves.
- Ven. Ānanda attained the *Arahantship* just the night before the First *Saṅgāyanā*. He came to the Council by air (with *abhiññā* powers) and entered the hall through the keyhole. He did that to dispel any doubts from the minds of the other *Arahants* of his attainment.
- There are only a relatively few instances of *Arahants* or even the Buddha performing such supernormal acts. It was essential to remove any doubts of others about the *Arahantship* of Ven. Ānanda because of the critical role he played at the First *Saṅgāyanā*.

Also see: "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna," "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala," and "Sotāpatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna."

6.4.10 Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa

October 1, 2017

- Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa – Introduction
- How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha
- Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa
- What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex
- Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā

6.4.10.1 Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa – Introduction

November 1, 2017

1. This subsection replaces the old subsection, "Āsvāda (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava [ādīnava] (Bad Outcomes), Nissaraṇa (Relinquish)." I had used Sinhala terms in that series, without realizing it. Also, I have basically re-written some of the posts — including the Introduction — to have a logical flow.

- Furthermore, this subsection was under "*Paṭicca Samuppāda*." I have now moved it to the "*Sotāpanna* Stage" where it is more appropriate.
- Here is the pronunciation of the three words: "WebLink: Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa."

2. There are two main categories of "pleasures" that one experiences: (i) Those arising **due to *kamma vipāka***, and (ii) mind-made "pleasures" where we keep generating more ***vacī saṅkhāra* (thinking/talking to ourselves in our minds) recalling such an experience of the first kind.**

- For example, eating a piece of cake that was given by a friend generates a "good feeling" via the taste itself. That belongs to the first category. This is a *kamma vipāka* and there are "no new *kamma* generated"; see, "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."
- But if we get "attached to that taste" and start thinking how good it is and crave for more, now we are generating *vacī saṅkhāra* (thinking/talking to ourselves about how good it is), then we are generating

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"new *kamma*." This second type is called ***assāda*** (*āsvāda* in Sinhala). [***assāda*** : [m.] taste; enjoyment; satisfaction.]

3. Therefore, ***assāda*** are basically "mind-made pleasures", i.e., **only those in the second category.**

- Those of the first type arise AUTOMATICALLY due to sense inputs. They arise due to our *kamma vipāka/gathi* via *mano saṅkhāra*. *Mano saṅkhāra* **are defined** as *vedanā, saññā* which arise in each and every *citta*.
- Based on those initial feelings, we are also likely to start generating *vacī saṅkhāra* (talking to ourselves, which is defined as *vitakka/vicāra*, then actual speech) and then even generate *kāya saṅkhāra* (bodily actions). We HAVE CONTROL over *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*, and that is the key to changing our defiled *gathi*.
- It is important to realize that *vacī saṅkhāra* are associated with speech and also "talking to ourselves": "Correct Meaning of Vacī Sankhara."

4. There is nothing we can do to stop the first kind. For example, even an *Arahant* WILL feel the "tastiness" of sugar or a nice meal (or saltiness of salt or unpleasantness of some medications/foods, etc). But he/she WILL NOT become attached to that taste and crave for more.

- It is this **craving** and the subsequent conscious thinking about it (*vacī saṅkhāra*) that is called *assāda*, and that is what is bad because **that will extend the *saṃsāric* journey filled with suffering** as we will discuss in detail in this subsection.
- So, it is important to distinguish between AUTOMATIC generation of *mano saṅkhāra* (due to *vipāka*) and CONSCIOUS generation of *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*: "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."

5. It is those CONSCIOUS generation of *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* that contribute to future suffering (and also lead to *tāpa* or "heat" in the mind right now): "Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities."

- We "get addicted" to things like drugs, alcohol, and even over-eating by constantly thinking about them. We tend to recall past experiences and create in our minds such future experiences. This is generating *vacī saṅkhāra* (talking to ourselves). Then we start talking and doing things accordingly.
- This is how we strengthen "old bad habits" and even develop "new bad habits" or *gathi*. These habits or *gathi* could be *saṃsāric gathi* or new ones.
- There are many posts at the site on "*gathi*" (or habits/character). A simple explanation is at "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)," and there is a scientific explanation too: "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View."
- This important concept of *gathi* is not discussed in current Theravāda literature, but it can explain many other concepts.

6. The more we enjoy such "mind-made pleasures" or *assāda*, the more established those associated *gathi* become. For example, a drug user/alcoholic is constantly thinking about either past experiences or the next, and is "building up" that *gathi*. Then it will become increasingly difficult to be drug/alcohol free.

- There is an even worse consequence too: that *gathi* becomes what one craves/thinks about and will become operational in *paṭicca samuppāda* via "*upādāna paccayā bhava*." One can start a PS cycle just in the mind by thinking about getting drunk via initiating *vacī saṅkhāra* and generating "*bhava* or existence of a drunkard." Then of course one will follow-up with actual drinking, which is done via *kāya saṅkhāra*. Soon enough one will end up an alcoholic.
- Therefore, ***ādīnava*** means "bad consequences or dangers." In this case, what we perceive as "mental pleasures" (*assāda*) WILL have bad consequences both in this life **and in future lives:** In the above example, one is likely to be matched with an "alcoholic mother" in the next birth, and be born an

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alcoholic. [***ādīnava***: [m.] disadvantage. 過患 (danger), 患難 (trials and tribulations), 過失 (negligence), 危難 (distress).]

7. This is another way to express the First Noble Truth. What a normal person thinks as "*somanassa*" ("*suva*" + "*manasa*" or "good feelings in the mind") CAN actually be the cause for FUTURE suffering, **but ONLY IF one gets attached, as discussed above**.

- Note the difference between consuming a tasty food and getting attached to it; seeing a nice picture and getting attached to it; hearing a nice music and getting attached to it, etc.
- **Getting to that point of being able to experience "taste things" without getting attached to them is not easy**; that is not attained fully until the *Anāgāmī* stage. It requires more learning and contemplation (*Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*).
- However, to first get to the *Sotāpanna* stage, one needs at least to "**see with wisdom**" that *assāda* do lead to *ādīnava*; when that understanding sinks in, **that will prevent one from committing *apāyagāmi kamma*,** i.e., one's mind will get rid of **the coarse level of *assāda***. This subsection can help gain that "vision."

8. When one fully understands the bad consequences (*ādīnava*) of these mind-made pleasures (*assāda*), that means one has understood the First Noble Truth as well as the causes for it, how to eliminate those causes, and the way to do it, i.e., all four Noble Truths.

- That leads to the cessation of *saṃsāric* journey and that is called ***nissaraṇa*** (end of "*carana*" or journey ("nis" + "charana", which rhymes as "nissaraṇa"). [***nissaraṇa*** : (nt.) 1. going out; departure; 2. escape.]
- But it is a step-by-step process that starts with the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage and culminates at the *Arahant* stage.

9. **It will take several posts to explain the above in detail**. However, understanding them will help with *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles and also with *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna bhāvanā*.

- The first few subsections of the "Living Dhamma" section has all the fundamentals that are needed to help understand this subsection. The posts mentioned in #3 and #4 are especially important ones.
- *Assāda* are related to *āsava* and *anusaya* too, as well as *gati* (or *gathi*) as we mentioned above. There are many posts at the site on those key concepts, and a couple were listed in #4 above. One could use the "Search" button on top right to locate relevant posts.
- In the following we will discuss a couple of more examples of *assāda, ādīnava* and *nissaraṇa* in simple terms.

10. There are many things that we know which provide instant gratification, but are harmful in the long term. A good example is smoking. A smoker gets an enjoyment with smoking. Furthermore, he/she wants it to be repeated again and again, and that is *assāda.* But it has been proven without a doubt that long-term smoking causes many health problems including cancer.

- Even though smoking has decreased over the years, there are still many people who smoke. I had a older friend who smoked heavily; I asked him why he would keep doing it since he knew about the bad consequences. He said the habit had been ingrained and it was hard to break it. This was many years ago, and he died because of his bad habit. The last several years of life were spent in hospitals, with parts of his lungs removed piece-by-piece and eventually he was on oxygen most of the time.
- Of course he finally gave up smoking when he was about to be hospitalized. By the time he clearly saw the "*ādīnava*" (when he actually experienced the bad consequences), it was too late. The damage had been done.

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11. However, his children clearly saw what he went through, and understood that smoking may provide temporary enjoyment (*assāda*), but is bound to bring about bad consequences (*ādīnava*). Thus they stayed away from smoking (*nissaraṇa*).

- This is the key point that we will prove to be valid for ANY sense pleasure at the end. But do not worry; we do not have to (and cannot effectively) give up anything without understanding. In fact such forced "giving up" will only lead to more stress. Our minds will automatically avoid more and more "bad things" as we keep learning Dhamma.
- There are few more "relatively easy to see" examples of "*assāda, ādīnava, nissaraṇa*," even before we get to the deeper analysis in the next post.
- Craving for tasty foods is another very clear example. Most of us cannot "see" the bad consequences of overindulging in eating and as a consequence we have a obesity problem in most countries. This has resulted in many health problems for each person who is engaging in it, and also has led to increased health-care costs for all. Still many people are beginning to see the truth of "*assāda, ādīnava, nissaraṇa*" of overeating.
- Heavy drinking, use of drugs, association with bad friends, are more such relatively "easy to see" examples.

12. However, we can systematically understand the "root causes" for ALL such problems by using the guidelines provided by the Buddha. Once we understand the actual root causes, at least some of us can think through and avoid not only such "mundane problems", but start seeing even more long-term benefits: It is the same line of reasoning that eventually leads to the four stages of *Nibbāna*.

- Thus even though Buddha Dhamma is focused on "eliminating the long-term suffering", it can also help reduce some of the "short-term suffering" too.
- As a clear example of this, one can always examine the health of Buddhist monks. On average they are much more healthier than the "householders" in any of the Buddhist countries. They do not smoke and do not overeat.
- And one can clearly see their "joy in heart" and the calmness of their minds even though they have very few possessions and do not seek gratification in many sense pleasures that others value so highly.

13. This last point is worth thinking about some more. If one thinks deep enough, one can see that even some common "sense pleasures" are not that different from the pleasure one gets by inhaling a drug. They give a highly enjoyable "burst of pleasure", but inevitably lead to bad outcomes even short term. One can get a hangover with a bad headache due to excess drinking, and in the case of overeating one can feel the "discomfort" right away.

- We seek such sense pleasures because we don't realize the value of just having a calm, peaceful state of mind. One does not understand the value of a "neutral mind" (which is called *upekkhā*), unless one can experience it. It is like getting rid of a headache that one had for a long time. We do not realize the "incessant stress" that is with us, until we reduce it.
- Our minds are constantly under stress seeking sense pleasures. That is what we all had been doing in countless previous births too. That is why it is hard to recognize any negative consequences.

14. In the *Sambhodhi Vagga* of the *Aṅguttara Nikāya*, there are several *suttā* on *assāda*, *ādīnava*, *nissaraṇa*. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Pubbeva Sambodha Sutta (AN 3.103)" provides a succinct statement on what they are:

"*..ko nu kho loke* ***assādo****, ko* ***ādīnavo****, kiṃ* ***nissaraṇan****'ti? Tassa mayhaṃ, bhikkhave, etadahosi: 'yaṃ kho lokam paṭicca uppajjati sukhaṃ somanassaṃ, ayaṃ loke assādo. Yaṃ loko anicco dukkho vipariṇāmadhammo, ayaṃ loke ādīnavo. Yo loke chandarāgavinayo chandarāgappahānaṃ, idaṃ loke nissaraṇan'ti...*"

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Translated: "..What are *assāda*, *ādīnava*, and *nissaraṇa* in this world? If one gets attached (*paṭicca*) to *sukha/somanassa* that is *assāda*. That gives rise to *dhamma* (which are the seeds for future suffering, because these are really "*kamma* seeds") with *anicca, dukkha*, and *viparināma* nature, and that is called *ādīnava*. Arising of such *dhamma* can be stopped by constraining the tendency to indulge in sense pleasures (*chandarāgavinayo*), and thus getting rid of craving for sense pleasures (*chandarāgappahānaṃ*)..."

- It is to be noted that *sukha* is "bodily pleasure" and *somanassa* is "mind pleasure." We will discuss this highly condensed verse in the upcoming posts.
- In that *sutta* the Buddha says that he was unable to attain the *Buddhahood* until he realized the need to see the dangers in sense attachments, and to work diligently to get rid of such cravings for sense pleasures.
- It is important to note that *dhammā* are really *kamma* seeds that lead to future *vipāka*; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!" and "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

12. There are many other *suttā* that discuss these three key concepts. In particular, "WebLink: suttacentral: Assada Sutta (AN 6.112)" is notable since it ties *assāda diṭṭhi* to *anicca saññā*:

""*Tayome, bhikkhave, dhammā. Katame tayo?* ***Assādadiṭṭhi****, attānudiṭṭhi, micchādiṭṭhi. Ime kho, bhikkhave, tayo dhammā. Imesaṃ kho, bhikkhave, tiṇṇaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā. Katame tayo?* ***Assādadiṭṭhiyā pahānāya aniccasaññā bhāvetabbā****, attānudiṭṭhiyā pahānāya anattasaññā bhāvetabbā, micchādiṭṭhiyā pahānāya sammādiṭṭhi bhāvetabbā. Imesaṃ kho, bhikkhave, tiṇṇaṃ dhammānaṃ pahānāya ime tayo dhammā bhāvetabbā"ti.*"

- Or, contemplation of *anicca saññā* leads to the removal of *assāda diṭṭhi.*
- This is because the mind-made pleasures (*assāda*) are based on the wrong perception of *nicca saññā*, i.e., that those sense experiences are real and fruitful.

6.4.10.2 How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha

March 11, 2016; revised October 31, 2017; February 10, 2020

1. The essence of the Buddha Dhamma is that what we PERCEIVE to be enjoyment (*assāda*) is actually the CAUSE of FUTURE SUFFERING; that is called ādīnava (or dangers) of assāda. **But that understanding comes in stages.** This is a subtle point to understand, and requires some cleansing of the mind to "see." Grasping the essence of Buddha Dhamma requires a concentrated mind.

- At a minimum, one should read these posts when the mind is calm. That will make a huge difference in comprehending Dhamma. Most people (especially those who come to this site) are not "immoral", but the state of mind can change. Even an excited mind cannot grasp deep Dhamma. I discussed this in a few of my very first posts two years ago; see, for example, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."
- This is why I highly recommend everyone to read the first several posts in the meditation section starting with "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation."
- Most people new to Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism), start at the wrong place: "Do I really need to give up all these sense pleasures?." The answer is no. One will **voluntarily** give up things **that one will be convinced to be dangerous or at least unfruitful**. *Nirāmisa sukha* comes from this understanding.

2. The key here is to understand that "*bhava*" and "*jāti*" are according to one's *gati*. That is because "*bhava*" arises via "*upādāna*" and *upādāna* means what one likes or enjoys; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."

- *Bhava* means "potential to bring about existence" and that existence is according what **one craves for** (*upādāna*), **not what one wishes for**. *Upādāna* means things that one is AUTOMATICALLY attracted to. At least the initial reaction is automatic, and that is what counts at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment; see below.

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- If one craves for sensual pleasures in the *kāma loka*, then it is hard to avoid a *bhava* and *jāti* in the *kāma loka*.
- More importantly, if one is seeking sense pleasures and is willing to do things that can be done only with "animal *gati*," "*pretha gati*," "*asura gati*," or "*niraya gati*," then no matter how much one wishes, one cannot avoid birth in those realms.
- **One cannot fool one's mind.** One has to see the dangers in the lowest four realms to cultivate the desire and drive to be free of them.

3. The four lowest realms are collectively called the "*apāyā*." Those who are destined to go to *apāya* have "*dugati*." The word "*dugati*" comes from "*du*" + "*gati*" or immoral habits (character).

- On the other hand, those who have moral character have "*sugati*," which means good ("*su*") *gati*.
- Sometimes the *apāyā* themselves are also called *dugati*, and the higher realms are called *sugati*.
- A given person could have both *sugati* as well as *dugati*. One becomes the *Sotāpanna* when the possibility for *dugati* to surface (i.e., *anusaya*) is permanently removed.

4. It is hard to see the true *anicca* nature of the higher realms, i.e., in *sugati* (for example in the *deva* realm), until one is free of the lowest four realms. Most of us perceive *deva* realms to be full of happiness. Until one's mind is purified to at least the level of a *Sotāpanna* it is hard to comprehend the futility of a birth in the *deva* realms.

- But the animal and human realms have enough visible suffering for us to be motivated.
- One cannot even imagine to comprehend the *anicca* nature of *rūpa loka* or *arūpa loka* until one is free of *kāma loka*, including the *deva loka*.
- This is why COMPREHENDING Dhamma **at each level** is the essential. It is a step-by-step process.

5. In the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta*, the Buddha described three rounds of bondage (*tiprivattaya*); see, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta." Getting through those three walls is done via four stages of *Nibbāna* (*Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant*).

- At each stage, one gains wisdom (*ñāṇa*) to " see further", i.e., the *anicca* nature of higher realms. Thus one has to make progress systematically. This process is analogous to the following example. Let us visualize a person wearing glasses that have been covered with four layers of a dark, but see-through, film. One could see through a single layer of the film, but when all four layers are on, one is virtually blind.
- A normal human without exposure to pure Dhamma is like a person wearing those glasses covered with all four layers. He/she could just barely see the immediate surroundings, but not much else. Such a person would only be concerned with the immediate surrounding, and will not be able to see any dangers existing not too far away.

6. When exposed to Buddha Dhamma for the first time, it is like bringing in more light. Even with the dark glasses, one can see a bit more clearly, and that is enough for most people to get interested and learn more.

- When one learns about the various aspects of Dhamma, one can see evidence that there is a much bigger hidden world out there, and at some point one could comprehend the dangers of rebirth in the *apāyā*. That stage can be compared to one layer of those dark films coming off. It is the attainment of the *Sotāpanna* stage. This is a big step since *pañcanīvaraṇa* (those five factors that cover the mind) are permanently removed.
- Now, one can see much better, and thus has the ability to start comprehending the dangers of the higher realms in the *kāma loka*, i.e., the human realm and the *deva* realms. First one comprehends the dangers of sense pleasures associated with the human realm and when that happens one attains the *Sakadāgāmī* stage (one will never again be born in the human realm), and the second film comes off.
- In two more stages (*Anāgāmī* and *Arahant*), the remaining two films come off and one will be able to clearly see the true nature of this world only at the *Arahant* stage.

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- Thus, it is useless to try to grasp everything at once or to try to give up "normal" sense pleasures forcefully. However, it is imperative to give up those extreme (immoral) behaviors (*gati*) to be free from *dugati* (*apāyā*).

7. The main problem is that some people go to extremes in seeking sense pleasures. They are willing to steal, lie, and even commit murder to acquire wealth, status, or titles. All those are perceived to lead to higher sense pleasures.

- But in doing so, one will be cultivating *gati* suitable for rebirth in the *apāyā*, i.e., *dugati*.
- One may enjoy such sense pleasures for maximum of 100 years or so. But when one is born in the *apāyā* it is very difficult to get out. One could be trapped there for billions of years to come. This is the danger that many do not see.
- This is the difference a Buddha makes. In the absence of a Buddha in the world, humans are unaware of the existence of these other 29 realms, and in particular, the four lowest realms.

8. Those *akusala kamma* that makes one to be eligible to be born in the *apāyā* have a special name: *pāpa kamma*. I guess the closest English translation would be "*akusala kamma* of the worst kinds."

- As I have discussed in a previous post, there is a huge difference between *lobha* and *rāga, dosa* and *paṭigha*, and *moha* and *avijjā*: "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."
- *Pāpa kamma* are done with *lobha, dosa*, and *moha*, the stronger versions of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage one is left with the milder versions of *rāga, paṭigha*, and *avijjā*. It basically means a *Sotāpanna* still likes to enjoy sense pleasures, but not at the expense of others.
- A *Sotāpanna* is inherently incapable of doing anything that normally would qualify one to be born in the *apāyā*. Even under extreme pressure, a *Sotāpanna* would not be compelled to such *pāpa kamma.*

9. I have done analyses to show that such *pāpa kamma* are done because one has *micchā diṭṭhi.* When one has *micchā diṭṭhi*, one has the hidden ability (*anusaya*) to generate "*diṭṭhi sampayutta citta*" and those are strongest of the 8 *lobha citta*; see, for example, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta."

- Thus it is very important to understand what *micchā diṭṭhi* is. One can use the Search box to find many relevant posts, but here is a simple explanation: "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis."

10. Another issue to think about is which factor dominates the determination of the next *bhava* and thus *jathi* (birth): *kamma vipāka* (seeds) from the past OR one's *gati* right now.

- We all have done both highly meritorious deeds and highly immoral deeds in the past. Those cannot be eliminated easily. But the critical point is that unless one "willingly grasp" any one of those *kamma* seeds at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment at the end of the current *bhava*, those *kamma* seeds cannot bring about a new *bhava*.
- When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one permanently loses "*gati* suitable for the *apāyā*," i.e., one loses "*upādāna*" for *bhava* in the lowest four realms. Thus even though we may have potent *kamma* seeds for such *bhava*, they CANNOT be grasped at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.
- At the *Arahant* stage, one loses "*upādāna*" for *bhava* in all 31 realms, even though he/she may have even an uncountable number of *kamma* seeds from the past.
- This is why Aṅgulimāla, who killed 999 people, was able to attain the *Arahanthood* within 7 days. He lost craving for rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms. See, "Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma."
- We just need to get rid of *gathi* suitable to be reborn in the lowest four realms to become a *Sotāpanna*. That is the critical and first step.

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11. To repeat: Avoiding immoral behavior and actively engaging in moral behavior is not only for the prevention of creating bad *kamma* seeds or for creating good *kamma* seeds, but for changing our bad *gati*.

- The more critical end result we are looking for is to change our mindset, our *gati*. That starts with first getting rid of *dugati*. For most people, it is easy to see the dangers of the *apāyā*.
- When we lose *dugati* suitable for rebirth in the *apāyā*, we will not grasp such a *bhava* at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.
- Until we lose both kinds of *gati* at the *Arahant* stage, we NEED TO cultivate *sugati* so that we will grasp only such a "good *bhava"* at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.

12. Once one gets rid of *dugati*, one advances to the next stage automatically. It is hard to see the bad consequences of "*kāma gati*" (sense pleasures that keep one bound to *kāma loka*), until one is free of the "*apāya gati*" or *dugati*.

- In the same way, it is hard to see the *anicca* nature of "*rūpa* and *arūpa loka gati*" (*jhānic* pleasures that keep one bound to *rūpa* and *arūpa loka*), until one is free of the "*kāma gati*."
- This is why it is totally useless to meditate on things like "there is no self" or "there is no 'me'." The feeling of a self (or more correctly the *saṃyojana* of "*māna*") is removed only at the *Arahant* stage, which is infinitely far away compared to losing *dugati*.
- The perception of a "self" is going to be there as long as one craves for at least a trace of anything in the 31 realms. This is another point that needs a lot of contemplation. The critical point to understand is that it is unfruitful/dangerous to commit immoral actions to enjoy *assāda* or "mind-made pleasures."

6.4.10.3 Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha

November 9, 2017; revised September 3, 2019; October 5, 2019

Introduction

1. It is essential to understand the meaning of each term. The "defilement level" increases in the given order from *kāma* to *kāmacchanda*.

- Pronunciation of the terms: WebLink: Pronunciation of kāma guṇa to kāmacchanda

2. In *kāma loka*, we experience **five types** of **physical sense inputs**: pictures (*rūpa rūpa*), sounds, smells, tastes, and body touches. There are inherent "qualities" for each of these called "***kāma guṇa***." Those are common to all of us in *kāma loka*. They also depend on "*bhava*" and thus differ from humans to each type of animal; see below.

[***kāma*** : may denote: 1. subjective sensuality, 'sense-desire'; 2. objective sensuality, the five sense-objects.

kāma-guṇa : 'characteristics {cords (or strands)} of sensuality'.]

- For example, all of us experience the sourness of lemon or sweetness of sugar (there may be defects in some people due to *kamma vipāka*).
- We all experience the unpleasantness of thunder or the pleasantness of music.
- While there could be minor differences, all humans experience the same basic "qualities" or '*kāma guṇa*" through the five physical senses. Even when one becomes an *Arahant*, that will not change.

Realms in *Kāma Loka* and Two *Brahma Lokā*

3. The 31 realms naturally exist to provide different levels of *kamma vipāka* according to the *(abhi) saṅkhāra* done in previous lives (mainly in the human realm).

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- The lowest four realms in *kāma loka* (*apāyā*) have conditions that induce excessive suffering. Higher two realms in *kāma loka* have *rūpa rūpa, sadda, gandha, rasa*, and *pottabba* that provide increasingly higher levels of "pleasures."
- The *rūpavācara brahma* realms have *rūpavācara jhānic* pleasures; those *brahmā* had given up *kāma rāga* and had cultivated *rūpavācara jhānā* in previous human lives.
- Those in *arūpavācara brahma* realms had given up both *kāma rāga* and *rūpa rāga*, and had cultivated *arūpavācara jhāna* in previous human lives.
- That is why *kāma guṇa* is absent in both *rūpavācara* and *arūpavācara brahma* realms. Those who are born in those realms had given up sense pleasures for *jhānic* pleasures.

What Are *Kāma Guṇa*?

4. Therefore, there are pleasing things in our *kāma loka* (human realm) that naturally arise to provide sense pleasures. That is because "human *bhava*" is a "good *bhava*." Even more sensory pleasures are naturally available in deva realms.

- **Thus, as humans, we are naturally exposed to those "*kāma guṇa*."** We are naturally "exposed to" sense objects that are "pleasing" to the five physical senses. Of course, *deva* are exposed to even stronger *kāma guṇa*.
- Thus, if one has not comprehended the *Tilakkhaṇa* **then it is natural to attach to such "pleasurable things."** One perceives that things in this world — especially those things with *kāma guṇa* — can provide long-term happiness. But in reality, such cravings lead to suffering because those "pleasures" are not sustainable. Furthermore, those things with *kāma guṇa* motivate people to immoral deeds to get access to them.

Kāma Rāga – Attachment to *Kāma Guṇa* via *Saṅkappa Rāga*

5. Now, if a person gets attached to those sensory inputs with *kāma guṇa*, and starts generating sensual thoughts (i.e. ***vacī saṅkhāra*)** that leads to "***kāma***" or ***kāma rāga***. Generating sensual thoughts is also called ***saṅkappa rāga*** **(**creating *saṅkappa* that lead to *saṃsāric* journey). A *sutta* reference is in #15 below.

- Engaging in *saṅkappa rāga* (i.e., thinking greedy thoughts about such sense pleasures) means generating *vacī saṅkhāra.* That is then likely to lead to *kāya saṅkhāra*, too (start engaging in related physical activities.)
- That can happen to any average human. It can happen to a lesser extent to a *Sotāpanna*. That next step of **intentionally** generating sensual thoughts happens with ***kāma rāga***. That will again reduce at the *Sakadāgāmi* stage and stopped only at the *Anāgāmi* stage. [***kāma-rāga*** : 'sensuous lust', one of the ten fetters (*saṃyojana*, q.v.)]
- The removal of ***kāma rāga*** **cannot be forces. *Kāma rāga* will naturally reduce when cultivating *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna.***

6. An *Anāgāmī* has removed *kāma rāga*, but still has *kāma*, i.e., likes them somewhat.

- However, *kāma* of an *Anāgāmi* is not strong enough to lead to rebirth in the *kāma loka*. In other words, an *Anāgāmī* will not generate *abhisaṅkhāra* (strong *saṅkhāra*) for things with *kāma guṇa* (for example would have no desire to engage in sex).
- In the *Abhidhammic* language, an *Anāgāmī* has removed four greed-based *cittā* associated with wrong views. There are still "four greed-based *cittā* dissociated with wrong views" left. But they have lost much of the potency to move from *kāma* to *kāma rāga* level; see #3 of, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."
- It is only at the *Arahant* stage that *kāma* is absent completely.

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Kāmaccandha – Being Blinded by *Kāma Rāga*

7. If not willfully controlled, *kāma rāga* can intensify to a point where one is capable of committing immoral deeds (hurting others or oneself.) One starts losing control when *kāma rāga* **elevates** to the ***kāmacchanda*** level, the highest. [***kāmacchanda*** :'sensuous desire', one of the 5 hindrances (*nīvaraṇa*, q.v.); attachment to sensual pleasure.]

- That can happen to anyone below the *Sotāpanna* stage, i.e., one can be "blinded" by *kāma, resulting in kāmacchanda* ("*kāma*" + "*icca*" + "*andha*," where *icca* is liking, and *andha* is blind, and thus "blinded by the craving for *kāma*").
- **Whether an average human will generate *kāma*, *kāma rāga*, or *kāmacchanda* depends on the strength of the sensory input and also on prevalent conditions.** For example, if one's mindset becomes degraded due to alcohol consumption, and one sees an attractive woman in an isolated setting, things could get out-of-control with *kāmacchanda*.

Kāmaccandha Leads to Rebirth in the *Apāyā*

8. Immoral actions done with *kāmacchanda* could lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*.

- Only *kāma rāga* — not *kāmacchanda* — can be arise in a *Sotāpanna*. Thus he/she is released from the *apāyā*, but not from *kāma loka*. A *Sotāpanna* is incapable of committing an "*apāyagāmi* deed" in order to satisfy any kind of sensory pleasure.
- I hope you get the basic idea. The above reasoning applies to any of the five physical sense inputs.

Some Examples for Clarification

9. We can clarify with some examples. Sugar has a "*kāma guṇa*" of sweetness for humans; that holds for everyone from an average person to an *Arahant*.

- A beautiful woman will be seen as such by anyone from an average person to an *Arahant*.
- An average person may generate *kāma* to *kāmacchanda* for that woman.
- A *Sotāpanna* may generate *kāma* to *kāma rāga*.
- An *Anāgāmī* may generate just *kāma*. But there is no *"kāma rāga anusaya"* left in him to go beyond that.
- But an *Arahant* will not generate *kāma* either.

10. The sight of such a woman is a *kamma vipāka*. For anyone (from an average person to an *Arahant*), still living in the human realm will see that she is beautiful.

- If one gets "interested" one generates *kāma saṅkappa* or *vacī saṅkhāra;* see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra." Then it could lead to *kāya saṅkhāra*, i.e., turn one's head to looks at her again with *kāma rāga* or *kāmacchanda*, that is a new *kamma*.
- A *Sotāpanna* still has "*kāma rāga anusaya*," and that is why he/she will return to the *kāma loka*. He/she can be born as a human or *deva* in the future.
- A *Sakadāgāmī* is in between the *Sotāpanna* and *Anāgāmī* stages. He/she will be reborn only in the *deva* realms.
- Of course, an *Anāgāmī* will not be reborn anywhere in the *kāma loka*. since there is no *kāma rāga* left.

Different Types of *Kāma Guṇa* for Different Existences

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11. Anyone born in the human realm will have similar "*kāma guṇa*" because they had cultivated corresponding "human *saṅkhāra*." We all like same things, and any variations we do have are due the variations in those main *saṅkhāra* types.

- **However,** "*kāma guṇa*" of animals can be much more different compared to humans. There are also many variations among animals.
- Pigs eat very unpleasing things, including feces. Tigers or lions like to eat raw meat. Cows don't like meat but like grass. The variations are quite apparent. Again those correspond to ***saṅkhāra* that they had cultivated as humans**. Furthermore, each *bhava* (and *jāti*) corresponds to such *saṅkhāra* via *paṭicca samuppāda*. Some of you may be able to see that, but we will discuss this later.
- In *brahma* realms, things with *kāma guṇa* are absent. They were born in those realms because they had preferred and cultivated *jhānic* pleasures, instead of craving for sensual pleasures.

12. In that regard, we just keep in mind for now that *(abhi)saṅkhāra* generated by humans have high *javana* power, and thus lead to various "*bhava*" and *jāti*. Animals cannot generate such *citta* with high *javana* power because of their unfortunate birth. That is an important point. Animals just pay for past *kamma* until that *kammic* power is exhausted; see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."

- Even most *devas* enjoy their *kāma* and "go with the flow," and enjoy them (while they can.) *Brahmā* too enjoy *jhānic* pleasures that come with their birth.
- It is only those *devas/brahmā* that had become at least *Sotāpanna* that would be motivated to strive for *magga phala*.

Only *abhisaṅkhāra* Lead to Future Rebirths

13. Therefore, it is mostly humans who can cultivate *abhisaṅkhāra* (of both types) and thus make conditions for future "good births or bad births." That is a critical point in the *Agganna Sutta.*

- All the animals that we see were humans in the beginning. Those with "bad *gathi*" that had been generated via "bad *abhisaṅkhāra*" in their deep past, were reborn as various types of animals as the Earth evolved, and conditions for animal life appeared.
- An introduction to *Aggañña Sutta* is at "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

Five Kinds of *Kāma Guṇa*

14. Now let us briefly discuss a key *sutta* that is relevant. The "WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbedhika Sutta (AN 6.63)" lists the five *kāma guṇa*:

"..*Pañcime, bhikkhave, kāmaguṇā—cakkhuviññeyyā rūpā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasaṃhitā rajanīyā, sotaviññeyyā saddā ... ghānaviññeyyā gandhā ... jivhāviññeyyā rasā ... kāyaviññeyyā phoṭṭhabbā iṭṭhā kantā manāpā piyarūpā kāmūpasaṃhitā rajanīyā. Api ca kho, bhikkhave,* ***nete kāmā kāmaguṇā***.."

Translated: "..*Bhikkhus*, there are five types with characteristics of sensuality (*kāma guṇa*). Which five? **Forms** are cognizable via the eye—agreeable, pleasing, charming, likable, desire-inducing, enticing. **Sounds** are cognizable via the ear. **Aromas** are cognizable via the nose. **Flavors** are cognizable via the tongue. **Body sensations** are cognizable via the body—agreeable, pleasing, charming, likable, desire-inducing, enticing. But, *Bhikkhus*, **these are not sensuality (*kāma*)..**."

- I have translated "*guṇa*" as "characteristics," but "qualities" would work too.

Kāma Different From *Kāma Guṇa*

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15. Then the next verse of the *sutta* says **what *kāma* is**: "*Saṅkappa rāgo purisassa kāmo,* ***Nete kāmā yāni citrāni loke...***"

Translated: "a person's *kāma* is getting attached and thinking about (*saṅkappa rāga*) those pleasing things in this world (*citrani loke*)." **Those beautiful things are not *kāma*.**" Here, "*citrāni loke*" means "a world full of delightful things."

To emphasize: There are many pleasing, desire-inducing, enticing things in the *kāma loka*. Just experiencing them is not *kāma*. One who has understood the real nature does not get attached to them. But those who do not yet understand the real *anicca* nature of things in the *kāma loka*, value them highly. They crave them, and get a satisfaction (*kāma assāda*) by thinking about them (generating *kāma saṅkappa* or *vacī saṅkhāra*); that is *kāma*.

- It is essential to realize that conscious thinking or "talking to oneself" is *vacī saṅkhāra*; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra." Thus, one who does that has *saṅkappa rāga.*
- Such *vacī saṅkhāra* can then lead to *kāya saṅkhāra*, whereby one takes actions to fulfill such desires (if one has *kāma rāga anusaya*).
- Some people go one step further and commit *akusala kamma* to fulfill such desires (then it becomes *kāmacchanda*).

Saṅkappa Rāga Is *kāma*

16. Therefore, anyone in the *kāma loka* will experience *kāma guṇa*. It is a natural outcome of being in the *kāma loka.* It is the tendency to think about them on a regular basis and enjoy that with *saṅkappa rāga* that elevates to *kāma.* A higher level of *kāma* is *kāma rāga.*

- And giving up that craving comes only with an understanding of the true nature (the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature), i.e., realize that they have adverse consequences; see, "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha." and "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana – Introduction."
- Getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage means one has understood the dangers of *kāma assāda*. As long as one has cravings for them, one would still have them. However, a *Sotāpanna* will never do an immoral act to gain those sense pleasures.
- For a *Sotāpanna* to be free from such *kāma assāda*, he/she needs to contemplate the dangers (*ādīnava*) of *kāma assāda* as we discussed in the above two posts. That is the "*asubha bhāvanā*." [***asubha*** means unfruitful, detrimental]

What Is *Asubha Bhāvanā*?

17. Many people misinterpret the *asubha bhāvanā* as to contemplate on disgusting things like rotting dead bodies. **That is entirely wrong; such meditations only lead to *paṭigha* or "friction of the mind."**

- Instead, one needs to contemplate on the fact that **the cause of future suffering is getting attached to those pleasing sensual things**. One needs to see the unfruitful (*asubha*) nature of those things with *kāma guṇa.* Real *asubha* (detrimental) things are those eye-pleasing, ear-pleasing, …body-pleasing things in this *kāma loka*. See, "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha."
- Therefore, it is not even possible to do the *asubha bhāvanā* correctly until one gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage. It is only then one begins to see the dangers **in craving for sense pleasures**.
- However, it is always good to cut down on sense pleasures, even while striving for the *Sotāpanna* stage. It makes one's mind calm and susceptible to grasp more profound concepts.
- Extreme sense pleasures are a burden to the mind. It is possible to avoid those right now; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life." Doing everything in moderation naturally leads to a simpler, healthier, and peaceful life.

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6.4.10.4 Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways

Revised September 4, 2016; Revised February 9, 2017; October 17, 2017; November 5, 2018;May 5, 2020 (Same at Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways @ The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha) **)**

Introduction

1. The word *vedanā* comes from ("*vé*" + "*danā*") which means "දැනෙනවා" in Sinhala. That means to "become aware." When an *ārammaṇa* comes to the mind (via any of the six senses,) we become aware of it.

***Vedanā* can arise in two ways**:

1. One type of vedanā is a consequence of a previous *kamma* or previous defiled action, i.e., a ***kamma vipāka***. That *kamma* could have been done many lives ago.
2. For example, when one gets a "pleasant feeling" while eating a piece of cake offered by the friend, that is a *vipāka vedanā*. Then, if we start thinking about how to eat that cake in the future, with such thinking, we generate "pleasant feelings" about such future experiences. Those are "mind-made" or *samphassa-jā-vedanā* associated with greedy thoughts.

Further details on the two types of *vedanā* can be found at, "Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa-jā-Vedanā" in a Sensory Event." But let us discuss them briefly below.

Vedanā Arising from *Kamma Vipāka*

2. *Vedanā* (feelings) due to *kamma vipāka* are **three kinds** : *Sukha vedanā* (pleasant or joyful feeling), *dukha vedanā* (unpleasant or painful feeling), and *adhukkhamasukha* (without being painful or joyful, just neutral. The word adukkhamasukha is a combination of adukkhama and asukha.)

- **Those three types of *vedanā* are felt only by the body (*kāya*). All *vedanā* initially coming through other five sense faculties are neutral.**
- *Kamma vipāka* leading to *sukha vedanā* and *dukha vedanā* happen to everyone, including *Arahants*. While everyone can live mindfully (taking necessary precautions) to avoid some of such *dukha vedanā*, others are too strong to be able to avoid.
- For example, the Buddha himself had physical ailments later in his life as *kamma vipāka*. Moggallana *Thero* was beaten to death because of a bad *kamma* that he did many lives before.

3. However, *kamma vipāka* are not certain to happen. Some can be reduced in power (see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation.") Many *vipāka* can be reduced in strength with time if one starts acting with mindfulness.

- Many can be avoided by preventing conditions for them to arise. That means acting with *yoniso manasikāra* or just common sense. For example, going out at night in a bad neighborhood is providing fertile ground for past bad *kamma vipāka* to appear. Many *kamma vipāka* CANNOT take place unless the conditions are right. See, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā."
- We all have done innumerable *kamma* (both good and bad) in past lives. If we act with common sense, we can suppress bad *kamma vipāka* and make conditions for good *vipāka* to arise.
- Also see the discussion on *kamma bīja* in, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- Now let us look at the second type of *vedanā*.

Vedanā Arising from *saṅkhāra* ("*Samphassa-jā-vedanā*")

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4. These are the *vedanā* (feelings) that we generate on our own. These are the *vedanā* that do not arise in an *Arahant*.

- Based on *vipāka vedanā*, we may generate more types of "mind-made" *vedanā* called *somanassa* and *domanassa vedanā* as we discuss below.
- In #2 above, we saw that *vipāka vedanā* are felt only by the body (*kāya*.)
- Some of the *vedanā* coming through the other senses feel as "pleasant" or "unpleasant" NOT because of *kamma vipāka*, but due to another reason. Those are associated with each realm and are "*kāma guṇa*." See, "Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)." For example, all humans taste sugar to be sweet. But some people get addicted to eating sweets full of sugar. That second category is "mind-made."
- We may generate "*samphassa-jā-vedanā"* starting with initial *vedanā* due to both mentioned above. But most *samphassa-jā-vedanā* have *kāma guṇa* as the cause.

Some Examples of *Samphassa-ja-Vēdanā*

5. These *samphassa-jā-vedanā* arise due to attachment via greed or hate, at that moment (i.e., due to one's *gati*); see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

These are the *vedanā* (feelings) that *Arahants* do not feel. Since they do not have any "bad *gati,"* they do not commit any *(abhi)saṅkhāra*, an *Arahant* avoids any kind of feeling arising from *saṅkhāra*. The easiest way to explain this kind of *vedanā* is to give some examples:

- Three people are walking down the street. One has an ultra-right political bias (A), the second has an ultra-left preference (B), and the third is an *Arahant* who does not have special feelings for anyone (C). They all see a famous politician hated by the political right coming their way. It is a given that the sight of the politician causes A to have displeasure and B to have a pleasurable feeling. On the other hand, sight does not cause the *Arahant* to generate any pleasure or displeasure. **Even though all three see and identify the person**, they produce different types of feelings. *It is essential to realize that the feelings were created in A and B by themselves.*
- Two friends go looking for treasure and find a gem. Both are overjoyed. It seems quite valuable and one person kills the other so that he can get all the money. Yet when he tries to sell the "gem," he finds out that it was not that valuable. His joy turns to sorrow in an instant. *Nothing had changed in the object. It was the same piece of colored rock. What has changed was the perception of it.*
- What could happen if an *Arahant* found the same gem lying on the road? (He would not have gone looking for one.) He might think of donating it to a worthy cause.

Another Example of Samphassa-jā-Vedanā

6. A loving couple had lived for many years without any problems and were happy to be together. However, the husband slaps his wife during an argument (this is a *kamma vipāka*). The physical pain from the slap itself did not last more than a few minutes. But for how long the wife would suffer mentally? Those feelings arise due to *saṅkhāra*, i.e., sadness and hate. Even the husband, who did not feel any physical pain, would suffer for days if he really loved his wife. *In both cases, the real mental pain was associated with the attachment to each other.* The wife could have dropped something on her foot and would have suffered about the same amount of physical pain. But she would not have had any lingering mental pain associated with that.

- In all the above cases, the initial sense contact was due to a *kamma vipāka*. **No *kamma* energy was generated at that instant.** However, based on that initial contact, we tend to pursue it with our mind and thus may **start generating *kamma* automatically. See, "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."**

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Samphassa-jā-Vedanā Arise Due to Taṇhā

7. Thus it is clear that in all the above examples, the "extra" happiness or suffering (other than due to *kamma vipāka*) arose from **within one's own mind**. And *taṇhā* (attachment via greed or hate) was the cause of it. See, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- When we generate such "mind-made *vedanā,"* we also do *kamma* (via *abhisaṅkhāra*) that will bring more suffering in the future.
- The Buddha pointed out that when he described *dukkha* in the *Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta.* See, "Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta."

8. Thus all these feelings arise due to *taṇhā*, some form of attachment: greed (craving, liking) or hate (dislike); all these are due to *mano/vacī/kāya saṅkhāra*. The feelings (or rather, the perceptions that give rise to feelings) reside INSIDE oneself. It does not come from outside. We use external things to CAUSE happiness or suffering by our own volition.

- There is no inherent suffering or happiness in ANYTHING external; the sense contact with an external thing CAUSES pain or happiness depending on our *gati* and *āsavā*. An *Arahant*, who has removed all *āsavā*, will be free of such emotional responses.

Connection to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

9. It is also clear how the accumulation of *saṅkhāra* via *Paṭicca Samuppāda* leads to such varied feelings: If we attach to something with a "like" or a "dislike," we generate a mindset accordingly. That is *Paṭicca Samuppāda (pati + icca* leading to *sama + uppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction").

- If we attached to something with "greed", we act with that "greedy mindset." We will be happy if we get what we wanted. If we got "attached" to something with anger, we would have an "angry mindset" and would be happy if we remove whatever caused that anger.
- In either case, the strength of the feeling is also proportional to the strength of the "like" or "dislike": ***Sama uppāda* or *Samuppāda* means both in quality and quantity**; the higher the strength of "pati + ichcha", the higher the strength in "*sama + uppāda*".
- This is how we form habits ("*gati*") too. A teenager drinking alcohol with a bunch of friends gets attached to that setting and looks forward to having the same experience again. The more he repeats that activity, the more he gets "bonded", and thus forms a drinking habit. See, "Habits and Goals" and "Saṃsāric Habits and Āsavā."

The sequel to this post is at, "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa."

A deeper discussion on *vedanā* at: "Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka?," "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?," and "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."

6.4.10.5 Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa

December 11, 2015; Revised November 19, 2018

In this post, we will discuss an important classification of *vedanā* based on whether they arise due to *kamma vipāka* or our defiled thoughts (*saṅkhāra*).

1. This is a sequel to the previous post, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways," where we discussed how feelings arise due to *kamma vipāka* and also due to *mano saṅkhāra*.

- As discussed in several posts, we can avoid certain *kamma vipāka* from actually taking place by not making suitable conditions for them to appear, but some strong ones are hard to avoid; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

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- However, feelings (both good and bad) that arise due to *saṅkhāra* are totally avoidable, and *Arahants* are completely free of them. We discussed this in the previous post.
- Now let us discuss in detail what types of feelings arise due to those two causes.

2. First, let us discuss the feelings that we feel in **our physical bodies**.

- They include *sukha vedanā* such as bodily comforts one feels sleeping in a luxurious bed, eating tasty food, smelling nice odors, seeing something attractive, etc. They arise via the five physical senses.
- Then there are *dukha vedanā* that are again brought in via the five physical senses: injuries to the body, headaches, eating something untasteful, smelling a bad odor, hearing to an ear-piercing sound, etc.
- Both those types of *vedanā* are due to *kamma vipāka,* and *Arahants* feel them too. *Sukha vedanā* arise due to *kusala kamma vipāka* (past good deeds) and *dukha vedanā* arise due to *akusala kamma vipāka* (past bad deeds).
- **These *sukha* and *dukha vedanā* mainly exist in the *kāma loka*, where the dense bodies of the beings are sufficiently dense to impart them.** In fact, it is mainly in the lower five realms (including the human realm, that *dukha vedanā* exists as *kamma vipāka.* However, the worst types of *dukha vedanā* are in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*), and that is why a *Sotāpanna* is said to have overcome the worst of the suffering forever.
- In the *deva lokas*, it is mainly the *sukha vedanā* that results due to good *kamma vipāka*. That is why a *Sakadāgāmī* is never born at or below the human realm, and is said to become "healthy forever."
- In the *rūpa loka* and *arūpa loka,* beings mainly have *jhānic* pleasures. Thus an *Anāgāmī*, who will never be reborn in the *kāma loka*, is said to become "peaceful forever."

3. Some *vipāka vedanā* felt by the body are neutral. Furthermore, all *vipāka vedanā* coming through the other four physical senses are also neutral: *adhukkhama asukha* (without being painful or joyful, just neutral) *vedanā*, which are commonly called *upekkha vedanā.*

- It is important to note that these *adhukkhama asukha* or *upekkha vedanā* are the true reality of experience. *Vedanā* comes from ("*ve*" + "*danā*") which means "*veema danaveema*" (වෙම දැනෙ වෙම) in Sinhala. Basically, when we sense something via our six senses, we **become aware** that something happened, i.e., seeing a picture, hearing a sound, etc.; that is *vedanā*.
- For example, seeing a person X only leads to an *upekkha vedanā* for ANYONE initially.

4. However, within a fraction of a second of that seeing event, it COULD LEAD TO pleasant (*somanassa*) or unpleasant (*domanassa*) feelings DEPENDING ON WHO IS SEEING X. Person X's wife or child will generate *somanassa vedanā* upon seeing X. However, an enemy of X will generate *domanassa vedanā* upon seeing X.

- On the other hand, a total stranger (or an *Arahant*) will not generate either *somanassa* or *domanassa vedanā* upon seeing X, and that is the true reality, as mentioned in #3 above.
- Thus both *somanassa* and *domanassa vedanā* are MIND MADE, and arise due to *mano saṅkhāra*. And those *saṅkhāra* are generated based on one's own *gathi* and *āsavas*.
- In another example, if two people who are strong supporters of two opposing political parties see the leader of one political party, one will generate *somanassa vedanā* and the other will generate *domanassa vedanā* upon seeing that politician. **Thus, those feelings could not have resided with the politician, but arose entirely due to the *gathi* of those two people.**
- An *Arahant* will not generate either kind, because there is no attachment (or repulsion) to anything or anyone for an *Arahant*.
- This is a very important point that one could do insight meditation on.

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5. We also know that both *sukha* and *dukha vedanā* can LEAD TO *somanassa* and *domanassa vedanā* too. For example, When one gets a headache due to a *kamma vipāka*, one could be agonizing over how long that will last, whether that will prevent one from going to a party next day, etc. Those are *domanassa vedanā* due to that initial *dukha vedanā* from the headache.

- On the other side, when one eats a tasty piece of cake (good *vipāka vedanā*), one could be start thinking about buying more of that cake and enjoying it later; that gives rise to *somanassa vedanā.*
- Both the *domanassa vedanā* and the *somanassa vedanā* in the above two examples are totally mind-made, i.e., due to *saṅkhāra.*

6. Therefore, based on the three types of *vedanā* (*sukha vedanā, dukha vedanā, and upekkha vedanā*) that arise due to *kamma vipāka*, ADDITIONAL two types of *vedanā* (*somanassa* and *domanassa vedanā*) COULD arise depending on the *āsava* and *gathi* of the person experiencing them.

- Those feelings that we feel IN THIS LIFE due to *saṅkhāra* are MOSTLY two kinds: *somanassa vedanā* and *domanassa vedanā*. Those *saṅkhāra* also make *bhava* (via thoughts, speech and actions) and those give rise to *kamma vipāka* mostly in future lives but also in this life itself as we discuss below in #11.
- Thus rebirths are also generated via (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra* and that is how the cycle of rebirths is maintained. That is why it is called *saṃsāra* ("*san*" + "*sāra*," where "*sāra*" means "good"), i.e., one perceives that it is good to keep doing *saṅkhāra ("san" + "kāra",* where *"kāra"* or *"kriya"* is action).

7. This is why *Dukkha Sacca* (First Noble Truth) does not mean that we can ELIMINATE the *dukha vedanā* arising in our present physical body; those are due to *kamma vipāka* (the causes were already done).

- However, by gradually reducing *saṅkhāra* (with increased understanding of Buddha Dhamma), we can stop making new *saṅkhāra* and thus eliminate FUTURE suffering. This is the key to *dukkha sacca.* These *saṅkhāra* are also called *assāda* (*āsvāda* in Sinhala)*; see,* "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."

8. Still, we can reduce bad consequences from past *kamma vipāka* using what are called "strategies" ("*upakrama*") in Buddha Dhamma.

- One is to be mindful and not to let conditions for past *kamma vipāka* to take place. This is discussed in, "What Is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?" and "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya."
- If the *kamma vipāka* has already started imparting its effects (say, someone finds out that one has cancer), then one can work to alleviate that condition by using another related "strategy": One can get medical help and adopt a lifestyle that is opposes the spreading of the cancer. Even here what we are doing is to overcome this bad condition by making suitable environment for "opposing good *kamma vipāka*" to bear fruit. Thus, if one does not make an effort, the bad *kamma vipāka* will run its course and one may die in short time.

9. Each living being's body is designed to impart appropriate good and bad *kamma vipāka* suitable for the *kamma* seed that gave rise to that particular life.

- For example, an animal cannot implement "strategies" ("*upakrama*") to overcome most of its *kamma vipāka*. For example, it is unable to do anything about a wound (other than licking it) or to think about dragging its cot to a sunny spot (our dog likes to be in the sun but we have to move her cot!).
- Some animals have built-in defenses for their survival, but they cannot make them any better. For example, some birds instinctively know how to build a nest, but that "nest design" has not been improved by them over millions of years. And baby turtles "know" the way to the ocean and start trotting in the right direction minutes after their hatching; see, "How Character (Gathi) Leads to Bhava and Jathi."
- Animals also are unable to do strong good or bad *kamma*. Even though most animals kill other animals, that is not done with greed or hate, but just for survival. It is just like the instinct for the birds to build

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nests or the baby turtles to head in the right direction to the sea. In *Abhidhamma* language, they generate mostly, "*upekkha sahagata citta*" and those have much less *javana* power.

- Thus, animals cannot accumulate much good or bad *kamma*. Otherwise, they will never be able to escape that "*bhava*," since most survive by killing other animals. In the same way, whenever they get a "good life" (say as a human)– which is very rare — that is due to a good *kamma vipāka* done in a previous "good life."
- But not all animals are the same. Those "higher up" animals like monkeys can accumulate *kamma* than "lower ones" such as worms, and cats and dogs are somewhere in between.

10. The potency of human *saṅkhāra* comes from the ability of humans to generate both "*somanassa sahagata citta*" (thoughts with joy) for *kusala kamma* and *akusala kamma.* The *javana* power of those *citta* are very high.

- Thus when one is doing a good deed with joy, that brings much more merits compared to someone who is doing it just because others are doing it, i.e., with an "*upekkha sahagata citta*"; see, "A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Decrease Demerits (Akusala)."
- Even more strong *javana* arise when a good deed is done with knowledge that it will lead to good results and why, i.e., one knows right from wrong.
- But the most potent *javana* arise when a good deed is done with understanding of the *anicca* nature, i.e., when one does it with "*somanassa sahagata ñāṇa sampayutta citta*." Thus, *paññā* (or *ñāṇa*) comes from an understanding that is deeper than just knowing right from wrong.
- It works the other way around for bad deeds: the most potent *javana* (with high *kammic* power that can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*) are generated with "*somanassa sahagata diṭṭhi sampayutta citta*," i.e, thoughts with joy and **wrong vision**. A good example is someone who commits murder and enjoys and it is done with the *diṭṭhi* that such an action cannot bring bad consequences.
- But when one commits murder due to anger that is done with aversion and displeasure: "*domanassa sahagata paṭigha sampyutta citta*"; see, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

11. Now let us consider the consequences of *saṅkhāra* in this life, that we mentioned in #6 above. Suppose a teenager starts associating with bad friends and start drinking alcohol. Initially, he does not even like the taste of it, i.e., he may be generating a *domanassa vedanā* due to the taste of alcohol. But with the insistence of those friends he continues drinking.

- Then he makes a habit (*gathi*) of it, begins to perceive the taste as a *somanassa vedanā*, and starts making *saṅkhāra* about drinking. Even while in the middle of some other task, he starts thinking about the next party where he can drink, and what types of drinks there will be and so on.
- Now "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa"* step in the *paṭicca samuppāda* leads to making a "new *viññāṇa* for drinking." The more he thinks about such parties and generate those *somanassa vedanā*, the more *viññāṇa*, *nama rūpa*, etc that he makes for such "drinking events."
- And the stronger that "*viññāṇa* for drinking" gets, the more he will be thinking about it (making more *saṅkhāra*). Then the habit is strengthened; see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View."

12. Mind phenomena are complex. But with the background that we have accumulated, we can figure out some of the causes and possible effects. There is no need to memorize all these different terms; they will be carved into the memory as one contemplates and sorts out one's own experiences.

To summarize: *Sukha* and *dukha vedanā* arise due to *kamma vipāka*. *Somanassa* and *domanassa vedanā* arise due to *saṅkhāra*, which in turn arise due to our *gathi* and *āsavas*. The more *saṅkhāra* we do, the stronger a given *gathi* (habit) becomes, which in turn become *āsavas* (cravings) and fuel the *sansāric* journey (rebirth process). This vicious cycle can be broken only through comprehending the *anicca* nature of this world.

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6.4.10.6 What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex

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1. "*Kāma*" comes from "*kā*" meaning "eat or destroy" and "*ama*" means *Nibbāna*. In our human world, which is a part of "*kāma loka*," temptations for staying away from *Nibbāna* come from five physical senses.

- Some people believe "*kāma"* is just about engaging in sex. Some others believe attractive sense objects are "*kāma"* objects, and those lead to defilements. Both are not quite correct.
- While "attractive sense objects" can lead to "*kāma assāda*," the objects themselves don't have *kāma*. An *Arahant* is not tempted by any such object. [***assāda*** : [m.] mind-made pleasures {taste; enjoyment; satisfaction.}]
- While "attractive sense objects" can lead to "*kāma assāda*" or "mind-made pleasures", the objects themselves don't have *kāma*. An *Arahant* is not tempted by any such object.
- "*Kāma assāda*" or "sensual pleasures" are ASSOCIATED WITH our experiences through any of the five physical senses. But as we will see below, the Buddha specifically taught that "*kāma"* is a "made up pleasure."
- The lowest 11 realms are collectively called "*kāma loka"* because all such made up pleasures are available through all five physical senses in those realms.

2. We experience those external sense inputs in two ways:

- **We experience them directly**: For example, we see a person; hear a song; taste a piece of cake; smell a fragrance; someone we love gives a kiss. Those are actual sense contacts and are due to *kamma vipāka*.
- You may be surprised, but most of our "sense pleasures" or "*kāma assāda*" are created by our minds. A sense contact comes and goes away relatively quickly; but we keep thinking about it, sometimes for hours. **This "*kāma assāda*" is the one that we CREATE IN OUR MINDS,** via *saṅkhāra*.
- For example, we may just see an attractive item in a store display that provides a sensory pleasure while we are looking at it may be for a few seconds.
- But then we start thinking about how nice it would be to be able to buy it, enjoy it, and analyze how to go about paying for it, etc. We may be thinking about it for several days. Please take the time and contemplate on this. The initial sense contact of several minutes led to hours of thinking about it and making up "additional pleasure." That is ***kāma assāda.***

3. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Na Santi Sutta (SN 1.34)," the Buddha defined "*kāma"* as that second kind mentioned above: "*Na te kāmā yāni citrāni loke, Saṅkapparāgo purisassa kāmo*..."

Translated: "World's pretty things are not *kāma,* a person creates his/her own *kāma* by generating mind-made pleasures (*rāga sankalpanā*)..."

- Buddha said that this world has many attractive pictures, sounds, tastes, smells, and touches. But those are not "*kāma*." The initial sense experience could be pleasant, but it is a *kamma vipāka* (no *saṅkhāra* generated in the initial sense input).
- When one attaches to such a sensory experience and **keep thinking about them**, one makes "*saṅkappa rāga*" (සංකල්පිත රාග in Sinhala) about it (by generating *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*), that is "*kāma*." Each person generates his/her own *kāma* based on his/her *gathi* or *samsāric* habits/cravings.

4. Let us discuss what is meant by "*saṅkappa rāga*": *Sankappa* or *saṅkappa* means thoughts. *Rāga* means the craving for pleasures in *saṃsāra*; see, "Lobha, Rāga and Kāmacchanda, Kāmarāga."

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- Thus "*saṅkappa rāga*" means thinking about such sense pleasures and giving priority to them. We tend to think for hours about an actual sense experience that we enjoyed in the past or one that we are about to experience in the future.
- Sometimes we also think for hours about how to enjoy a certain sense experience that seems out of reach for various reasons. In all these cases, we can spend hours and hours thinking about them and getting *kāma assāda* (or "*āsvāda*" in Sinhala) from it.
- In fact, most times sexual enjoyment comes from just thinking about a past experience or an anticipated one. The actual contact pleasure is relatively short-lived.

5. As we pointed out in #2 above, **some actual sense contacts** arise due to *kamma vipāka* (good *kamma vipāka* lead to good sense experiences, and bad lead to bad). Actual sense contacts are relatively short-lived. Even the tastiest food, we can eat so much. Even if it is the most luxurious chair, you cannot sit there for too long. You can think about all types of sense experiences and they are relatively short-lived.

- Even an *Arahant* experiences such sense experiences due to *kamma vipāka*, both good and bad. He/she may eat tasty food when offered, ride in a luxurious car, or see eye-catching pictures while on the road.
- But he/she will not spend anytime afterwards thinking about such sense experiences, i.e., there is no "*saṅkappa rāga*."

6. It is relatively easy to distinguish between sense pleasures due to *kamma vipāka* and those due to *kāma assāda*.

- When one is offered a tasty meal, for example, that is due to a previous good *kamma*, i.e., it is a *kamma vipāka*. But when one starts thinking how good that meal was and start thinking about how to enjoy another such meal, that is *kāma assāda*.
- In the same way, one may be born to a wealthy family and get all types of luxurious sense contacts, those are *kamma vipāka*.
- Whether rich or poor, when one is thinking about acquiring and enjoying new sense pleasures or reminiscing on past sense pleasures, that is *kāma assāda.*

7. Now we have two questions.

A. Why is it OK to experience direct sense pleasures that **naturally comes** one's way, but not good to enjoy "made-up mental pleasures" by thinking about them? (It is important to realize that even those direct sense pleasures INITIATED by oneself do not count as harmless; when we think about it a bit, we realize that such instances have their beginnings at "*saṅkappa rāga*," i.e., one must have thought about to initiate it).

B. How can one experience an enjoyable sense pleasure and not be "tempted by it", i.e., not make "*saṅkappa rāga*"?

8. The answers to those two questions can be found in one explanation. But that requires analyzing the situation from a different vantage point than we are used to. This is the "Dhamma that has never been known to the world.." or "*pubbe ananussutesu Dhammesu...*"

- The *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycle starts with, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." **Those "made-up mental pleasures" or "*kāma assāda*" are precisely what *saṅkhāra* are.** These have bad consequences, or *adeenava*, through the rest of the *paṭicca samuppāda* (PS) cycle: "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*," "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*,…..up to "*jāti paccayā jara, marana, soka, parideva*,…." Thus the end point is suffering.
- **When we experience a "direct sense contact" that naturally comes our way, that is not *saṅkhāra* or *kāma assāda*. That is a *kamma vipāka*.** They do not lead to future suffering.

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- This is a critical point to understand and is explained in detail in "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa." Please read those again and make sure you understand the difference. If it is not clear, please let me know.

9. Now let us consider some examples to understand how even a sense-contact due to *kamma vipāka* can lead to "*kāma assāda*." In a given day, we are bombarded with millions of sensory inputs. But not all of them "grab our attention", and make us start thinking about them; more specifically, to start thinking about "getting more of it" of "how to acquire it so that it can be enjoyed at will."

- Why do certain sense inputs attract our attention more than others? A given sense input may tempt one person, but may not affect another at all. For example, one person may like heavy metal music, but another may be annoyed by it. We can think about many cases like that.
- But each person can be tempted by a set of sensory inputs that he/she has a liking for. For two people, these sets may overlap to some extent but there will be differences. That is because the *āsavas/anusaya* (or cravings) for each person is unique. They can change for a given person, but they define one's character at any given time. One can change one's *āsava/anusaya* by changing one's habits or "*gathi*." You can do a search on "*āsava, anusaya*, *gathi*, habits" and read the relevant posts.

10. The more *āsava/anusaya* one has, it is more likely that one's mind will be pulled in many different ways. This is the key reason for the scatteredness of our minds. Such a mind can be burdensome. This is called *tāpa* or "heat in the mind"; see, "Satipattana Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

- The *āsava/anusaya* can be compared to dirt at the bottom of a glass of water. If there is a lot of dirt, only a slight disturbance can make the dirt come up and make the water dirty. But if it is only a little bit, most minor disturbances may not make the water dirty.
- Just like that, the more *āsava/anusaya* one has, it will be easier to make the mind restless.
- On the other hand, if there is no dirt at the bottom of the glass, no matter what kind of disturbance it is, the water will remain pure. The mind of an *Arahant* is like that. He/she can live totally unaffected surrounded by the world's most tempting sense objects. There will be no "*saṅkappa rāga*" or *kāma assāda.* Of course he/she will experience the good/bad *kamma vipāka* same as others.

11. Now, one could say, "well, the more such *saṅkappa rāga* that I make, it is better. I don't mind if mind gets many such *assāda* in a given time."

- In order to analyze that, we need to look at the *ādīnava* (bad consequences) of such *asvāda*, other than mind being pushed and pulled in many directions as we discussed in the previous bullet.
- The problem is that each time we enjoy *kāma assāda,* we do *(abhi)saṅkhāra*, as we saw in #8 above. They lead to future suffering via the *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycle. This is what we have been doing in count-less number of births up to now.

12. That future suffering can arise both in this life as well as in future lives. It can materialize at different levels depending on the "strength of the *kāma assāda."*

- Let us start at the most extreme level. One decides that "I have to have this. I am going to do whatever it takes to get it." With such a mindset one can kill, steal, engage in sexual misconduct, lie, or make any number of other immoral acts with a "drunken mind."
- Of course, the bad consequences are many, even during this life. One could get caught and go to jail. Even otherwise, one will be under constant stress of worrying about being caught.
- But stronger consequences will follow in future lives as well, with interest. Thus a normal moral person can see the "*ādīnava*" in such strong *kāma assāda*.
- By contemplating on such "*ādīnava*," it becomes easier for one's mind to automatically reject doing such acts; this is "*nissarana*." Through an understanding of the consequences, one avoids such acts.

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13. At the next level, we may not do any of the immoral acts by body or speech speech, but may still accumulate *vacī saṅkhāra* via constantly thinking about them. It is important to realize that such conscious thoughts (*vitakka/vicāra*) are included in *vacī saṅkhāra*; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

- The problem with *vacī saṅkhāra* or *kāma assāda* is that they are addictive. One can spend hours and hours enjoying past sense events of perceived future events (especially involving sex, food, and also about one's enemies).
- And *vacī saṅkhāra* or *kāma assāda* appear to be harmless. No one else can know about them. One could spend hours on end generating *kāma assāda* about an object of interest and derive an enjoyment. But they have consequences.
- It must also be remembered that all those *kāya saṅkhāra* and *vacī saṅkhāra* that one suppressed by one's will power started off as *mano saṅkhāra*. Thus even though *dasa akusala* corresponding to speech and bodily actions were avoided, those due to *mano saṅkhāra* (thoughts that just come to one's mind) and then one normally "keeps going" by generating CONSCIOUS deliberate thoughts or *vacī saṅkhāra*, which can lead to actual speech and even bodily actions.
- Thus even though *dasa akusala* corresponding to speech and bodily actions were avoided, those due to *vacī saṅkhāra* (*kāma assāda*) would still count as bad *kamma*.
- This is why keeping the conventional five precepts is not sufficient; the hard part is to purify one's thoughts or the mind; see, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them."

14. A key problem with *vacī saṅkhāra* or the *kāma assāda* is that they lead to the formation of bad habits (*gathi*), which in turn lead to the formation of new *āsava/anusaya* or in strengthening old *āsava/anusaya;* see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)," and other related posts.

- It can become a vicious circle. In a way, this is the "wheeling process" of "*riya*" that sustains the cycle of rebirths; see, "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?."
- Even though those *vacī saṅkhāra* (*abhijjā [abhijjhā], vyāpāda, micchā diṭṭhi*) seem to be harmless, those can lead to birth in the *apāyā*.
- When one starts controlling such conscious thoughts (*vacī saṅkhāra*), one gati will gradually change, and then those "automatic bad thoughts" or *mano saṅkhāra* will become less and less frequent, because one's *āsava/anusaya* will gradually reduce.
- The best and permanent way to change *āsava/anusaya* is to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. When one realizes that "nothing in this world can be maintained to one's satisfaction in the long run" (*anicca*), one's mind automatically stops thinking about such "made up pleasures." We will discuss this more in upcoming posts.

6.4.10.7 Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccaya Vedana or Samphassa Ja Vedana

In posts with advanced concepts I have to use to many Pāli words. There are no short phrases in English to give the same meanings for phrases like "*samphassa jā vedanā*." Thus it will be beneficial to learn the meanings of these Pāli words and phrases, and also to be able to pronounce them if that seems to be helpful. I have included some audio files in the post, "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)." Here is how to pronounce the Pāli words in the title of this post:

WebLink: Listen to pronunciation of : kāma-āsvāda-phassa-paccaya-vedanā-samphassa-ja-vedanā

1. In the previous post, "What is Kāma? It is not Sex," we saw that *kāma* is not sex or even attractive sense objects, ear-pleasing sound, tasty food, nice smell, or a sensual body touch as many believe. ***Kāma* is basically *vacī saṅkhāra* about sense-pleasing objects (constantly thinking about those pleasures)** , whether it is an eye-catching object, ear-pleasing sound, tasty food, nice smell, or a body touch.

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- We saw that *kāma* (or *kāma assāda*) is *sankalpita rāga* which means **thinking about** such sense objects and giving priority to them. We also saw that such *kāma assāda* (or *assāda* in Sinhala) are *vacī saṅkhāra* that arise when our deep-seated *āsava/anusaya* (which are related to our habits or "*gati*") are triggered by certain sense inputs.
- Thus we can see that *kāma assāda*, *sankalpita rāga, vacī saṅkhāra* mean basically the same thing.
- **To re-emphasize:** *kāma assāda* are beyond actually experiencing those sense inputs that come our way due to good *kamma vipāka* (even though one would need to stay away from high-pleasure activities, because one could get used to them and make corresponding habits). *Kāma assāda* are craving and thinking and planning about such sense inputs.
- Some extreme *kāma assāda* (**or at least actions and speech initiated by them**) can be suppressed by understanding the bad consequences (*ādīnava*) of them.
- Without a Buddha appearing in the world, we would not even realize that even milder *kāma assāda* have bad consequences (*ādīnava*) too. Yet, they do have bad consequences as we saw in the previous post.

2. The critical point that we need to discuss now is how to prevent milder, but still harmful, *kāma assāda* from arising in our minds. We basically have to use the same tactic that was discussed both in the previous post and also in the introduction to this series, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa – Introduction."

- When a mind comprehends that certain actions are harmful, it avoids such actions. As we discussed in that introductory post, the best way to quit smoking is to fully understand the bad consequences of that habit. Another is to cultivate a good habit (say, listening/reading Dhamma) instead.
- In the previous post we discussed how we avoid immoral actions via speech and bodily actions by comprehending the bad consequences of such actions.
- In other words, the primary way to effectively remove bad habits (*nissaraṇa*) is to comprehend the bad consequences (*ādīnava*) of such *kāma assāda* from arising in our minds.

3. This is where another important aspect of Buddha "previously unheard Dhamma" comes into play. This unique message is that in addition to being harmful, *kāma assāda* are unfruitful in the long run. Even though we normally value them, when analyzed with the way the Buddha taught, we can see that they are just mind-made due to our ignorance of the true nature of this world.

4. It is important to understand the big difference between *vipāka vedanā* and *kāma assāda.* We cannot stop *vipāka vedanā* from arising; but we can stop *kāma assāda* by cleansing our minds.

Kāma assāda are normally triggered by a *vipāka vedanā.* Also, *kāma assāda* are **totally made up in our minds.** Let us take a simple example to gain more insight.

- Husband and wife are walking down the street and the wife stops and looks at a beautiful painting on display in a store window. Husband looks at it, shrugs his shoulders and wants to move on. It is somewhat expensive, so she is thinking about whether they can afford it right now, but she would really like to buy it. Husband has no interest in it, and thinks that it is a waste of money to buy it.
- They both saw the same painting as a *vipāka vedanā.* That was just the "seeing event", and as we will discuss in *Abhidhamma*, **most *vipāka vedanā* are neutral,** like seeing or hearing. The exceptions are bodily contacts, which can be either bodily *dukha vedanā* (like a cut or a headache) or *sukha vedanā* (like getting a massage or being in an air-conditioned room on a hot day) depending on whether it is bad or a good *vipāka.*
- Now, any "happy feeling" that was generated in the mind of the wife would have been due to *kāma assāda.* Such a "happy feeling" was not generated in the mind of the husband. This is an important point. The "happy feeling" that was generated in the wife could not have been a property of the painting; if so, it should have given the same "happy feeling" to the husband!

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5. Thus in the above particular case, only the wife started enjoying *kāma assāda* due to seeing the portrait. In other words, a *pavutti kusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycle operated only for the wife; it was triggered by her deep-seated craving (*assāda/anusaya*) for such an object, which made her act with *avijjā*.

- We could also state the same process by saying that "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*" was followed by "*thinnan saṅgati phasso*" and "*phassa paccayā vedanā*"; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- Now she is attached and deliberately looks at the picture, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step started and then went through the step, "*(san)phassa paccayā vedanā*" in a fraction of second; see, "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- However, for the husband, who saw the same portrait, there was no *assāda/anusaya* for such an object to "attach to it" and to act with *avijjā* and to initiate those processes; also see, ""Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis – Do We Always Act with Avijjā?."
- For some, this may be crystal clear but those who are not very familiar with the concepts may want to review those relevant posts.

6. Now that she is "attached" to the portrait, the wife keep looking at it for a while, which will lead to numerous such *pavutti akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycles. Not only that, she will be enjoying "*kāma assāda*" about that picture even after they left that place by thinking back about it. Now she has made a "*viññāṇa*" and a "*bhava*" for it.

- That "*kāma assāda*" can resurface with *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles that involve only the mind when she is at home: It starts with "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*," i.e., she just remembers the portrait while washing dishes. How does she start thinking about the portrait when she was busy with some other task?
- One way to explain that is to say that "she had 'cultivated' a *viññāṇa"* for that portrait and now it can resurface sometimes even without a prompt. This is sometimes known as the "subconscious"; see, "3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."
- Another way to explain it by saying that she had made a "*bhava*" for liking that portrait and it is a *dhamma* that can enter the mind when the conditions are right: "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*." However, that particular *dhamma* or concept or thought would never make contact with the mind successfully if she was listening to a discourse or thinking about a key concept like *anicca*. Since she was doing a task that did not motivate her much (washing dishes) that is an opportunity for such "subconscious *viññāṇa*" to come to the surface.

7. Of course, now that "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*" step will be followed by, "*thinnan san gati phasso*" and "(*san*)*phassa paccayā vedanā*"; see, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa." Her "*gati*" for liking such pictures will make her mind "*samphassa*," which in turn will lead to "*samphassa paccayā vedanā*" or "*samphassa jā vedanā*."

- This is a *vedanā* that her husband will not get. He did not make a "*viññāṇa*" or a "*bhava*" for that portrait and thus it will not come to his mind.

8. Now, suppose that a week later they are walking by the same store. The wife remembers the portrait, but finds that it is no longer there; someone had bought it. Now, think about what happens to the two of them.

- The wife will be distraught: "I should have bought it; now I may not be able to find such a nice portrait." But the husband will not have any bad feelings, except may be some bad feelings about his wife not been able to get what she wanted.
- This is the suffering that we can stop from arising even in this life. It is not a *vipāka vedanā*, but a "*samphassa jā vedanā*." The wife got distraught only because she got attached to that portrait, but the husband did not.

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9. I just gave a very simple example from real life. Of course it is a relatively insignificant "*taṇhā*" without drastic consequences. I just wanted to use it, because most people can understand it. Of course the consequences can be much harsher if one gets attached to something of more significant, keep thinking about it and make that "*viññāṇa* grow", and eventually does something bad to acquire it.

- a) For example, X who "falls in love" with Y, may be thinking about it all day and make a "very strong greedy *viññāṇa*" about X. So, X makes all kinds of plans in his/her mind about Y, and the more he/she does it, the more strong that *viññāṇa* gets.
- b) The more strong that *viññāṇa* is it is more likely to "come to his/her mind" because it is a *dhamma* that is constantly hovering around his/her mind (or in the subconscious). It is easy to start more PS process with "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*."

10. Note the difference between a) and b) above. In a), the process starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" when X first thinks about Y and starts thinking about Y with *avijjā* and gets "bonded to Y" in his/her mind. At this point, a "baby *viññāṇa*" is formed about Y.

- Now, since it is at an early stage, this "baby *viññāṇa* for Y" may not trigger "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*" (process b) often. And that *viññāṇa* may start dying out if X does not get to think about Y for a while.
- But if X sees Y again in a few days, then that "baby *viññāṇa* for Y" gets fed again. The sight of Y makes X to go through many PS cycles and strengthen that "*viññāṇa* for Y."
- If X gets to see Y often and may be even to "hang out with Y", that "*viññāṇa* for Y" will grow because now X is giving it a lot of food (*āhāra*).
- Now with a "strong *viññāṇa* for Y", X's mind will be constantly being with "*dhamma* about Y" and it is more likely that "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*" will be triggered even while X is doing something else.

11. Then one day, X hears that Y has got engaged to another person. What will happen to X? He/she will be highly distraught, and depending on the level of attraction (and X's *gati*), X may do something bad.

- For example, if the attraction (level of *taṇhā*) was very strong, AND if X has "violent character" (i.e., "violent *gati*"), then X may hurt Y or the person that Y got engaged to. Then not only will X be suffering due to "loss of Y", but would also have made causes for FUTURE SUFFERING by committing a bad *kamma*.

12. Now we can see how both *taṇhā* and *gati* are two critical issues. Both those can be lessened by contemplating on the bad consequences (*ādīnava*) of acting foolishly.

- And that can be done on a permanent basis by comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Then one's *gati* will change permanently to the "moral *gati*" of a *Sotāpanna*, and one will never do anything that will lead to the birth in the *apāyā*. Even though a *Sotāpanna* may still generate "*samphassa jā vedanā*," due to some sense inputs, those will be milder and thus any suffering incurred would be mild.
- I hope that it is clear from this discussion that it is impossible to forcibly suppress *kāma assāda* or thoughts about sense objects. The only way it can be done is via purifying the mind by learning Dhamma (especially *anicca* nature of this world) and thinking about the bad consequences of such thoughts (*ādīnava*). This is what the Buddha realized as the *āsavakkhaya ñāṇa*, the way to get rid of *āsava* (and *anusaya*) via getting rid of bad habits (*gati*) and cultivating good habits (*gati*).
- And this is discussed in the meditation (*bhāvanā*) section under, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

6.4.11 Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?

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In this post, we will discuss why interpretations of two key concepts — *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *saṃyojana* — in many current English publications (including supposedly *Theravāda* texts) are incorrect.

Difference Between Wrong Views and Wrong Perceptions

1. Most texts describe *sakkāya diṭṭhi* as "self-illusion" or "personality belief," i.e., "belief that a self or I exist" (you can Google "*sakkāya diṭṭhi*" and see). **Here it is essential to understand that there is a difference between "wrong view" and "wrong perception."** A *Sotāpanna* would have removed the wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), but not the false perception (*saññā*.)

- But this **perception (*saññā*)** of a "self" (or a "soul" which is also called "*ātma*") is NOT *sakkāya diṭṭhi* per *Tipiṭaka* as we discuss below. That is a *saññā* (perception) that we have carried from life-to-life. For a discussion on *saññā*, see, "What is Saññā (Perception)?."
- The deeply-embedded idea of a "self" or an innate sense of "me" is rooted in the *māna cetasika*.
- If one gets offended if treated with disrespect, that means one still has *māna* left. Even an *Anāgāmī* could be somewhat perturbed if he/she perceives to be treated badly. A component of *māna* — called *asmi māna* — is still left at the *Anāgāmī* stage. *Māna* is removed not at the *Sotāpanna* stage, but the *Arahant* stage.

A *Sotāpanna* Removes Only Wrong Views About an "Unchanging Self"

2. What is removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage is the **wrong view (*diṭṭhi*)** that there is something unchanging and permanent like a "soul" is associated with oneself. That goes with the belief that lasting happiness can be achieved by just living a moral life (even though that is essential.)

- When one can see that there is no "real essence" (like a "soul" or a "*ātma*") associated with a living being, this **wrong view** of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* goes away. A life-stream evolves, according to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*; see, "Anattā in Anattalakkhaṇa Sutta – No Soul or a Ātma."
- Therefore, it is incorrect to believe that the **perception** of a "self" will go away at the *Sotāpanna* stage. It is also dangerous, because one is trying to do something that is **not possible** to do at that stage. It is like a child in the primary school trying to get a Ph.D.

Sotāpanna Stage – Four Conditions

3. In the post, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala," we discussed the four conditions that need to satisfied to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.

- With fulfilling those conditions, one will break through *three saṃyojana* (mental bonds) and be permanently released from rebirths in the *apāyā* (four lowest realms). The Pāli word *saṃyojana* (or *sanyojana* or *sanyoga*) is usually translated as "fetters." See, for example, the Wikipedia article: "WebLink: WIKIPEDIA: Fetter (Buddhism)."
- But as in many English publications (books, internet posts), the above Wikipedia article misdescribes *saṃyojana*.

4. We are bound to the 31 realms in this world by **ten "mental tethers"** or ***saṃyojana***. It can be visualized as someone attached to a post by a rope, except that there is no one else that forcibly bind us to the 31 realms.

- *Sanyojana* or *sanyoga* ("*san*" + "*yoga*" where "*yoga*" means to bind) means bound via "*san*"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."
- We voluntarily bind ourselves to this world with our minds, because we believe that somewhere in these 31 realms we can find permanent happiness.

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- **Most people think they can find happiness in this life itself!** They don't even pause to contemplate what happens when one gets old and helpless. If one takes time to observe, there are many examples around: famous, wealthy, and powerful, became disabled at old age, and died a miserable death.

Three *Saṃyojana* Removed

5. A *Sotāpanna* breaks through 3 of those ten *saṃyojana* — or "bonds" or "tethers" — and gets permanently released from the four lowest realms (*apāyā*). He/she does this by comprehending the true nature of this world, i.e., attaining *sammā diṭṭhi*.

The keyword "***sammā***" comes from "***san***" + "***mā***," which means "to become free of ***san***." For example:

- "***Mā*** *hoti jāti, jāti*," means "may I be free of repeated birth."
- "***Mā*** *me bāla samāgamo*" means "may I be free of association with those who are ignorant of Dhamma."
- Thus *sammā diṭṭhi* is to be free of wrong views. One gets some level of *sammā diṭṭhi* at the *Sotāpanna* stage and completes it at the *Arahant* stage.

Importance of Comprehending the Unfruitful/Dangerous Nature of This World (*Tilakkhaṇa*)

6. One has to break those bonds in one's mind. One gains *sammā diṭṭhi* — right view to become free of '*san*' — by comprehending the true nature of this world of 31 realms.

Anicca – that nothing in this world can bring permanent happiness in the long run.

Dukkha – despite our struggles, we will be subjected to much more suffering than pleasures if we remain in the rebirth process.

Anatta – therefore, one is truly helpless in this struggle to attain "something of the essence in this world." That is just an illusion.

- See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

Two Eightfold Paths

7. It is essential to realize that there are two Eightfold Paths with two types of *sammā diṭṭhi*. See, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."

- One first needs to reach a "moral mindset" by staying away from immoral acts embedded in the five precepts. That is attaining "mundane *sammā diṭṭhi*."
- Then one's mind is cleansed enough to comprehend the Three Characteristics of this world: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- When one gains this "*lokuttara sammā diṭṭhi*" to some extent, one will indeed start on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- This distinction is hard to perceive for many people. I encourage them to read the first few subsections of the "Living Dhamma" section.

8. Now let us discuss how gaining *lokuttara sammā diṭṭhi* leads to the removal of three of the ten mental tethers (or fetters) that bind us to the rebirth process. In particular, to be released from the worst types of suffering in the *apāyā*.

- Those three *saṃyojana* are *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (also called *sathkāya diṭṭhi*), *vicikicchā*, and *silabbata parāmāsa*.

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Two Prevailing Major Wrong Views

9. The Buddha discussed 62 types of *diṭṭhi* that were present during that time in the *Brahmajāla Sutta*. We don't need to address all of them today, because there are only two of those wrong views that are prevalent today.

- Religious people (Creator-based religions), believe that there is a "permanent soul," and one will be born in heaven or hell forever after this life. This idea of a "*āthma*" or a "self" was the *sassata diṭṭhi*.
- Science today believes that our thoughts arise in our brains, i.e., our mental body is the same as the physical body ("I am my body"). So, when we die, that is the end of the story because the physical body becomes dust; so they say, "enjoy life while it lasts." That was the "*uccheda diṭṭhi*" (pronounced "uchcheda") that the Buddha also rejected: "Life terminating with the death of the physical body."
- Thus the Buddha rejected both wrong views that "a self exists" and "a self does not exist." Things can exist due to causes, and if those causes do not exist, they cease to exist. That is the principle of cause and effect explained in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Beings exist due to *avijjā* and *taṇhā*, and they cease to exist when those cease to exist and reach permanent happiness (i.e., attain *Nibbāna*).

10. Even those religious people may subconsciously have that part of the *uccheda diṭṭhi* of "I am my physical body."

- Our increasingly materialistic societies always feed this narrative — that it is so important to look beautiful and robust because my body is what I am — via television and movies.
- In other words, *sakkāya diṭṭhi* in the present day is rooted in the view of "I am my physical body." That leads to the perception, "I can achieve happiness by providing a lot of pleasurable sense inputs to my body."

Meaning of *Sakkāya* or *Sathkāya*

11. "*Sath*" means "good" or "fruitful."

- And *kāya* can mean either one's actions or one's body, as we discussed in *Kāyānupassanā;* see, "Kāyānupassanā – Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)."
- *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* encompasses mainly two views: (i) "I am my body," and I need to keep it beautiful above all. (ii) I can achieve happiness by diligently pursuing (good) things in this world.
- This view is of course related to the perception of *nicca*. **That it is possible to maintain things to our liking or *icca* (or *icchā*.)** See, "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – "Me and Mine" View"

Getting Rid of *Sakkāya Diṭṭhi*

12. Therefore, getting rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* in the present day requires one to realize that this physical body is "just a shell" that we have possession of only for about 100 years.

- That is why it is essential to realize the role played by our mental body, *gandhabba*, which could live for thousands of years. But that also will cease to exist when we grasp a new existence (*bhava*) at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment when the *gandhabba* itself dies.
- Our next existence depends not on how well we keep our physical bodies (they need to be healthy), but how well we "improve" our mental body. Learning *Dhamma* and living according to that *Dhamma* helps with the latter.
- I have given a more straightforward explanation of *gandhabba* at the "Living Dhamma" section: "Mental Body – Gandhabba," and there is a separate section in the *Abhidhamma* section that goes into more detail.

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13. The second view associated with *sakkāya diṭṭhi* in #10 above. That one can achieve happiness by diligently pursuing things in this world. *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* can only be removed by comprehending the "*anicca* nature."

- See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- When one comprehends *anicca*, one realizes that no matter what we do, staying in the rebirth process leads to net suffering. Even though there are bouts of happiness to be had, those will be insignificant to suffering in the long run, especially when one is (inevitably) born in the *apāyā*.

Cūḷavedalla Sutta (MN 44)

14. It should be noted that a full explanation of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* is given in the *Cūḷavedalla Sutta* (Majjhima Nikāya 44) where Ven. Dhammadinna explains it to her former husband Visakha:

"..*Kathaṃ panāyye, sakkāyadiṭṭhi hotī"ti? "Idhāvuso visākha, assutavā puthujjano, ariyānaṃ adassāvī ariyadhammassa akovido ariyadhamme avinīto, sappurisānaṃ adassāvī sappurisa-dhammassa akovido sappurisadhamme avinīto,* ***rūpaṃ attato samanupassati, rūpavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā rūpaṃ, rūpasmiṃ vā attānaṃ****. Vedanaṃ ... pe ... saññaṃ ... saṅkhāre ... viññāṇaṃ attato samanupassati, viññāṇavantaṃ vā attānaṃ, attani vā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇasmiṃ vā attānaṃ. Evaṃ kho, āvuso visākha, sakkāyadiṭṭhi hotī"ti.*

- First, it is essential to realize that "*atta*" in the above verse used in the conventional sense, to denote "I."
- What we have discussed regarding "I am my body" is stated in the bold text above that can be translated as: **"I am my body, my body is me, my body is in me, I am in my body"; see,** "Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma." Thus one may see one's *rūpakkhandha* as one's "*attā*" in four ways.
- In the same way, some people could take one's *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* to be oneself in four ways as above. All these mental components give rise to the idea that "I remember this and that happened to me a long time ago; so there must be a continuation of me until the body dies." Therefore, this wrong view encompasses 20 types of ("*visativatthuka*") *sakkāya diṭṭhi*."
- The French Philosopher Rene Descartes famously said, "I think; therefore I am"; he proposed that those thoughts arise in the pineal gland in the brain. That is a part of *uccheda diṭṭhi*.

Two Meanings of *Atta*

15. When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one "sees with wisdom" (becomes "*dassanena sampanno*") that it does not make sense to take the stand "I am my body," etc. as above.

- However, "just seeing" that it makes sense, and verifying and experiencing that to be accurate, are two different things. One finally confirms that to be accurate and thereby gets rid of the perception of "me" (called "*asmi māna*") only at the *Arahant* stage.
- There was a lengthy discussion on this issue at the discussion forum. I recommend reading it since it is not possible to put it in a short post like this; see, "WebLink: Wrong English translations of Aniccha, Anatta, Sakkāya diṭṭhi."

16. The confusion in conventional translations of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* seems to arise when they try to connect "*atta*" in the above verse ("*rūpaṃ attāto*") as the opposite of "*anatta*" in *Tilakkhaṇa*. ***Atta*** **has two meanings**: one meaning is "I" or "myself" as in "*Atta Hi Attano Nātho*" ("only I can be of salvation to myself"), and that is the meaning implied in the above verse.

- The other meaning of "*atta*" is "in control" or "has an essence", and the opposite of that is the *anatta* in *Tilakkhaṇa*: "one is helpless in this rebirth process."

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- Those two meanings are explained in "Attā Hi Attano Nātho" and in detail in, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?."
- That is why one needs to be cautious when using Pāli dictionaries. **One cannot define and fix the meaning of a Pāli word.** One HAS TO KNOW the context; see, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?."

What is *Vicikicchā*?

17. The second *saṃyojana* removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage is *vicikicchā*. Does it means doubts about the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha as explained in many translations? It is informative to see how such doubts are related to the *Tilakkhaṇa*.

- *Vicikicchā* comes from *vi+chi+ki+icchā*. Our distorted views (*diṭṭhi*) that worldly things can lead to happiness lead to our liking ("*iccā*") for them. We then take actions ("*ki*" or "*kriya*") are based on our craving. And, "*Cha*" means *citta* or the way we think, here based on such *diṭṭhi*. In this case, "*vi*" means "distorted" (වැරදි in Sinhala.) **Therefore, to engage in actions (and thoughts) based on the wrong view that it is possible to maintain things to our liking is *vicikicchā*.** See, #11 above.
- Therefore, *vicikicchā* goes away simultaneously with the loss of *sakkāya diṭṭhi*.
- One dissociates from such wrong views by comprehending "*anicca* nature." When one becomes a *Sotāpanna*, one automatically sees the "fruitlessness" in many immoral or inappropriate actions. One truly knows deep down that most of our efforts in pursuing sense pleasures are in vain. However, until one becomes an *Anāgāmī*, one is still attached to sense desires.
- For example, a *Sotāpanna* may still engage in sex, but will not engage in immoral sexual activities outside marriage. While the first can still lead to one's rebirth in the human and *deva* realms, the latter can lead to births in the *apāyā*. A *Sotāpanna* is released only from the *apāyā*.
- In other words, if one has *vicikicchā*, one MAY do immoral *apāyagāmī* actions under tempting conditions. But a *Sotāpanna* is INCAPABLE of doing such actions under ANY circumstance. A *Sotāpanna* will not have any doubts about which activities are really immoral.

What is *Silabbata Parāmāsa*?

18. The third *saṃyojana*, *silabbata parāmāsa,* is the wrong view that *Nibbāna* can be attained by following specific precepts/rituals. They include five or eight precepts (or just by doing good things).

- Attaining *Nibbāna* REQUIRES *lokuttara sammā diṭṭhi*. To achieve *lokuttara sammā diṭṭhi*, one needs to grasp the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*). See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- When one comprehends *anicca*, one stays away from immoral actions. That happens not because one is firmly adhering to a set of precepts or rituals. Now one knows deep inside that such activities are fruitless and dangerous in the long run.
- However, following precepts (i.e., staying away from immoral deeds) is necessary to get to mundane *sammā diṭṭhi*. That enables one's mind cleansed enough to be able to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*.

Kāma Rāga NOT Removed at *Sotāpanna* Stage

19. Finally, a *Sotāpanna* needs to break two more *saṃyojana* or bonds — *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* — to become free of the *kāma loka*. Only an *Anāgāmī* is free of rebirth anywhere in the *kāma loka*, which includes human and six *deva* realms.

- The last five *saṃyojana* (including the perception of a "self" or *māna*) will be removed only at the *Arahant* stage; see, "The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How Root Causes are Removed."

July 24, 2020: A detailed discussion at "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" and "Origin of Life."

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6.4.12 Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmi Citta

1. First I need to clarify the title. Of course, *citta* (pronounced "chittha") are thoughts. All *kamma* start as *mano saṅkhāra*, i.e., one starts thinking about something and it escalates into speech and bodily action by the "wheeling" or "*riya*" process; see, "Nibbāna – Stopping of the Sansāric Vehicle."

- The complete cessation of doing *saṅkhāra* happens only when one becomes an *Arahant*. But after attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, this "wheeling process" stops for certain types of initial thoughts or *citta*.

2. We have seen that *apāya* is a common word for the lowest four realms of existence, see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." *Apāyagāmī* ("*apāya*" + "*gāmī*" means directed towards) *citta* are those that lead to potent *kamma* responsible for rebirth in the lowest four realms.

3. So, what *cittā* or thoughts gets one started on the "wheeling process" or a "thought process" that leads to speech or bodily action of very bad consequences, i.e., birth in the *apāyā*? These are thoughts that arise because one does not have a full understanding of the "nature of this world", i.e., the *Tilakkhaṇa*, or *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

Out of the 89 possible citta (see, "The 89 Types of Citta") 12 are immoral *citta*:

- 8 with the *lobha* (greed) root; *moha* root is there too.
- 2 with the *dosa* (hate, ill will) root; *moha* root is there too.
- 2 with just the *moha* (ignorance) root.

ALL TEN immoral acts (*dasa akusala*; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)") are done with these 12 types of *citta*.

4. We generate greedy thoughts because we "want to get possession of things that seem to provide happiness." When we do not get what we want, we generate hate or ill will towards whoever Is in the way.

- And we do both types of actions because we do not realize that it is not possible to achieve lasting happiness with anything in "this world." Not only that, but we also do not realize that by doing those bad actions we accumulate bad *kamma* (i.e., accumulate *kammic* energy) that are going to have bad consequences in the future, either in this very life or in future lives.
- Thus ignorance of the true nature of 'this world" is the cause of all bad actions done with greed and hate; this is why the *moha* root is in all of them. We also do certain bad actions just based on ignorance too, like comparing how one is "better" than another, etc.

A. The two ignorance-rooted citta are:

- One associated with *vicikicchā* (*vichi+ki+ichcha* = liking based on the distorted view, i.e, *diṭṭhi*). Commonly *vicikicchā* is described as "doubt", which could be taken as "doubt about the true world view." Just like a fish biting on a bait due to not "seeing" the hook, we just grab things without "seeing" the consequences, i.e., possible harm to others and the consequences of such harmful actions for ourselves.
- One associated with *uddhacca* (restlessness or agitation of the mind). This is the opposite of *samādhi* or the ability to concentrate and be able to think through the consequences of actions. One could have *uddhacca* even if one knows the "true nature" of this world; it is sort of a cumulative result of all defilements accumulated through beginning-less *saṃsāra*. This is completely removed only at the *Arahant* stage.

All 12 types of *citta* have ignorance as a root (primary as in the above two types) or as secondary in the other ten *citta*. These ten *citta* can be divided into two categories in another way, i.e., based on whether such *cittā* arise mainly due to *vicikicchā* (i.e., due to not knowing the true nature of this world) or *uddhacca* (i.e., the agitation of the mind due to all accumulated defilements).

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B. Out of the eight greed-rooted citta, four arise with wrong view (*diṭṭhi*), i.e., due to lack of understanding of the "true nature of this world", and that "this world" is much more complex than we perceive with our senses, and that our life does not end here, but what we do will have consequences for very long times into the future. The other four are done anyway, even with the right view, because of the agitation of the mind due to all "gunk" accumulated over the long *sansāric* journey. Thus the eight greed-based citta can be divided into two broad categories:

- Four done with wrong views (*diṭṭhi*) are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Four dissociated from wrong view (i.e., it does not matter whether one has right view if defilements still cloud the mind; for example even one who has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage may do these four)

C. The two hate-rooted citta are also done regardless of whether one has the right view (at the *Sotāpanna* stage) or not:

- These two hate-rooted *citta* are dissociated with wrong views, but are due to the agitated mind (*uddhacca*). Thus they persist after the *Sotāpanna* stage, up to th *Anāgāmī* stage.

Now we can see the broad view:

5. Five *cittā* (*vicikicchā* and the four greed-rooted *citta* associated with wrong view) arise because one does not know the true nature of the world, *Tilakkhaṇa*, i.e, *anicca, dukkha, anatta.* They contribute to one of the four types of *āsava* called the *diṭṭhi āsava or diṭṭhāsava.*

These are the same *citta* that could lead to *apāyagāmī kamma*. Thus when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, these five *citta* cease to arise forever, and one WILL NOT BE ABLE to do any such grave *kamma*. Thus, the *Sotāpanna* stage is a very important stage of *Nibbāna* where *āsavakkhaya* happens to a significant level due to the removal of *diṭṭhāsava*:

- A *Sotāpanna* attains that stage just by getting rid of *diṭṭhi* or wrong views: *sathkāya (or sakkāya) diṭṭhi* is the view that lasting happiness can be attained via pursuing things in this world. *Vicikicchā* is leads to tendencies and actions associated with wrong worldviews, and *sīlabbata parāmāsa* is the view that *Nibbāna* can be attained by following specific precepts/rituals without cleansing the mind.
- The other seven *citta* are the ones that are harder to remove. They arise due to an agitated mind which is a result of other defilements (*āsavas*) that we have accumulated over the long *saṃsāra*; see. "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of āsavas."
- Out of these, the two hate-rooted *citta* are lessened in strength at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and are removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage.
- The remaining four greed-rooted *citta* (those dissociated from wrong views) contribute to *kamaraga* (greed for things in the *kamaloka*). *Kamaraga* is lessened at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and completely removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage. Thus an *Anāgāmī* is unable to generate hateful thoughts or lustful thoughts and is free from rebirth anywhere in the *kamaloka*. An *Anāgāmī* has removed *kamasava*, another part of the *āsava*.
- Finally, it is only at the *Arahant* stage that those remaining four greed-rooted *citta* (which still contribute to *bhavasava*) and the *uddhacca citta* (which still contribute to *avijjasava*) are completely removed. This is when all the defilements or *āsavas* are completely removed from one's mind.

6. It is clear that all five *akusala citta* that are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage arise due to *micchā diṭṭhi*, i.e., not comprehending the Three Characteristics of existence: *anicca, dukkha, anatta.* Also see, "Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)."

7. This realization of correct views CANNOT be attained by following rituals, such as just obeying precepts. It comes naturally when one COMPREHENDS the true nature of this world of 31 realms: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." That it is unfruitful to involve in any kind of activities to gain mundane

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pleasures by hurting other beings. Such an understanding makes irrevocable changes in one's *manomaya kāya*, and thus prevents one from doing such activities even in the future lives.

8. Now it is important to realize that a *Sotāpanna* can be a parent taking care of a family. He/she will be doing a job, driving kids to school, and doing all other daily tasks. But one does all this with the clear understanding that one should NOT do certain things. One could live a moral life suitable for a *Sotāpanna* without giving up ANY responsibilities as a regular "householder." Actually one could even attain the *Anāgāmī* stage without becoming a *bhikkhu*. And there were many "householders" that had attained *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī* stages at the Buddha's time; there are some even today.

6.4.13 What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?

Revised May 10, 2017;December 1, 2017; July 7, 2018; August 16, 2019

1. Upon attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, *micchā diṭṭhi* (the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* together with wrong views of *nicca, sukha, atta*) is COMPLETELY removed. That is one *akusala* out of *dasa akusala.* But that itself accounts for more than 99% of *akusala* (defilement) from one's mind since the "*apāyagāmi* strength" of other nine *akusala kamma* are also removed.

- This illustrates the importance of removing *micchā diṭṭhi*, and why I have so many posts on that. Also, see the first discourse in, "Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses."
- Some people think a *Sotāpanna* is incapable of breaking the five precepts based on an incorrect translation of the WebLink: suttacentral: Gihi Sutta (AN 5.179). The relevant verse is: "*..ariyasāvako pāṇātipātā* ***paṭivirato*** *hoti, adinnādānā* ***paṭivirato*** *hoti, kāmesumicchācārā* ***paṭivirato*** *hoti, musāvādā* ***paṭivirato*** *hoti, surāmerayamajjapamādaṭṭhānā* ***paṭivirato*** *hoti.*"
- **However, "*pativirato hoti*" does not mean "abstains from" as translated at many online sites**; it means "does not do with liking." Thus, a *Sotāpanna* may — under some conditions — break the five precepts. It is only an *Arahant* that will not break five precepts or engage in any of *dasa akusala*.
- The five precepts have deeper meanings too: "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them."

2. The six things that a *Sotāpanna* will not do per "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahudhātuka Sutta (MN 115)":

- Killing one's mother.
- Killing one's father.
- Killing an *Arahant*.
- Injuring a Buddha.
- Causing *saṅgha bheda* (spreading wrong Dhamma is included here).
- Taking refuge in anyone other than a Buddha (i.e., believing in other ways of "salvation").

3. *Nakhasikha Sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya*), **describes the vast amount of defilement** removed by a *Sotāpanna*.

- One time the Buddha picked up a little bit of dust with the tip of his fingernail, and asked the *bhikkhus*, "What do you think *bhikkhus*? Which is greater: the little bit of dust I have picked up with the tip of my fingernail, or the soil in this great Earth?."
- Of course the *bhikkhus* answered that the amount of soil in this Earth is vastly more massive than the bit of dust picked up on a fingernail.
- Then the Buddha told the *bhikkhus* that the number of defilement that a *Sotāpanna* has removed could be compared to the soil in the whole Earth. The amount that he/she has left to remove can be compared to the bit of dust on his fingernail.
- Therefore, the amount of suffering a *Sotāpanna* has left in future rebirths is insignificantly small.

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- There is a decent online explanation of the *sutta* that one can look up: WebLink: ACCESSTOINSIGHT: Nakhasikha Sutta: The Tip of the Fingernail

4. Another simile is in the *Sineru sutta* of the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. "The amount of suffering a *Sotāpanna* has to endure can be compared to **seven grains of sand** on top of mount Sineru. In comparison, the amount of suffering a normal human has left to endure is sand in the whole mountain."

- That is logical, of course, since the suffering encountered in the *niraya* is never ceasing. One birth in the *niraya* (hell) would lead to much more suffering than thousands, millions of births in the human or higher realms.
- A *Sotāpanna* will NEVER be reborn in the four lowest realms. Furthermore, he/she will have only **seven future *bhava*** left, and those in the human realm or the realms above it.

5. That may be why most people tend to think that attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage requires attaining *jhānā*, all sorts of *abhiññā* powers, etc. **None of that is a requirement for achieving the *Sotāpanna* stage.**

- But at least half of the ten evils (*dasa akusala*) must be removed to become a *Sotāpanna*? No. It turns out that a *Sotāpanna* removes only one of the *dasa akusala*, that of *niyata micchā diṭṭhi*. Of course, in achieving that, a *Sotāpanna* would have reduced the "*apāyagāmī* strength" of most of the other *dasa akusala*. That is the key to understand. In particular, *abhijjā [abhijjhā] or lobha* is reduced to *rāga* level and *vyāpāda or dosa* is reduced to *paṭigha* level; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."
- For a discussion on *dasa akusala*, see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)." As discussed in that post, *Niyata Micchā Diṭṭhi* (**established** wrong views) is an *akusala* done with the mind.
- A *Sotāpanna* is said to have achieved "*dassanena pahatabba*" or removal of defilement via correct vision. He/she has removed an unimaginably vast amount of evils ("*keles*" or "*kilesa*" or "*klesha*") with the removal of *micchā diṭṭhi*, or attaining the first stage of *Sammā Diṭṭhi*: the true nature of this world of 31 realms.
- How a *Sotāpanna* reduces *dasa akusala* via getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi* "to overcome *apāyagāmī citta*" is discussed in "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." Here is it described how five out of the 12 *akusala citta* do not arise after the *Sotāpanna* stage; those are the five that lead to birth in the *apāyā*.

6. **This is a critical point to understand. Removal of *micchā diṭṭhi* leads to the stopping of highly immoral actions.** Most people worry excessively on the defilement done with the body and speech. They are afraid of even accidentally killing an insect, or telling even a "white lie." Of course those need to be avoided too, because moral behavior (speech and actions) are a prerequisite for cleansing the mind.

- But having *niyata micchā diṭṭhi* is million-fold more weighty. These and other types of *Niyata Micchā Diṭṭhi* (**established** wrong views) are discussed in, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)."
- It would be beneficial to understand the weights of different types of *kamma*; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kammas."
- If one has a vessel that is leaking water, there is no point in trying to plug the smaller holes first. One should seal the largest hole first, which in this case is getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi* or false views (about this world).
- That may still not convince some. If so, see whether this conclusion is contradictory to anything in the *Tipiṭaka*. One should carefully examine all the "requirements" that need to be fulfilled to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage. It should become clear that indeed, this is all one needs to do.

7. So, we have come to the "crux of the matter": How can one remove *niyata micchā diṭṭhi*? That is ALL one has to do to become a *Sotāpanna*.

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- However, complete removal of *niyata micchā diṭṭhi* requires an understanding of the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) to some extent.
- One cannot PRETEND to believe in things that one honestly does not believe in. Just by saying, "I do believe in rebirth, or, I do believe that there are other realms in this world other than the human and animals realms," for example, WILL NOT WORK.
- That is not like going to courts of law and trying to convince a jury of one's innocence. One's mind need to "see the realities of this world."
- **And that comes only via learning Dhamma, the correct version**, the version that was discovered by the Buddha and has been passed down through generations of Noble Persons or *Ariyā*. That is what we discussed in detail in the post, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala."
- That is also why we need to clearly comprehend the term, *saññā*, commonly translated to English as "perception."

8. Of course, *Saññā* is one of 52 *cetasika* and one component of *pañcakkhandha*. It is actually one of the seven universal *cetasika* that arise with every *citta*.

- *Saññā* works very closely with another universal *cetasika* called *manasikara*. *Manasikara* is the *cetasika* that brings old memories and future hopes into a *citta*. When *cetana* "puts together the *citta*," the *citta* recognizes the subject (*saññā*) and automatically produces *vedanā* (feelings) about it. Thus we can see the significant roles played by those four *cetasika* right away.
- But *saññā* is not limited to "recognizing objects." *Saññā* is the "inner understanding" of any concept.
- For example, when we hear the word, "fire," we immediately recognize what that means. Even a picture of a fire may flash in our minds. But a little baby (or a person who does not understand English) does not have a "*saññā*" for that word; it means nothing to them. But the baby (or that person) can understand what "fire" means if we teach it to them.
- Growing up, we acquire innumerable "*saññā*" mostly by becoming familiar with them. We first recognize who "mother" and "father" are, know different colors, different objects, etc.

9. Even though we acquire "*saññā*" for most objects and people, some strong *saññā* may be "passed down" from previous lives. That can take many forms.

- Some people, when visiting a place that one had never previously visited in this life, may already "know" about that place in great detail. Children who remember past lives have been reported to lead investigators to various locations in faraway cities where they had lived in previous lives. Even many adults have said that they can walk a city with complete confidence that they are visiting for the first time.
- Then there is the "ability" to play the piano, recite *suttā*, or just being able to comprehend complex mathematics as a child, etc. Some of these cases discussed in "Evidence for Rebirth."

10. We "acquire" most *saññā* through our families first, then through friends, schools, workplaces, etc.

- Thus most of our "world views" or *diṭṭhis* are acquired through our families. Our first impressions on moral issues, politics, and religions come from our families.
- Those *sannas* are hard to change, depending on how forcefully and frequently they have been used.
- However, the human mind is unique. When given enough substantial evidence, one's *saññā* about something or some concept can PERMANENTLY change. For example, when one learns how to do algebra (addition and subtraction, etc.) correctly, one will never forget that. And even if an authority figure (a teacher) insists that one plus two is four, even a child will not accept that. He/she can count with fingers and show the teacher that the correct answer IS three.

11. As we grow up, we acquire *saññā* for more specialized tasks. One could "learn" to become a carpenter, a doctor, an engineer, etc.

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- **This "learning" is acquiring "*saññā*" for a particular task. It is not just memorizing how to do things.** When a physician finishes his/her learning, he/she can "troubleshoot" a brand new patient and figure out what is wrong. When an engineer builds a new structure, it could be something that had not been made before. One acquires "skills."
- Once one learns a "skill," one will never forget that; at least it is easy to "get back to it." One who had learned to ride a bicycle as a child may never touch a bicycle for 30-40 years. But then, even at old age, he will be able to ride a bike though he may fall once or twice initially.

12. A *Sotāpanna* acquires a basic level of understanding about "this world" and that "knowledge" or "comprehension" does not go away even in future lives. Thus, it is a strong version of "memories from past lives" that some children report.

- Once someone sees a "glimpse" of the Buddha's core message that there is no permanent happiness to be had by wishing for anything in this world in the long run. The term "in the long run" implies that one believes that at the end of this life one WILL BE reborn. And that rebirth WILL BE determined by not only how one lives this life, but also how one had lived previous lives.
- That kind of a "vision change" does not happen quickly, unless one has "*saññā*" about that from previous lives; that is why it is easier for some people to grasp these concepts.
- And this "*saññā*" cannot be acquired via memorizing *suttā,* how to recite *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle, etc. Instead, one needs to COMPREHEND the concepts.
- The KEY concept to grasp is the "*anicca saññā*."

13. The only way to "build up" the correct *saññā* is to make an effort to understand the key message of the Buddha. Humans usually have wrong perceptions or "*vipareetha saññā*" that one can find happiness in this life by working hard. Most people do not even think beyond this life, even if they believe in rebirth. That is also called the "*nicca saññā*" (pronounced "nichcha sannā"), i.e., by working hard, or by sheer luck, one can achieve and maintain things in this world to one's satisfaction.

- The fundamental teaching of the Buddha is about the "*anicca saññā*," i.e., it is NOT POSSIBLE to maintain ANYTHING to one's satisfaction in the long run. The *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* is attained or when the *anicca saññā* is cultivated to some significant extent.
- When one has developed the *anicca saññā* to this level, one's mind automatically blocks "*apāyagāmi citta*."
- As we discussed in the *Abhidhamma* section, *citta* flow very fast, and we do not have control over those initial *cittā.* We are helpless to stop them in extreme cases like sudden rages or sheer greed. The key is to getting rid of immoral *gati* (by getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi* among other things).
- It is this *anicca saññā* that grows as one attains higher stages of *Nibbāna* (*Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī*) and peaked at the *Arahant* stage. At the *Arahant* stage one can see the "*anicca* nature" of ALL *saṅkhāra*, not only *abhisaṅkhāra.* That is what is expressed by, "*Sabbe saṅkhāra anicca*," and in the *Girimananda sutta*, the Buddha told Ven. Ananda, "*Ayaṃ vuccati Ānanda, sabba sankhāresu* ***anicca*** *sannā*"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttā."

14. When one develops the *anicca saññā* via learning Dhamma (listening and reading), the tendency to act immorally, even under extreme pressure, will slowly diminish.

- One would be able to see the corresponding "cooling down" (reduced stress level) when one thinks back after several months (could be sooner for some people). One will gradually feel the *nirāmisa sukha*, and will be drawn to Dhamma. One would automatically start spending more time on learning Dhamma.
- One does not need to force anything, except to make an initial determination to verify the truth of what I have discussed above by reading (and listening) and developing the "*Dhamma vicaya*" *sabbojjanga*. Make a habit to critically evaluate relevant posts at this site and from other sources. That is the best and direct meditation technique for attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage. Buddha Dhamma is all about learning the

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true nature of this world, which WILL automatically lead to the purification of the mind; see, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

- The more one purifies one's mind, the easier it will become to grasp the key Dhamma concepts and cultivate the "*anicca saññā*." And developing *anicca saññā* itself leads to the purification of the mind. That is why learning becomes exponentially fast, once getting some traction.

15. It should be quite clear that the enormous amount of defilement or "*kilesa*" (or "*anusaya*") are removed by just getting rid of *niyata micchā diṭṭhi*.

- That is because cultivating *anicca saññā* purifies one's mind, and one can start seeing the critical message of the Buddha. Without the *anicca saññā*, one can struggle for years and years without any benefit.
- Ask anyone who has done "breath meditation" (and believes *anicca* means "impermanence") for even 20-30 years whether they have made any significant progress. I am not talking about just calmness of the mind (or even mundane *jhānā*) that is only temporary (and can be broken). One will know when one has reduced *lobha, dosa, moha* to the extent that one will never be born in the *apāyā*.

Of course, one needs to have removed *micchā diṭṭhi* to even become a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*: "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

More on the *anicca saññā* at: How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā

6.4.14 Udayavaya Ñāṇa

- Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Ñāṇa – Introduction
- Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāṇa
- Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa
- Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Importance of the Cittaja Kaya

These posts can be better understood if one has a good understanding of the *gandhabba* or *manomaya kāya*: "Manomaya Kāya."

6.4.14.1 Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Ñāṇa – Introduction

February 12, 2016; revised October 23, 2018; re-written November 23, 2020

The *udayavaya ñāṇa* (*ñāṇa* pronounced "*ngana*"; see the pronunciation guide in "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)") is sometimes referred to as the *udayabbaya ñāṇa.*

- In fact, the actual Pāli word is *udayabbaya* (I had inadvertently used the Sinhala word udayavaya). A description of the *udayabbaya ñāna* is in the *Paṭisambhidāmagga Pakarana*: "WebLink: suttacentral: 1.1.6. Udayabbayañāṇaniddesa."
- However, it is about the arising (*udaya*) and destruction (*vaya*) of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala). This is another example of two Pāli words combining to sound differently: *udayabbaya*.

Pronunciation (*udayavaya ñāna*):

WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation: Udayavaya ñāṇa

This series of posts needs to be re-written. It may take some time since I am busy these days with other things.

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What is Udaya (Arising)?

1. Things in this world do not arise without causes. Furthermore, many things do not come into existence "in an instant" especially in the human world. There are "*opapātika* births" that happen within several thought-moments, but that still "develops over that time interval.

- A good visualization is the "arising of the Sun" in the morning. It emerges gradually over a few hours. Of course, the Sun "came into existence" over millions of years; it started as a collection of stardust and condensed and "ignited" upon reaching a critical mass. That is another version of "arising" for the Sun.
- A human born as a baby and gradually grows into a stable height that lasts many years.
- Whether inert or alive, anything comes into existence due to causes.

What Is "Vaya" (Destruction)?

2. Anything that comes into existence in this world WILL be destroyed, without exception. For an inert object that destruction is final.

- However, there are two meanings when it comes to *vaya* (destruction) of a "living being." We can get a good idea by taking an example.
- A human being is said to die within about 100 years. **That "death of a person" is the mundane meaning of vaya for a human.**
- However, that "life-stream" does not end at the death of the physical body. If that human gandhabba has more life left, it will get into a suitable womb and give rise to another human body.
- Even when that human *gandhabba* dies, that life-stream will just "switch-over' to another existence, say a Deva or animal existence, for example.
- That life-stream will come to an end ONLY at the *Parinibbana* of an *Arahant*, i.e., when the rebirth process comes to an end. **That is the *lokottara* (transcendental) meaning of *vaya* (destruction.)**

6.4.14.2 Udayavaya (Udayabbaya) Ñāṇa – Introduction

February 12, 2016; revised October 23, 2018

The *udayavaya ñāṇa* (*ñāṇa* pronounced "*ngana*"; see the pronunciation guide in "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)") is sometimes referred to as the *udayabbaya ñāṇa.*

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- However, it is about the arising (*udaya*) and destruction (*vaya*) of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala). This is another example of two Pāli words combining to sound differently: *udayabbaya*.

Pronunciation (*udayavaya ñāna*):

WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation: Udayavaya ñāṇa

1. Things in this world do not arise without causes. Anything that arises is destroyed sooner or later, and in the meantime, they change in unexpected ways (*vipariṇāma* nature). That is another way to look at the *anicca* concept. The suffering arises because we are trying to maintain things the way we want, but that is an impossible task.

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- Suffering does not arise merely because things are not permanent; the reason is more deeper. Things also change in unexpected ways. Furthermore, this *vipariṇāma* nature is present anywhere in the 31 realms; there is no refuge anywhere.
- This is the very foundation of Buddha Dhamma. Suffering arises due to causes, and those root causes of *lobha, dosa, moha* lead to the worst kinds of suffering. The other three root causes of *alobha, adosa, amoha* lead to temporary relief (in *deva* and *brahma* realms, but also in the human realm to some extent), but those also do not last long in the *sansāric* time scale.

2. *Udayavaya* describes how anything in one's world (*pañcakkhandha*) arises due to causes. And whatever arises (*udaya*), it matures with time while changing in unexpected ways, and then inevitably gets destroyed (*vaya*). Suffering is associated with anything that has the *anicca* nature, and everything in this world of 31 realms has that *anicca* nature.

- Seeing *anicca* via understanding the *udayavaya* of the *pañcakkhandha* (anything in this world) is stated as, "***uppāda vayattena anicca***," i.e., anything in this world is *anicca* because anything that arises is subjected to unexpected change while in existence, and is eventually destroyed.
- When one truly comprehends "***uppāda vayattena anicca***," one has attained the "*anuloma ñāṇa*" that is a prerequisite for the *Sotāpanna* stage.

3. For example, we think very highly about our bodies (especially when young). But we do not realize how much effort we put in (*vipariṇāma dukha*) to keep our bodies just in a "presentable form" to others. If we do not brush our teeth, wash or take a shower for a few days, do not comb the hair, do not wash our clothes, etc, we will be able to see the true nature of our bodies.

- If we do not eat well or exercise regularly, not only will our bodies be out-of-shape, but we will also be subjected to diseases. But this life filled with *vipariṇāma dukha* is a result of a past cause, and we just have to cope with it and keep the body in good shape; otherwise, things could get even worse.
- Thus even though we do not realize it (because that is what we have been used to), just maintaining everything in the status quo requires a lot of effort; this *vipariṇāma dukha* is normally hidden because we are blinded by the perceived "future pleasures." Just like a bull is pulling a cart with a heavy load when some straw is dangled in front of it, we trudge through the daily chores with visions of pleasure blinding us.
- Even when we do all this, sometimes "bad things happen out of the blue": one could get into an accident, come down with cancer or some fatal disease like that, or hear about an unexpected such catastrophe of a loved one.
- And then when we get old, no matter how much we struggle, we cannot stop the body from falling apart and eventually dying. Just think about your parents/grandparents; they were as young and vibrant when they were young too.
- And this is what we have been doing through an unimaginable number of births in the past. Always struggling just to keep up. But it gets much worse if and when born in one of four lowest realms (*apāyā*).

4. But the key here is not be depressed about it. Some people believe contemplating on such things and cultivating a depressed mindset is the "*patikula manasikāra bhāvanā*"; it is commonly mistranslated as "the contemplation on the foulness." But it is imperative not to get distressed about these things. The idea is to realize that all body parts are subject to *anicca* nature.

- When one realizes this true nature, and then also realizes that there is a way out, that leads to a higher level of *nirāmisa sukha*. That is when one "sees *Nibbāna*" and attains the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- When one gains the *udayavaya ñāṇa*, one can see the causes that need to be eliminated to overcome otherwise inevitable future suffering.

5. In *udayavaya ñāṇa*, the term "*vaya*" has two meanings:

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- Whatever is arisen due to past causes will be subjected to unexpected change and eventually is destroyed. This understanding about how anything that arises and causes a **net suffering** (even though there are pleasures to be had, they are minor compared to the suffering) is a part of the *udayavaya ñāṇa*.
- More importantly, one can stop these things from arising and thus permanently remove suffering. Thus understanding *udayavaya* leads to knowledge about the *dukkha nirodha sacca*, i.e., that by eliminating the causes, one can stop future suffering from arising. This is the second and more important meaning of "*vaya*" in *udayavaya*.
- But let us first discuss the factors associated with "*udaya*" or "arising."

6. The "*udaya*" part of the *udayavaya ñāṇa* describes five factors that lead to the arising of anything in this world. Anything in this world belongs to one of the five aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*): *rūpa khandha*, *vedanā khandha, saññā khandha, saṅkhāra khandha, viññāṇa khandha.*

- Thus our world is not only the *rūpa khandha*. In fact, most people think about material things in the world as THE WORLD. But Buddha Dhamma reveals a more "personal world" which includes how one feels about things in the world (*vedanā*), how one perceives those things (*saññā*), and how one thinks and makes plans (*saṅkhāra*) according to how one feels and perceives. The end result of those three (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*) are the *viññāṇa* that one builds (future hopes and desires) according to one's *gathi* (character).
- In fact, *pañcakkhandha* is even more complex than that because it includes past, present, future,… (11 categories) for each of the aggregates; see, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."
- Note that *pañcakkhandha* is shortened for *pañca khandha* or "five heaps" or "five aggregates." In the same way, *rūpa khandha* is normally pronounced as *rūpakkhandha,* and similarly *vedanakkhandha,* etc.

7. There are four factors that inevitably contribute to the arising of any of the five aggregates: We can easily guess the first two: *avijjā* and *taṇhā*. Because of *avijjā* (ignorance) of the true nature, beings tend to attach to things via greed or hate (*taṇhā*). And those two are always in front. Now, because of *avijjā* and *taṇhā*, beings initiate actions (*kamma*) via body, speech, and mind.

- Thus, *avijjā, taṇhā,* and *kamma* are common to the arising of any of the five aggregates.
- Then when any one of the five aggregates start arising, it will need another factor that helps in the arising of that aggregate. Let us discuss that next.

8. A *rūpa* (material thing, whether alive or not) needs food (*āhāra*). A human or an animal needs to eat (these are called *kabaliṅkāra āhāra*), and a tree needs nutrition from the ground. Even a thing like a rock needs *āhāra* (not in the general sense of food) to be formed, and that is a very deep topic that we will discuss much later.

- Since *rūpa khandha* also includes "future *rūpa*" one may ask how would *āhāra* be associated with a future *rūpa*. In this case, the *āhāra* is a mental *āhāra*; we will discuss four types of food (*āhāra*) in the near future.

9. On the other hand, three of the mental aggregates (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*) arise due to *phassa* (contact), and thus *phassa* is considered a form a mental *āhāra*.

- For any of those to arise, there has to be a contact (*phassa*) with the outside world either via the eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, or the mind.
- *Viññāṇa* is the end result of a *citta* that includes *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *rūpa*. Thus the corresponding factor for *viññāṇa* is *nāmarūpa*. Even though in *paṭicca samuppāda* it is, "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*," it goes the other way too, "*nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇa*." This is called "*aññamaññā paccayā*," and is valid for many such pairs in the *paṭicca samuppāda.*

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10. Finally, the last factor is common to all five aggregates. In the deepest sense, any of the five aggregates is a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala). And each thus has three common features: *uppāda* (early stage of arising), *ṭhiti* (change while growing), *bhaṅga* (destruction). Thus the fifth factor that describes a given aggregate is the *uppāda lakkhaṇa* or *nibbathi lakkhaṇa*.

- Note that some *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (especially those belong to the *rūpa khandha*) can have long life-cycles: a human lasts about 100 years, a universe lasts billions of years. But the mental components have relatively short life-cycles, especially *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra* are very short-lived. Some *viññāṇa* are brief, but others can last long times.
- Whether it is a human or a building (*rūpa*), a feeling, perception, *saṅkhāra*, or *viññāṇa*, they all have those three characteristics of *uppāda, ṭhiti,* and *bhaṅga (i.e., nibbatti lakkhaṇa).*

11. It is easiest to discuss an example with the *rūpa khandha*, and take just a small part of it to say a human being (X) and an animal (Y). First let us start with the root causes for the birth of X or Y. Those two beings, in one of their previous lives, had acted (done a *kamma*) with *taṇhā* (which itself was caused by *avijjā*).

- That moral act (for X) and an immoral act (for Y) led to the corresponding *bhava* (human *bhava* and animal *bhava*), which at some point led to the birth of a living being with corresponding characteristics (*gathi*).
- That resulted in the conception of a human baby (X) and a baby animal (Y) in a suitable womb. They both grew by consuming food (*āhāra*) inside the womb initially and then outside the womb after the birth.
- *Āhāra* also can be an actual cause and we will discuss that in a future post.

12. The baby X or Y thus born, will now grow according to the blueprint (*manomaya kāya*) that took hold of a single cell in the mother's womb at conception. That *manomaya kāya* has the basic blueprint of that being.

- Growing and maturing of X or Y, now proceeds with the *uppāda* (or *nibbatti) lakkhaṇa* that was associated with the particular *manomaya kāya*.

13. This same line of reasoning can be applied to other four *khandha*: *Vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* also arise mainly due to *avijjā, taṇhā, kamma*, and also *āhāra* (food) for them.

- I will discuss later what it means to say *āhāra* (food) for those mental elements. Actually, those are much more important than the food for the physical body and any other *rūpa*.
- The other four aggregates also arise, stay in existence for a time, and then is destroyed.

14. To summarize, the each of the five aggregates arises with the aid of five factors:

- *Rūpa*: *avijjā, taṇhā, kamma, āhāra*, *nibbatti lakkhaṇa*.
- *Vedanā*: *avijjā, taṇhā, kamma, phassa*, *nibbatti lakkhaṇa*.
- *Saññā*: *avijjā, taṇhā, kamma, phassa*, *nibbatti lakkhaṇa*.
- *Saṅkhāra*: *avijjā, taṇhā, kamma, phassa*, *nibbatti lakkhaṇa*.
- *Viññāṇa*: *avijjā, taṇhā, kamma, nāma rūpa*, *nibbatti lakkhaṇa*.

15. Thus those are the 25 factors that describe how anything in this world arise. The *udayavaya ñāṇa* encompasses the comprehension of those 25 factors.

- There are 25 more factors that lead either to the destruction of something that arose **OR** lead to the prevention of something from arising. We will discuss them in a future post.
- Thus the *udayavaya ñāṇa* is said to encompass 50 factors altogether that contain all knowledge about the arising and destruction of anything in this world, AND also the knowledge on how to stop anything from arising (nirodha) in this world.

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- Thus with *udayavaya ñāṇa* one comprehends how suffering arises and how one can eliminate future suffering. A key point here is that anything that arises (*uppāda*) is not just guaranteed to be destroyed (*bhaṅga*), but also that it changes unexpectedly (*vipariṇāma*) during its existence (*ṭhiti*). It is the *anicca* nature.

Next in the series, "Nibbatti Lakkhaṇa in Udayavaya Ñāṇa."

6.4.14.3 Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāṇa

February 26, 2016

1. In the previous post, we discussed the first 25 factors that encompass what is involved in the "*udaya*" stage of *udayavaya*: "Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Introduction." Each of the five aggregates has five factors associated with it basically leading to its formation; thus there are 25 factors that give rise to **each person's world**.

- The five aggregates or the *pañcakkhandha* is much more complex than most realize. Please read the posts on *pañcakkhandha* to familiarize with it if you really want to grasp the *udayavaya ñāṇa*: "The Five Aggregates (Panñakkhandha)."
- Also note that a given *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) is a tiny fraction of *pañcakkhandha.* We have discussed the five stages of a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), and it is related to *udayavaya ñāṇa.* Buddha Dhamma is so deep, all these different descriptions are well-connected at some level.
- Do not worry if all this seems to be overwhelming (of course some people will be able to see the connections). It will make sense with time. Just keep reading posts that you have already read. They will make more sense each time you go back and read, especially after reading other relevant posts.

2. It is important to grasp the fact that anything that we experience, we experience only for a fraction of a second. Then it is gone to the "past pile" (*atita;* pronounced "atheetha") of the five aggregates or piles.

- Anything that we are only imagining or hoping to experience has not yet materialized; those are in the "future pile" (*anāgata; pronounced "anāgatha"*) of the five aggregates.
- Only a negligibly small fraction is being experienced at a given moment: the "present pile" (*paccuppanna; pronounced "pachchuppanna"*); see, "Five Aggregates – Introduction."

3. All these things arise as a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), whether it is material (*rūpa*) or mental (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*). A given *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) itself (not the experience) may exist for brief moment, or some may last a long time (especially those belonging to *rūpa* aggregate). But even then parts of it are continually being "passed on" to the past.

- Think about a human being X. He/she starts with a single cell and grows by the day, becomes a baby, a child, a young person, an old person, and then is perished. So, when another person Y, is watching X grow, the "*rūpa khandha*" of Y continuously grew, all the while making the "past *rūpa khandha*" bigger each moment. When X is observing himself, that experience goes to his "*rūpa khandha*."
- At a given time, we can see only a momentary "snapshot" of a *rūpa khandha*. When X dies, all those stages –moment by moment — had gone to the past, and thus now belong to the "past *rūpa khandha*" of X and Y. Note that they are different: each one's experience of X is different.
- Now we can see why each person's *pañcakkhandha* is unique to that person.

4. Now we will analyze why all five aggregates have their origin in *avijjā, taṇhā*, and *kamma:* Because we have the wrong perception (*nicca saññā*) that we can eventually reach happiness by craving for things in this world (*avijjā*), we get attached to somethings or hate other things (*taṇhā*), and then act accordingly (*kamma*).

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- After one attains *parinibbana* (i.e., when an *Arahant* dies), there is no world to experience. No more *pañcakkhandha*.

5. The other two factors of *āhāra* and *nibbatti lakkhana* describe the "progression" of a *pañcakkhandha* that have the origins in *avijjā, taṇhā*, and *kamma*.

- If it is a material thing (*rūpa*) it needs *āhāra* (food) to grow; they can be food that living beings eat or nutrients that plants need.
- If it is a mental thing (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*), it needs "mental food": *phassa* (contact), *mano sañcetanā*, and *viññāṇa āhāra*. We will discuss these later.

6. Any one of those five aggregates needs a "blueprint" or a set mechanism to arise, grow, mature, decay, and eventually cease to exist. This is what the fifth factor, *nibbatti lakkhana*, is about.

- This "blueprint" is made according to those three causes: it is a complex plan which takes into account many aspects that are formed by the level of *avijjā* (ignorance), kind of *taṇhā* (greed, hate), and *kamma* (kind of acts that were done with body, speech, and mind).
- Those complex factors give rise to *nibbatti lakkhana*, "blueprint" for any one of the five aggregates to rise. It can be called "production characteristics" of that particular *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) belonging to one of the five aggregates.
- As we learn more, we will see that all five factors actually become causes, and are inter-related.

7. This is easier to see this with a human (or an animal). When a living being gets a human *bhava*, then based on a specific *kamma vipāka* that came to focus at the time of death in the previous *bhava*, a blueprint for the *human bhava* is automatically generated by *kammic* energy.

- That blueprint is the *manomaya kāya* or the *gandhabba* that we have discussed many times; see, the posts under the section "Manomaya Kāya."
- The arising of that human starting from a single cell in mother's womb happens according to the "blueprint" in that *manomaya kāya:* eventual height, eye color, skin color, etc were determined when a suitable womb was automatically selected according to the "*gathi*" of that being. That "selection process" — which happens automatically and not decided by any superior being — had chosen the matching parents for the *gandhabba*.
- That was the role played by the *nibbatti lakkhana* in this particular case.

8. Thus the particular *bhava* is determined by the particular action (*kamma*): if that action was suitable for a dog *bhava*, then one would get a "dog *bhava*."

- But other characteristics of that dog are determined by the overall "*gathi*" of that being that it had acquired through uncountable previous births.
- Thus *nibbatti lakkhana* is a complex entity that takes into account numerous things, but two are prominent: the specific *kamma* and overall *gathi*.

9. For example two different beings could get the same "dog *bhava*." But no two dogs will look and behave alike. Some are vicious and some are loving. Some are big and some are small. The possible varieties are basically infinite. Even two "twin dogs" that look exactly the same will have at least some behaviour differences when they grow. Same thing applies to two humans.

- Thus *nibbatti lakkhana* is a complex mold of multiple factors. But only a Buddha can see why certain features are in a given being. Even a spot on dog is said to be due to some reason.
- Even though the "*bhava*" is determined by a specific strong *kamma* (called a *janaka kamma*), the actual body will reflect numerous *kamma vipāka* from numerous lives in the past.
- But as we have discussed elsewhere, what kinds of *kamma vipāka* can bring fruits will depend to a large extent on having suitable conditions available. If one acts foolishly that will allow some bad *kamma*

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vipāka from the past to bear fruit. In the same way, by acting with mindfulness one can avoid such bad outcomes and even bring about good outcomes due to past good *kamma vipāka*.

- There are several posts that discuss the above important fact. For example, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?" and "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā."

10. Therefore, it is important to realize that it is *manomaya kāya* does not determine one's future rigidly; some of the "production characteristics" can change. It is not like making a robot in a factory according to a set blueprint.

- It is easy to see that one's body structure can change according to one's lifestyle. If one becomes careless and start eating indiscriminately, one will become obese. Even one's character can change by one's motivation and due to external influences.
- Thus *nibbatti lakkhana* are not deterministically set. The overall *gathi* can change and the *manomaya kāya* and the physical body in turn can change.

11. The main reason for this flexibility is that the *manomaya kāya* has three "components": *kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya*, and *utuja kāya;* see previous posts on *manomaya kāya*.

- The *kammaja kāya* is the one that is really pre-set. It had taken into account the reasons (*kamma vipāka*) that led to the particular *bhava*.
- The critical component that is under OUR CONTROL is the *cittaja kāya*. This is basically how we think (that leads to our speech and bodily actions). And how we think depends on our level of ignorance (*avijjā*).
- The third component is the *utuja kāya*, which is basically the fine body of the *gandhabba*. It is being created and changed CONTINUOUSLY due to both the *kammaja kāya* and *cittaja kāya*. The fine matter based on *suddhāṭṭhaka* are being created due to *kammaja kāya* and *cittaja kāya*; see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

12. Thus the evolvement of a human being is a complex process. But one could get a good basic understanding by comprehending the above basic structure. We will go into more details in the future, but let us discuss a few more important aspects.

- Now we can see that the physical body is just a "shell." There is *gandhabba* inside that physical body and controlling it; see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

13. Thus, these physical bodies that we value so much are really lifeless shells. The essence — *gandhabba* — is hidden inside that physical body.

- The *utuja kāya* of the *gandhabba* is the one that is spread over the whole physical body gives it a "life." It is a fine grid that overlaps our nervous system, and that is how we feel body sensations.
- Under some extreme stresses, the *gandhabba* can get out of the physical body. This is what is known as the out-of-body experience (OBE); see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." When that happens the physical body is lifeless, and doctors have declared many heart patients undergoing operations to be dead for several minutes only to find out later that the patient is alive (*gandhabba* had returned to the body).

14. The critical point for our present discussion is the fact that once born with a human body, the human *gandhabba* can determine its own *nibbatti lakkhana* to some extent by wisely using the *cittaja kaya*.

- It is this *cittaja kaya* that ultimately makes it possible for a human to attain *Nibbāna*.
- One can change one's *gathi* (habits/character) by comprehending first moral versus immoral, and then comprehending the *anicca* nature of this world.
- Most people do not realize the importance of the *cittaja kaya*. This is in essence why a Buddha is needed to reveal the true nature of this world, and to teach how to use the *cittaja kaya* (i.e., the way

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one thinks, and therefore speaks and acts): First to stay away from immoral behavior to cleanse the mind to some extent, and then to comprehend the *anicca* nature.

15. The *nibbatti lakkhana* for any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) associated with any of the five aggregates work similarly. Let us consider a certain *viññāṇa* that we experience when seeing a person X.

- That *viññāṇa* depends on who is looking at X. If it a loving parent for Y, then Y will generate a "loving *viññāṇa*" upon seeing X. That *viññāṇa* will arise, stay there for a certain time, and fade away as the mind is directed to something else. But when that viññāṇa arises , it arises with some *nibbatti lakkhana* associated with one's own past experiences with X. An enemy of X (say, Z) could generate a "hateful *viññāṇa*."

16. It is easy to see that other three aggregates in the above example will also arise accordingly.

- Y will generate happy feelings (*vedanā*), will recognize (*saññā*) X as a parent, and may generate some kind of action or speech via *saṅkhāra*. On the other hand, Z will generate an entirely different set.
- Thus the four mental aggregates are related to each other.

17. In Buddha Dhamma everything that we learn about is connected to each other at some level. It is the whole fabric of nature. Each and every piece of information is part of a complex puzzle. When one begins to see how it all fits together, one's mind becomes joyful, and provides incentive and desire to learn more about the true nature of this complex world.

Next in the series, "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa."

6.4.14.4 Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa

March 19, 2016

1. First part of the *Udayavaya Ñāṇa* involves the causes for the arising of *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (and hence arising of *pañcakkhandha*). Out of the five main factors (*avijjā, taṇhā, kamma, āhāra*, and *nibbatti lakkhana*), we discussed the *nibbatti lakkhana* in the previous post of the series.

- Many posts at the site discuss the first three factors, so will now discuss the remaining factor, *āhāra* (food), that is both a cause and a condition for the arising of *pañcakkhandha*.

2. When we think of *āhāra* (which means food in both Pāli and Sinhala), we automatically think about food that we consume to stay alive. However, it is clear from the previous two posts that a physical body is just a shell that is "controlled" by a *gandhabba*. There are many other posts on *gandhabba* in the "Manomaya Kāya" section. Here is a summary of some concepts discussed there:

- In effect, we have four kinds of bodies (*kāya*): the physical body (*karaja kāya*) is the one people normally associate with the perception of a "me." But we have three "mental bodies" that are collectively "*manomaya kāya*" or "*gandhabba*." Those three are *kammaja kaya, cittaja kaya*, and *utuja kaya.*
- In a way, the physical body is just a shell that we use for about 100 years or so and discard at death; the *gandhabba* leaves that dead body and waits for a suitable womb to make another physical body, if there is *kammic* energy left in the *human bhava*.
- The foods for the physical body are called *kabaliṅkāra āhāra*. There are three other "mental foods" that are consumed by the *gandhabba*.
- The *gandhabba* consumes three kinds of mental food: *phassa āhāra*, *mano sañcetanā āhāra*, and *viññāṇa āhāra*.

3. A given *Kammaja kāya* was created at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment by a powerful previous *kamma*, and its energy just gets depleted with time. For example, if a particular *human bhava* came into existence

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with enough *kammic* energy to support a human life for 1000 years, then that energy will be slowly spent over 1000 years. In other words, *kammaja kāya* does not need any additional energy, i.e., *āhāra*.

- In a way, all three types of mental foods are consumed by the *cittaja kāya*. And some of the energy from the *kammaja* and *cittaja kaya* are converted to *suddhaṭṭhaka* (matter), and that is what makes the fine body (*utuja kāya)* of the *gandhabba,* which is too fine for us to see.
- As I mentioned in the previous post is this section, "Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāṇa," the critical component that is under OUR CONTROL is the *cittaja kāya*. We can overcome our "loosely preset destiny" embedded in the *kammaja kāya* by cultivating our *cittaja kāya*, or basically our thoughts and thereby our behavior (*gathi*). This is what makes it possible to attain *Nibbāna*!

4. Let us first discuss the *kabaliṅkāra āhāra*. There are two relevant meanings for this name. The first meaning is associated with what this type of *āhāra* does: to energize the physical body. Here "*kabaliṅkāra*" comes from "*kayata bala dena*" in Pāli or Sinhala where "*kāya*" is body, "*bala*" is energy or power, and "*dena*" means provide.

- Therefore, *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* here means the food we eat to make our bodies grow and keep energized. Without food, a physical body that starts in the womb of the mother cannot grow to a baby and then once comes out cannot grow to be an adult. Without *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* that particular *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) cannot survive, and thus is an essential factor contributing to part of the *pañcakkhandha*.
- This kind of *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* is essential for the survival for humans and animals (and also *devas*). *Devas* consume just one kind of *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* called "*amurtha*"; it is a drink that they consume, which leaves no residuals. Thus, they don't need to worry about sweating, urinating, or defecating.
- Thus *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* are needed only in *kāma loka*. As we will see below, when one loses craving for *kabaliṅkāra āhāra,* one will never be born again in the *kāma loka,* i.e., one becomes an *Anāgāmī*.
- There are no solid bodies (*karaja kāya*) in either *rūpa loka* or *arūpa loka*. In *rūpa loka* there is only the "*thrija kāya*" or the three mental bodies of *kammaja kāya, cittaja kāya*, and *utuja kāya.* Thus in the *rūpa loka* beings are essentially *gandhabbas* but that term is normally reserved for humans and animals when they are in the *para loka* waiting for a womb; see, "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)."
- In the *arūpa loka*, there is no *utuja kāya* either. Except for the *hadaya vatthu*, there is no *rūpa* associated with an *arūpa brahma*.
- It is not essential to know all these details, but these details are needed to complete the "big picture", especially for those who are interested in finer details.

5. The second meaning of *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* has a deeper meaning; here it is a CAUSE for the arising of FUTURE *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala). Craving *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* means one is hoping for rebirth in the *kāma loka* to enjoy them; see, "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha."

- Thus, the stronger the craving is, harder it is to "escape from the *kāma lokas*."
- This is a good example of how (*abhi)saṅkhāra* or strong cravings/hopes/desires lead to corresponding *bhava* and thus corresponding births (*jāti*).
- In *paṭicca samuppāda*, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" is followed by "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*," and leads to "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" and "*bhava paccayā jāti*." Thus generating (*abhi)saṅkhāra* for *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* leads to rebirths in the *kāma loka*, but most times in unexpected way, as we discuss below.

6. One NEEDS to consume *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* to provide one's body with the nutrients it needs to live a healthy life. However, if one craves for tasty foods in excess, *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* can become a CAUSE to for the arising (*udaya*) of future births in the *kāma loka*.

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- This is why it is NOT actual consumption of tasty foods that contributes to making "*kāma bhava*." It is the excess greed for tasty foods (*kāma assāda*); see the section on , "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."
- This second type of "*pada nirukthi*" or the "origin of the phrase" *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* comes from "*kāya bali karana*" which means "leading to distorted body." Here the word "*bali*" or "distort" applies because **the body that one acquires in a future life** is due to such greedy *saṅkhāra* could be much different than expected. This is the deeper meaning of *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* in the *udayavaya ñāṇa*.

7. Such excessive greed for food matches the "*gathi*" of *pretha* beings. Thus when one cultivates such greedy *(abhi)saṅkhāra*, it leads to corresponding "*pretha bhava*" and thus "*pretha jathi*" in the future.

- When encountering delicious food, some people lose any sense of decency. The greediness shows, and when eating such a meal some display "animal like" behavior, spilling food and getting the food all over their face. That is a display of "greedy animal like" *saṅkhāra*. When they cultivate such *saṅkhāra*, the corresponding birth could be that of a pig.
- And then there are some who do not like to share such food and like to keep others away from enjoying such meals. That could cultivate *saṅkhāra* of a "vicious dog." We see such dogs all the time; they growl when another dog comes even close to their food.

8. Once one gets the basic idea, it is easy to see various kinds of *pretha* and animal *saṅkhāra* can be cultivated even without realizing it, and can lead to future births corresponding to such "*gathi*."

- And the cultivation of such extreme *gathi* is a consequence of not knowing or not comprehending Buddha Dhamma, specifically *paṭicca samuppāda* ("pati ichcha" leading to "sama uppada"); see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."
- And such *saṅkhāra* CANNOT be suppressed by sheer will power alone. One needs to learn Dhamma and realize that they DO LEAD to bad consequences. Again, see the section on "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana."

9. There are "good births" in the *kāma loka* too: the human realms and the *deva* realm. *Bhava* (and birth) in those realms also are according to one's *(abhi)saṅkhāra*, which of course are generated according to one's dominant *gathi*.

- Those who cultivate human and *deva saṅkhāra* like to enjoy sense pleasures, but they are not excessively greedy. They don't have mentality of "may all good things come to me, AND not to others." They are content with what they get and willingly share the excess with others.
- One is not released from the *kāma loka* until one's cravings for sense pleasures completely goes away when one comprehends not only the futility of such sense pleasures but also the possible dangers.

10. At even a deeper level, the tendency to generate such extreme greed goes away AUTOMATICALLY when one starts comprehending the "*anicca* nature." That it is not possible to achieve and maintain pleasurable worldly things (including food or beautiful bodies that result from eating such foods) as one desires.

- And this change in the mindset and the change in corresponding personal behavior may not reverse in a short time. But as one learns Dhamma, one will be able to see the change over time: Sometimes in a few weeks or even several months.
- The Buddha compared this "gradual transition" to the growth of a tree or a plant. One cannot see the change in the growth of a plant day by day; there is no point in checking it every day to see whether can see the growth. But if one takes care of the plant by providing it with nutrients and keeps the weeds away, one will be able to see the growth over a few weeks or months. And then one day, can reap the benefits of all that work when the plant blossoms and provides the flowers/fruits.

11. Therefore, the key is to LEARN Dhamma and also to comprehend it by contemplating on it, which is MEDITATION. But it is critical to learn the correct Dhamma.

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- A good example of the wrong way to meditate is what many people are doing with the *paṭikūla manasikāra bhāvanā*. Many translate "*patikūla*" as "*pilikul*" in Sinhala, which means "to be rejected because it is repulsive." They meditate on contemplating the repulsiveness of the body (sweat, urine, and feces generated by the body) and also the fact that once one chews on even the most delicious food, it becomes "vomit."
- But the Buddha did not advice that. Just as we should not desire extreme sense pleasures, we also should not be repulsed by the things that we mentioned in the above paragraph. They both generate *taṇhā*, in the first instant by attachment (craving) and in the second by aversion (*paṭigha*). The neutral mindset (*upekkhā*) comes from understanding the true nature of things.

12. Now we can see that the connection of *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* in the *udayavaya ñāṇa* has two facets:

- One plays a role in taking care of the physical body that we have inherited due to past causes. If we are not mindful of what we eat, it can lead to bad consequences via the body that we already have. If we are mindful, we can make that body to work optimally for achieving our goals, both mundane and transcendental. And of course, if the physical body does not get enough *kabaliṅkāra āhāra,* it will die.
- The other is to be aware of the role *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* plays in generating physical bodies for us in future births via generating *(abhi)saṅkhāra* related to pleasurable foods.
- It is said that one can become an *Anāgāmī* (i.e., stop rebirths in the *kāma loka*) by comprehending the true nature of *kabaliṅkāra āhāra.* Then one loses the craving for any sense pleasures in the *kāma loka*. But such a mindset is unfathomable for a normal human who only sees the immediate sense satisfaction. Furthermore, such a mindset CANNOT be achieved by sheer will power; it has to be through understanding the *anicca* nature of *kāma loka*.

Next in the series, "Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Importance of the Cittaja Kāya."

6.4.14.5 Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Importance of the Cittaja Kāya

July 22, 2016; December 1, 2017; December 14, 2019

Three Components of Mental Body (*Manomaya Kāya*)

1. In previous posts in this series, we discussed *kabaliṅkāra āhāra* for the physical body and three types of *āhāra* for the "mental body" (or *manomaya kāya* or *gandhabba)*: *phassa āhāra, mano sañcetanā āhāra, and viññāṇa āhāra.*

- The *manomaya kāya* or the *gandhabba* consists of three components: *kammaja kāya*, *citta kāya*, and *utuja kāya*. The *kammaja kāya* gets its energy at the beginning of that *bhava*, and does not require any external *āhāra*. The *utuja kāya* is sustained continuously via fine *rūpa* produced by *kammaja kāya* and *cittaja kāya*.
- **Therefore, the three types of *āhāra* for the *manomaya kāya* are all consumed by the *cittaja kāya*.** This *cittaja kāya* is nothing else but the stream of thoughts that we generate.
- An aside: Sometimes the *gandhabba* can inhale "aroma" or *gandha* (*kabaliṅkāra āhāra*) and have a fine (misty) physical body too; **thus the name *gandhabba***, where "*abbha*" means "inhale" or in this case "absorb." Such "more solidified" are the ones that people can sometimes see, and even be captured by a camera.

The Big Picture

2. Now we can take a step back and look at the big picture, and it gives a very illuminating view. This "big picture" could be very helpful in comprehending the *anicca* nature. Of course, this is not the only way to grasp *anicca* nature.

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- The physical body that we value so much and think about as "me" is just a temporary shell. Just like anything material in this world, it grows and peaks and then starts the downhill march ending in decay and eventual death. At the death of physical body, the *gandhabba* that comes out and has to wait for a suitable womb to start building a new body, if the human *bhava* still has more *kammic* energy left; see, for example, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- This is a key factor that contributed to the concept of a "self" ("āthma") in Hinduism. Hindu *yogis* who cultivated *abhiññā* powers could look back at a finite number of previous lives and could see a *gandhabba* giving rise to repeated rebirths in human form (they likely practiced *jhāna* in those recent previous lives, which made it easier for them to attain *abhiññā* powers in this life).
- However, they could not see far back enough to see that one could be born an animal or even worse too.

An Analogy

3. For humans and animals, we can compare the physical body controlled by the *gandhabba* to a car (or any other vehicle) being driven by a person. The body of the vehicle is like our physical body, and the driver is analogous to the *gandhabba*. Without the *gandhabba* , the physical body cannot do anything; it would be a lifeless, i.e., a dead body. It is the *gandhabba* that "operates" the human body; see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

- The birth of a *gandhabba*, in turn, is due to the *kammic* energy that was created in a previous life. The *kammaja kāya* represents that energy (which will be slowly depleting with time.) The term *kammaja kāya* comes from "*kamma*" and "*ja*" and "*kāya*." Here "*ja*" means "birth" or "origin" and "*kāya*" is the body. Thus *kammaja kāya* means the "body that was created due to *kamma*."
- Similarly, *cittaja kāya* arises due to *citta* (loosely translated as thoughts).
- "*Utu*" means "change" and the *utuja kāya* is that part of the *gandhabba* body which arises by conversion of *kammic* energy and the energy from *citta* (*javana*).

We Have Control Over *Cittaja Kāya*

4. Now, we can see the critical importance of *citta*. *Kammaja kāya* itself arises due to previous *kamma*, i.e., by *citta* in a previous life. More specifically, *javana* in such *citta* provided the energy for a new *bhava* which lead to the *kammaja kāya;* see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."

- *Kammaja kāya* is just a result, and it will slowly lose its energy over the human existence. We cannot do anything about (but if one does an *anatariya kamma* it will be shortened). Thus it is only the *cittaja kāya* that we have control over. This is critically important. **We have finally converged to the essence of a human being.**
- This is why the Buddha said "*Mano pubbangama Dhamma.*…." The origin of anything in this world can be traced back to the mind (thoughts).
- Here we see the truth of the above statement for living beings. In the future, it will become clear that ANYTHING in this world has origins in the mind. That is the story in the *Aggañña sutta*. But we have to proceed step-by-step. An introduction at, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

5. **We have the control over our own destiny via our thoughts or *cittaja kāya*. I cannot emphasize enough the critical importance of the *cittaja kāya*.**

- Therefore, we have to pay attention to what kind of *āhāra* (conventionally translated as food, but you can see that is not a good translation) that we provide for our thought stream. But we have control over only those thoughts that we initiate.

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Two Types of *Citta* (*Viññāṇa*) and Associated Feelings (*Vedanā*)

6. There are two types of thoughts. **Some *citta* arise due to *kamma vipāka*.** For example, we may get to taste a delicious meal due to a good *kamma vipāka* and while eating it we feel "*jivhā viññāṇa*," i.e., those come through our sense of taste. These do not have *abhisaṅkhāra*. Also see, "Mōha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa" and "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

- **There is another set of *citta* that we initiate.** For example, based on that tasty meal, we start thinking about coming back to the same restaurant in the future, how to make it at home, etc. These generate *abhisaṅkhāra*. The worst kind is *apuññābhisaṅkhāra*, where we think about ways to get that meal in an immoral way, say, by stealing.
- But if it is just some food that quenches the hunger, we do not generate that type of *citta* subsequent to the *vipāka citta*.
- In another example, we see millions of things in a day (via *vipāka citta*), but generate *abhisaṅkhāra* only in a few.

The Unending Cycle of *Kamma*/*Vipāka*

7. The Buddha said, "*kammā vipākā vaddanthi, vipākā kamma sambhavo, thasmā punabbhavo hothi, evan loko pavaththathi.*"

- What that means is: "Because of *kamma vipāka* we experience sense inputs; based on those we initiate new *kamma* (*abhisaṅkhāra*), and those, in turn, will bring *vipāka* in the future; that is how the world evolves (rebirth process continues)."
- Thus the critical part is where we generate *abhisaṅkhāra*. This is done with *javana citta*. We will discuss this using *citta vīthi* in the future, but let us try to get some basic understanding of how these *javana citta* can be controlled. There are many posts in the "Mind and Consciousness" and "Citta and Cetasika" sections on *citta* and *citta vīthi*.

The Key Is to Change Our *Gati*

8. In fact, *javana citta* run too fast to control at that time. Billions of *citta* run in a second. How can we control them? **We cannot control them *in situ*, as they initially arise.**

- *Javana citta* arise due to our *gati*! This is the key.
- For example, an *Arahant* is not be tempted by any attractive sense input. He has removed all *āsavas* (cravings) and there is no *anusaya* to bubble up. He/she has "Noble *gati* of an *Arahant*."
- On the other hand, a *Sotāpanna* may be tempted by that attractive sense input. He has not removed all *āsavas* (cravings); but he/she has removed *gati* suitable for the *apāyā*, so *javana citta* corresponding to highly immoral acts will not arise .
- The *āsava* (or *gati*) are analogous to the dirt in the bottom of a well. If the well water is perturbed, some dirt can come to the surface (*anusaya*). (i.e., if a sense input matching our *gati* comes into play, bad thoughts automatically come into the mind). This is discussed in the post, "3. The Second Level – Key to Purify the Mind" in the Meditation section.
- When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, the worst types of "gunk" will be removed. The rest will be removed in three more stages (*Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant*).

Ānāpānasati/*Satipaṭṭhāna* – Only Way to Change *Gati*

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9. In a normal human, whether or not immoral *javana citta* will be triggered, will depend on his/her set of *āsavas* (or *gati*). If that particular sensory input is attractive (i.e., matches his/her *āsavas*), then he/she may automatically initiate a highly immoral act to pursue that sense input.

- But the key here is the following. Even if such immoral *javana citta* arise, one can still suppress them **before the actual act is done**, if one has learned *Satipaṭṭhāna* (or *Ānāpāna.*) For extremely immoral acts, like killing another human, most people will be able to control such thoughts even without knowing about *Satipaṭṭhāna*. But the more one learns Dhamma, and the more one understands the consequences, one will be able to have firm control even over minor offenses.
- Furthermore, the more one controls one's actions this way, the more one's *gati* will change for the better. **This is another key!** This has been discussed in detail in, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)." There are several posts under that topic.

Irreversible Change of *Gati* with Understanding of *Tilakkhaṇa*

10. A **large chunk** of immoral *gati* goes away just via comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* at the *Sotāpanna* stage. In fact, those *gati* that are suitable to be born in the *apāyā* will be removed. This is called "*dassanena pahāthabbā*," i.e., "removal via correct vision."

- Thus highly immoral *javana citta* do not arise in a *Sotāpanna*. A well that has been cleaned of the visible dirt at the bottom can not be muddied by perturbing the water in that well. Just like that, highly immoral thoughts do not arise in a *Sotāpanna* because it is free of "worst gunk."
- However, to be able to grasp *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, one's mind needs to be cleansed to some extent. One needs to gradual changing of one's *gati* or *āsava*. The way to get there is to practice the correct *Ānāpāna bhāvanā* (or *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*.) See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

Udayavaya Ñāṇa – How Suffering Arises and How It Can Be Stopped

11. Thus the key to *Nibbāna* is in the *uadayavaya ñāṇa*: future rebirths arise (*uadaya*) due to *abhisaṅkhāra* (or *cetanā*) in our *javana citta*. By controlling immoral thoughts via reducing our *āsava* (bad *gati*), **we can eventually stop them from arising.**

- This is done by always being vigilant about the moral or immoral thoughts that come to our minds; this is *Satipaṭṭhāna*; see, "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta." Then if the thought is moral, we cultivate it (*āna*); if it is immoral, we stop it (*pāna*) before it leads to bad speech or actions; this is *Ānāpāna;* see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."
- The other key point is that the more cleans one's mind, the more one will be able to comprehend. In particular, comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, REQUIRES a mind cleansed to some extent.
- **I hope you can see that this is a feedback loop**: each time one goes through the loop (being vigilant or *satipaṭṭhāna* to cleansing the mind or *ānāpāna* to more cleansed mind to grasping deeper Dhamma and back to being vigilant), one makes progress.

Importance of *Tilakkhaṇa*

12. **This effect is greatly amplified when one finally grasps *Tilakkhaṇa:* One comprehends the futility of staying in this rebirth process (*anatta.*)** Anything that we acquire through much effort cannot be kept to our satisfaction in the long run (*anicca*) and eventually lead to nothing but suffering (*dukha.*) When one can "see" that, one will realize the urgency to reduce and remove one's *āsava* (bad *gati*). This leads to the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- A huge chunk of *āsava* (bad *gati*) simply disappear just via this understanding of the *anicca* nature at the *Sotāpanna* stage. Highly potent immoral *javana citta* do not arise in the mind of a *Sotāpanna.* Then no more rebirth in the *apāyā* or the four lowest realms.

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- Thus with *udayavaya ñāṇa*, one can really clarify the path to the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Then the remaining *āsava* disappear (*āsavakkhaya*) via three more stages (*Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant*) by continuing this process (*Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna*), and one attains *Nibbāna*, permanent happiness or the removal of all future suffering.
- But one also needs to do *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna* before the *Sotāpanna* stage in order to cleanse the mind to a level that is capable of grasping *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*

Closing the 'Gaps"

13. Finally, I would like to close the loop by pointing to the connection to the concepts we have discussed in the early posts. The *gandhabba* consumes three kinds of mental food: *phassa āhāra*, *mano sañcetanā āhāra*, and *viññāṇa āhāra*.

- As we saw in the previous post in this series, "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa," all three types of mental foods are consumed by the *cittaja kāya*. And this confirmed by the above discussion: Our initial sense inputs that COULD trigger *javana citta* come via *phassa*, sense contacts. They are JUST contacts. But based on those, we COULD accumulate new *kamma vipāka* (*abhisaṅkhāra*) by making *samphassa*; also see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."
- *Mano sañcetanā āhāra* (which are *abhisaṅkhāra*) come into play during those *samphassa;* this simply means we start "making plans", and also keep going back to that sensory input. With repeated triggers for a given sense input (*samphassa*) provides *āhāra* for that *viññāṇa;* for example, see, "2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms," and other relevant posts.

By reading the links given (and also using the "Search box" at top right) one should be able to clarify key issues. Please don't hesitate to comment if you need help in clarifying a given concept.

14. Also, please make sure to enter your email address correctly when making a comment. Recently, one person entered incorrect address, and sent me the same question twice. Unfortunately, I have no way of letting him know that I replied each time.

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7.1

Pāli Glossary

1/2/16: It seems that the audio files are not loading, so just removed the audio files.

We now have a Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation.

Possible Confusion in Pronunciation

It seems that the following conventions were adopted in order to make the text shorter.

In many cases:

1. "c" needs to be pronounced "**ch**" as in "**ch**arm" or "**ch**icago."

2. "t" needs to be pronounced "**th**" as in "**th**ud" or "**th**row."

   - For example, *citta* pronounced "chiththa", *cakkhu* is pronounced "chakkhu", *anicca* as "anichcha", *anatta* as "anaththa", *jāti* as "jathi", *taṇhā* as "thanha", *tilakkhana* as "thilakkhana."

3. "d" needs to be pronounced "**th**" as in "**th**is" or "**th**at." Note the difference in pronouncing "**th**" between 2 and 3.

   - For example, *vedanā* or dāna (as in giving) is pronounced this way.

Pronunciation Key

á rhymes like pat â → care ã → pay ā → father ê → pet ë → bee th → thin dh → this
ö → toe ü → moon ch → chin ng → thing

Common Pāli Words

I will keep adding more words to the glossary. If you would like me to add any missing words to the glossary, please send a comment.

10/6/15: I have added audio files. Please note the volume control below each audio.

Pāli Word	Audio	Pronounciation	Meaning
akusala		akusala	immoral, unwholesome
adosa		adhosa	non-hatred
alobha		alobha	non-greed
amoha		amoha	non-delusion
Anāgāmī		Anāgāmī	Non-Returner (to the human world)
Anariya		Anāriyā	One who is not yet a Noble One or Ariya
anatta		anaththā	not in-control, helpless
anicca		anichchā	inability to maintain to one's satisfaction
anantara			being in storage until retrieval (kamma vipāka)

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Pāli Word	Audio	Pronounciation	Meaning
anupassana		anupassanā	contemplate with anicca, dukkha, anatta
anusaya			defilements arising from latent cravings (āsava)
apāya		apāya	common term for four lowest realms
abhijjā [abhijjhā]		abhijjā	strong greed
Arahant			Never to be born in any of the 31 realms
Ariya		āriyā	noble one (Sotāpanna or above)
arūpa		arūpa	without rūpa (not really correct)
avijjā		avijjā	ignorance
ahirika		ahirikā	shamelessness
ahetuka		ahãthuka	without good roots
akasa		ākāsa	space (the void in between rūpa)
aloka		āloka	light, dissociating from "this world"
āpo		āpo	cohesive element
arammana		ārammana	object of thought
āsava (asaya)		asāva	deep-seated craving
asevana		āsãvanā	repeated practice
bahiddha		bahidhdhā	external
bala			power
bhanga		bhangā	dissolution
bhava			existence level
Bhauddhayā (Buddhist)		Bhaudhdhayā	One striving to stop the rebirth process
bhāvanā		bhāvanā	meditation, constant contemplation & use
Buddha		Budhdha (not "Budhdhā")	Buddha Gotama
bhavaṅga		bhavangā	life continuum
bhaya			fear
citta		chiththa	early stage of a thought (pure thought)

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Pāli Word	Audio	Pronounciation	Meaning
dana		dāna	giving
dasaka			decad
deva		dãva	a being in 6th-11th realms
dhamma		dhammā	Buddha's teachings, phenomenon, mental object
dhammavicaya		dhammavichaya	investigation of concepts like anicca
dhātu		dhāthu	element
diṭṭhi			view, wrong view unless specified
domanassa		dhomanassa	displeasure
dosa		dhosa	hatred
dukha		dhukha	suffering
dukkha		dhukhkha	suffering & it can be overcome
dvara		dhvāra	door (to the outside world)
ekaggata		ekaggathā	one-pointedness (of the mind)
gandha			smell
gathi		gathi	character
hadayavatthu		hadayavaththu	seat of mind
hetu		hãthu	root cause
hiri			shame
iddhipada		iddhipāda	means to accomplishment
kamachanda		kāmachanda	greed for things in kamaloka
kamaloka		kāmalõka	first 11 realms with five physical senses
kamavacara		kāmavachara	belonging to kamaloka
kamma		kammā	action, deed
kasina		kasina	meditation device (usu. a colored disk)
kaya		kāya	sensing (seeing, hearing, etc)
kaya		kaya	body
khaya			cutting off

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Pāli Word	Audio	Pronounciation	Meaning
khana			moment, sub-moment
khandha			aggregate, collection, heap
kilesa (keles)		kilãsa	defilement
kukkucca		kukkuchcha	tendency to do lowly things
kusala			removal of defilements
lahuta		lahüta	lightness
lakkhana		lakhkhana	characteristc
lobha		lobha	greed
loka		loka	world
lokuttara		lokoththara	beyond this world, transcendental
maccariya		machchariya	extreme greed, hiding wealth
magga		magga	path
mana		māna	conceit
manasikara		manasikāra	memory
mano		mano	mind
manodhatu		manodhāthu	mind element
manodvara		manodvāra	mind door
manussa			human being
marana			death
metta		meththā	loving kindness
micchā diṭṭhi		michcha diththi	wrong views
middha		midhdhha	lethargic mind
moha		moha	delusion
mudita		mudhithā	appreciative joy
muduta		mudhuthā	malleability
mūla		mūla or mūla	root
nama		nāma	name, mental
nāmarūpa		nāmarüpa	name and form

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Pāli Word	Audio	Pronounciation	Meaning
ñāṇa		ngāna	knowledge
nimitta		nimiththa	sign
nivarana		neevarana	hindrance
niraya			hell
niyama		niyama (not niyāma)	law of nature
oja		ojā	nutritive essence
paccaya		pachchayā	condition
pahāna		pahāna	abandoning
pancadvara		panchadvāra	five sense doors
pañcakkhandha		pancakkhandhā	five aggregates
pancaupadanakkhandha		pancaupādānakkhandhā	grasping/craving of five aggregates
paññā		pangngā	wisdom
pīti		peethi (preethi)	joy
pannindriya			wisdom faculty
paramatta		paramaththā	ultimate reality
pasāda rūpa		pasāda rūpa	sensitive matter (internal rūpa)
passaddhi		passadhdhi	tranquility
pathavi			element of hardness
paṭicca		patichcha	bind to something willingly
paṭigha			aversion, dislike
pavutthi		pavuththi	during this life, current
peta (preta)		petā (pretha)	hungry ghost
phala			fruit, fruition
phassa			contact
puggala			individual
purisa			masculine
rāga		rāga	attachment to saṃsāra
rasa			taste

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Pāli Word	Audio	Pronounciation	Meaning
rūpa		rūpa	matter (and energy)
rūpa kalapa		rūpa kalāpa	material group unit
rupavacara		rüpavāchara	belonging to rūpa loka
sadda		sadhdha	sound
sadharana		sādhārana	universal, common
saddhā		sadhdhā	faith (through knowledge and understanding)
sahetuka		sahëthuka	with roots
Sakadāgāmī		Sakadagāmi	Once-Returner (one more rebirth as a human)
saḷāyatana		salāyathana	six sense bases
samādhi		samādhi	high concentration with pure mind
sammā			quench (defilements)
samāpatti		samāpaththi	meditative attainment
samanantara		samananthara	contiguity, matching with anantara
samatha		samathā	calming the mind
samauppada		samauppāda	birth of a similar kind
saṅkappa			ideas
saṅkhāra		saṅkhāra	actions leading to defilements
saṅkhata (sankata in Sinhala)		sankhatha	conditioned, formed by conditions
saññā		sangngā	perception
saṃsāra (also called saṃsāra)		saṃsāra	beginningless rebirth process
sasava		sāsavā	with craving
sati		sathi	mindful of anicca, dukkha, anatta
satipaṭṭhāna		sathipattāna	establishment of sati
sanyojana		sanyojana	bind to defilements, fetter
sīla		seela	virtue, moral conduct
sekha		sëkha	trainee (the three stages below the Arahant)
somanassa		somanassa	with joy

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Pāli Word	Audio	Pronounciation	Meaning
sota		sotha	ear
Sotāpanna		Sothapanna	Stream Enterer (first stage of Nibbāna)
taṇhā		thanhā	attachment (bondage) due to greed, hate, or delusion
tejo		thãjo	heat element
thina		theena	sloth
uddhacca		udhdhachchā	tendency to be high-minded (restlessness)
upādāna		upādhāna	clinging, like to hold onto
upekkha			equanimity, neutrality
uppatthi		uppaththi	birth
vacī		vachi	speech
vaṇṇa (varna)			color
vayama		vayāma	effort
vāyo		vayo	fluidity
vedanā		vãdana	feeling
vicara		vichāra	sustained concentration on an object
vicikicchā		vichikichchā	acting without sati
vīmaṃsā		vīmaṃsā	investigation
vinnati		vingngāthi	intimation
viññāṇa		vingngana	(defiled) consciousness
vipāka		vipāka	result
vipassana		vipassanā	insight (via analysis of parts)
virati		virathi	abstinence from indulgence
viriya			effort
visuddhi		visudhdhi	purification
vitakka		vithakka	initial application of the mind on an object
vīthi		veethi	process (sequential)

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Pāli Word	Audio	Pronounciation	Meaning
vottapana		voththapana	determining
vyāpāda		vyāpāda	ill will, stronger than paṭigha

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7.2 Pāli Glossary – (A-K)

August 12, 2016; Revised May 27, 2017; February 19, 2020

"*Tipiṭaka* English" Convention

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Additional Pronunciation Keys:

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- "i" is pronounced like "i" in sit; "**ī**" is pronounced like "ee" in bee
- "u" is pronounced like "u" in "put"; "**ū**" is pronounced like "oo" in cool
- "o" is pronounced like "oe" in "Moe"; "e" is pronounced like "a" in pay
- "c" needs to be pronounced like "**ch**" as in "**ch**arm" or "**ch**icago"
- "ñ" needs to be pronounced like "**gn**" in "signor"

2. This glossary is in two posts, because there are a total of over 400 Pāli words included now. This is the first part of the glossary; second part at, "Pāli Glossary – (L-Z)."

- I have been able to get the audio files incorporated, and also have provided links to key posts whenever possible/needed.
- We also have a Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation, thanks to Mr. Seng Kiat Ng. If that GoldenDict dictionary is installed on your computer, you will be able to access this glossary from each post directly. Furthermore, it could provide translations from other online dictionaries as well.

3. Relevant posts on any of the words can be found by using the "Search" box on the top right.

Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
abhaya	"a" +"bhaya"; doing something to stop someone's fear	
abhaya dāna	saving the life of a living being	
abhijjhā	strong greed	
abhiññā	supermundane powers	
abhisaṅkhāra	strong saṅkhāra that lead to rebirths and strong vipāka	
ādīnava	bad outcome: Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana – Introduction	
adhimokkha	arising to the top; reaching a high value	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
adhivāsana	things one gets used to based on sansāric habits; part of gathi	
adinnādāna	stealing; taking something without permission	
adosa	without hatred	
ajjhatta	internal	
ākāsa	space (the void in between rūpa)	
ākāsānañcāyatana	first arūpa brahma realm	
ākiñcaññāyatana	third arūpa brahma realm	
akusala	immoral act	
āhāra	nutrients (for body or mind)	
ahetuka	without good roots	
ahirika	shamelessness	
akālika	remove defilements or timeless (no birth or death, i.e., Nibbāna)	
alobha	without greed	
āloka	light, dissociating from "this world"	
āmisa	mundane (belonging to 31 realms)	
amoha	without delusion; moral mindset	
amurta	fine food (drink) of devas	
Anāgāmī	Non-Returner (to the human world)	
anāgata	future	
ānāpāna	7. What is Ānapāna?	
ānāpānasati	6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)	
anāriya	not Noble	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
anatoppa	fear of doing immoral deeds	
anatta	not in-control, helpless	
ānenjābhi saṅkhāra	Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka	
anicca	inability to maintain to one's satisfaction	
Aniccatā	tendency to change unexpectedly; characteristic of a rūpa: Rūpa (Material Form) – Table	
anidassana	Cannot be seen; can also mean pure as in anidassana viññāṇa	
animisa	without pausing for even a moment: Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude	
aññamaññā	depend on each other	
anantara	being in storage until retrieval (kamma vipāka)	
anumodanā	accept pattidana (transfer of merits or sharing of merits) with joy	
anupassanā	discard kileasa by contemplating with anicca, dukkha, anatta: see #6 of 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?	
anusaya	defilements arising from latent cravings (āsava) and kilesa	
apacāyana	paying respects to those with higher virtues: Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā	
aparāpariya vedaniya	kamma vipāka that can materialize at any time in future	
apāya	common term for four lowest realms	
āpo	cohesive element	
Appanā samādhi	almost at jhāna: What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness	
appaṇīta	not to liking; dislikes	
appaṭigha	cannot be grasped or touched	
apuñña	immoral	
apuññabhi saṅkhāra	highly immoral saṅkhāra	
Arahant	never to be born in any of the 31 realms	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
ārammaṇa	object of thought	
Ariya	Noble person (Sotāpanna or above)	
arūpa	without rūpa	
asaññā	without perception; without saññā	
āsava =āsaya	deep-seated craving	
āsavakkhaya ñāṇa	Knowledge of removing āsava: The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas	
āsevana	repeated practice; associate	
asobhana	ugly or defiled (used mainly for cetasika)	
asura	one of the four apāyā; beings there have large bodies and are inactive	
assāda	enjoyment	
atīta	past	
atta	opposite of anatta or eight	
attha	opposite of anatta; perception that one has total control	
avici	one of the niraya (hell)	
avihiṃsā	non-aggressive	
avinibbhoga	consituents not separable, as in a avinibbhoga rūpa kalapa	
avyāpāda = abyāpāda	not angry, kind	
āyatana	an indriya becomes as āyatana: Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms - Taṇhā Lobha Dosa Moha etc	
āyu	lifetime	
avijjā	Ignorance of Tilakkhaṇa	
bahiddhā	external	
bahijja	external	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
bala	power	
bali	distort	
bīja	seed	
bhaṅga	dissolution; destruction	
bhava	realm of existence	
Bhaudhdhayā (Buddhist)	One striving to stop the rebirth process	
bhāvanā	meditation, constant contemplation & use	
bhavaṅga	life continuum	
bhaya	fear	
Bhikkhu	Buddhist monk	
bodhicitta	a Mahayana term denoting "enlightenment-mind"	
bojjhaṅga	bodhi aṅga or facilitating factor for Nibbāna	
brahma	a being in rūpa or arūpa brahma realms	
Buddha	Buddha Gotama	
cakkhu	eye or seeing	
cakkavāḷa	planetary system like our Solar system	
cetanā	intention; but deeper: What is Intention in Kamma?	
cetasika	mental factor	
chanda	liking	
citta	thought (pure thought)	
cittānupassanā	doing anupassana via contemplating on thoughts	
citta vīthi	citta come in packets of a discrete number; a single citta does not arise	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
cutūpapāta ñāṇa	ability to see all previous births	
cuti	death	
cuti citta	moment of death	
dāna	giving	
dasa	ten	
dasaka	decad; group of 10	
dassana	vision; but normally used for "comprehending"	
dassanena pahātabba	removing (kilesa) via comprehension of Dhamma	
desanā	verbal discourse	
deva	a being in 6th-11th realms	
Dhamma	Buddha's teachings, phenomenon, mental object	
dhammavicaya (sambojjhaṅga)	investigation of concepts like anicca	
dhammānudhamma patipadā	condition for attaining Sotāpanna stage: Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala	
dhammānupassanā	doing anupassana via contemplating on Dhamma	
dhātu	element	
dhyāna (same as jhāna)	meditative state with rūpa loka or arūpa loka consciousness	
ditta	observation	
ditthi	view, wrong view unless specified	
diṭṭhijukamma	"diṭṭhi"+"uju"+"kamma" or getting rid of wrong views on kamma:Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā	
domanassa	mental agony, displeasure; not bodily suffering	
dosa	hatred	
dosakkhaya	dosa + khaya or removal of hate	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
dugathi	"du" + "gathi" or habits that can lead to bad rebirths	
dukha	suffering	
dukkha	suffering & it can be stopped from arising	
dvāra	door (to the external world)	
ehipassiko	a quality of Dhamma, removing defilements in real time: Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha	
ekaggatā	one-pointedness (of the mind)	
gandha	smell, odor	
gandhabba	Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)	
gati	character, habits	
ghāṇa	nose or smelling	
gotrabhu	change of lineage ("gotra") when getting close to a jhāna	
hadaya vatthu	seat of mind (in the gandhabbayā)	
hetu	root cause	
hiri	shamefulness for doing akusala kamma	
iddhi	special powers or knowledges	
iddhipāda	means to special (mental) accomplishment	
indriya	one of the six sense faculties when used without lobha, dosa, moha	
issa (irisiyā in Sinhala)	jealousy	
Itthi (sthree in Sinhala)	feminine	
jarā	getting old or weak	
Jaratā	one of 28 rūpa: Rūpa (Material Form)	
jāti	birth of a living being OR birth of anything	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
javana	those citta with which saṅkhāra committed or kamma vipāka generated: Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power	
jhāna (same as dhyana)	meditative state with rūpa loka or arūpa loka consciousness	
jivhā	tongue (more accurately jivha indriya) OR taste	
jīvita	life: jivita indriya maintains life	
Jīvitindriya	one of the 7 universal cetasika: Cetasika (Mental Factors) OR one of the 28 rūpa: Rūpa (Material Form)	
kabaḷīkāra	one of the 4 āhāra: Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa	
kappa (kalpa in Sinhala)	time duration of an entity: kappa of a human is about 100 years; mahā kappa is lifetime of the universe	
kalyāṇa mittā (or mitrā in Sinhala)	Noble friend: Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala	
kāmacchanda	greed for things in kamaloka	
kāma loka	first 11 realms with five physical senses	
kāma rāga	attachment to sense pleasures in kamaloka	
kāmāvacara	belonging to kamaloka	
kāmesumicchācārā	immoral ways of enjoying sense pleasures: The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them	
kamma	action, deed	
kammanta	actions as in sammā kammanta	
kammaṭṭhāna	meditation verses or procedures	
kandha	heap, pile, or aggregate	
karunā	compassion in the suffering of others	
kasina	meditation object in anāriya jhāna (eg. a colored disk)	
kāya	pertaining to the body or action	
kaya	physical or mental body	
kāyānupassanā	doing anupassana via contemplating on the bodily actions	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
khaṇika samādhi	What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness	
khaya	cutting off or gradually reduce	
khaṇa	moment, sub-moment	
kriyā	action, deed	

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7.3 Pāli Glossary – (L-Z)

August 12, 2016; Revised May 27, 2017; February 19, 2020

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
lobha	excess greed: Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccanda, Kāmarāga	
lahutā	lightness (e.g., kāya lahutā is lightness in body)	
lakkhaṇa	characteristc of	
loka	realm or world depending on the context	
lokiya	belonging to this world of 31 realms	
lokuttara	beyond this world of 31 realms, transcendental	
macchariya	hiding wealth due to extreme greed	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
magga	path; procedure	
mahā	large or important	
māna	arrogance, self-admiration	
manasikāra	memory. Details at: Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises	
mano	mind	
mano sañcetanā	vedanā, saññā that arise due to one's gati	
manodhatu	mind element	
manodvāra	mind door to nāmaloka; see, Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial	
manodvāravajjana	a citta coming to the mind door as in manodvāravajjana citta	
manussa	human being	
marana	death (death of a physical body is not necessarily the end of human bhava; see, "Antarābhava and Gandhabba"	
mettā	kindness. Has two meanings: "Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā"	
micchā diṭṭhi	wrong views; see. "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis"	
middha	lethargic mind	
moha	delusion; mind totally covered; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Paṭigha, Avijjā"	
mohakkhaya	moha + khaya, removing delusion	
muditā	joy in the success of others	
mudutā	malleability; e.g., kāya midutā	
mūla	root (usually in root cause)	
musāvāda	lies, trying to deceive: The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them	
muta	combined word for smelling, tasting, and touching	
nāma	name, mental	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
nāmarūpa	name and form OR mental image of a nāma and rūpa	
namaskāraya (Sinhala)	Namaskāraya – Homage to the Buddha	
ñāṇa	knowledge	
nātha	with refuge, opposite of anātha	
nekkhamma	relinquish sense pleasures: Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless	
neva saññā nā saññāyatana	fourth arūpa brahma realm	
Nibbāna	stopping the rebirth process: Nibbāna	
nibbatti lakkhaṇa	Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāṇa	
nicca	having total control, that ability	
niddesa	short description: Sutta – Introduction	
nimitta	sign; something resembling	
nirāmisa	neutral thoughts without sense cravings	
nirodha	nir + udā or stop from arising	
nissaraṇa	willingly give up assāda: Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa – Introduction	
Nivana (Sinhala)		
nīvaraṇa	hindrance; covered mind	
niraya	hell	
niyama (or niyāma)	law of nature	
niyata	permanent, fixed	
ojā	nutritive essence	
oḷārika	rough, condensed	
opapātika	instantaneous and fully-formed birth as in deva and brahma realms	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
pabhassara	devoid of greed, hate, and ignorance; e.g., pabhassara citta	
paccayā	condition	
paccuppanna	conditional arising; present moment arising due to conditions	
pahāna	abandon; remove	
pahātabba	removal	
pakiṇṇaka	particulars or occasionals as in pakiṇṇaka cetasika: Cetasika – Connection to Gati	
pāṇātipātā	killing a living being: The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them	
panca	five	
pañcadvāra	five sense doors	
pañcadvāra vajjana cittā	Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs	
pañcakkhandha	five aggregates	
pañcanīvaraṇa	five hindrances that cover the mind	
pañcaupādānakkhandha	grasping/craving of the five aggregates: Pañcaupādānakkhandha – It is All Mental	
paṇīta	likable or good	
paññā	wisdom; comprehension of Tilakkhaṇa	
pāpa kammā	immoral actions	
para loka (paralowa in sinhala)	a human or animal gandhabba lives in para loka until a womb becomes available: Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)	
pāramitā	strive through many rebirths: Paramita and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?	
paribramana	rotating around another body	
perideva	lamentation, especially upon remembering a past mishap	
parivajjana	staying clear of bad influences: The Sotāpanna Stage	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
pīti	joy	
paññindriya	wisdom faculty	
parāmatta	ultimate reality	
pharusāvācā	harsh speech: Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)	
pasāda rūpā	sensitive matter (five internal senses; not physical senses): Brain – Interface between Mind and Body	
passaddhi	tranquility	
pathavi	element of hardness	
paṭicca	get bonded to something willingly	
paṭigha	aversion, dislike	
patikūla manasikāra bhāvanā	4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?	
paṭipadā	a procedure; way of living, like in majjima patipāda	
paṭiniddesa	detailed description: Sutta – Introduction	
paṭisandhi	Grasping a new existence (bhava)	
paṭisevana	good associations as in paṭisevana pahātabba: The Sotāpanna Stage	
pattānumodanā	Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) – How Does it Happen?	
pattidāna	transfer of merits: Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) – How Does it Happen?	
pavutthi	during this life, current	
pīḷama (peleema in Sinhala)	incessant stress, agitation: Anicca – The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")	
peta (pretha)	hungry ghost; one of the four apāyā	
phala (pala in Sinhala)	fruit, fruition	
phassa	sense contact; most times it is defiled or samphassa: Difference between Phassa and Samphassa	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
pisuṇāvācā	slandering: Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)	
phoṭṭhabba	"poththa" + "abba", where "poththa" is skin: sense of touch	
pubbe	previous	
pubbenivāsānussati ñāṇa	see #12 of Antarābhava and Gandhabba	
puggala	individual	
puñña kriyā	deed that makes one's heart joyful	
purisa	masculine	
rāga	attachment to the 31 realms: Lobha, Rāga and Kāmaccanda, Kāmarāga	
rāgakkhaya	rāga + khaya: removal of attachment to the 31 realms	
rasa	taste	
rūpa	matter AND energy	
rūpa kalāpa	elementary material group unit: Rūpa Kalāpa (Grouping of Matter)	
rupavacara	belonging to rūpa loka	
sabba	all	
sacca	truth, as in a Noble Truth	
sadda	sound	
saddhā	faith (through knowledge and understanding)	
sahajāta	born together	
sahetuka	with good roots as in dvihetuka and tihetuka; if no good roots it is an ahetuka birth	
Sakadāgāmī	Once-Returner (one more rebirth in kāma loka)	
saḷāyatana	six sense bases for a normal human	
samādhi	concentration on a good or bad mindset: What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
samanantara	matching with anantara: Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā	
samāpatti	different from jhāna, see: Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs	
sammā	quench (defilements): What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)	
sammappadhāna	four main efforts to stop "san" from arising: Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment	
samatha	calming the mind	
sāmisa	citta with kilesa or akusala cetasika	
sampajāna	sorting defiled thoughts: Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure	
sampappalāpa	frivolous talk: Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)	
samphassa	"san" + "phassa": Difference between Phassa and Samphassa	
sampaṭiccana	where "gati" are incorporated into a citta vīthi: Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs	
sampayutta	together and inseparable, like a dye dissolved in water	
samudaya	arising due to "san": "san" + "udaya"	
samuppāda	birth of a similar kind: sama + uppada	
saṃvega or saŋvega	"san" + "vega": javana power in a citta due to "san": see #9 of Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power	
san	San	
sandiṭṭhiko	"san" + "diṭṭhi" or enable seeing "san": Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha	
saṅkappa	thoughts, ideas	
saṅkhāra	actions leading to defilements, habits	
saṅkhata (sankata in Sinhala)	arisen by conditions	
saññā	perception, identification	
saṃsāra or saŋsāra	beginningless rebirth process: What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
saṃsāric	related to the rebirth process	
santati	one of the 28 types of rūpa: Rūpa (Material Form)	
saṃvara	"san" + "vara" or stop "san" by moral behavior: What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)	
saṃvarena	via sanvara as in sanvarena pahatabba: The Sotāpanna Stage	
saṃvega	"san" + "vega": enhanced javana of a citta due to "san", i.e., highly emotional	
sapta or saptha	seven	
sāsana	Buddha sāsana is Ministry of the Buddha	
sasankhārika	immoral citta arising due to shrunken mind (thīna middha)	
sāsava	with craving	
satara (in Sinhala)	four	
sakkāya diṭṭhi (or sathkāya diṭṭhi)	perception that things in this world are worth striving for: How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Diṭṭhi)?	
sati	in the mindset of anicca, dukkha, anatta: Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction	
satipaṭṭhāna	maintain sati: Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta	
santīraṇa	where a decision is made in a citta vīthi: Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs	
sanyojana or saṃyojana	bind to defilements or "san"	
sīla	virtue, moral conduct	
silabbata paramasa	perception that Nibbāna can be attained via just obeying set precepts or procedures	
sekha	trainee (the three stages below the Arahant stage)	
sobhana	good, likable, moral	
soka	sorrow due to personal loss	
somanassa	with joy	
sota	Two possible meanings: ear and Noble Eightfold Path	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
Sotāpanna	Stream Enterer (first stage of Nibbāna)	
Suddhaṭṭhaka	smallest material element: The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka	
suddhāvāsa	Brahma realms reserved for the Anāgāmīs	
sugati	"su" + "gathi" or moral habits/behavior; also good realms: Sansāric Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsava)	
sukha	bodily pleasure, like with a massage; somannasa is mental	
sukuma	fine; not coarse	
suññatā	emptiness: What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?	
suta	sound	
sutta	discourse in the Tipiṭaka	
suva	as in Nivan suva:	
taṇhā	attachment (bondage) due to greed, hate, or delusion	
tatramajjhattatā	neutrality of mind; not upekkhā: Cetasika – Connection to Gati	
tejo	heat element	
Thero	One who has attained Nibbāna; nowadays it is used for non-Arahants bhikkhus too	
thīna	shrinking of the mind, not alert	
tuccha	lowly (behavior)	
tiparivaṭṭa	Three rounds of bondage to this world.	
tihetuka	paṭisandhi with three good roots	
tilakkhana	Three characteristics of the 31 realms: Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta	
Tipiṭaka	three piṭaka: sutta, vinaya, abhidhamma: Preservation of the Dhamma	
tisarana	refuge in Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha: Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati	
tiviijjā	Three special knowledges of the Buddha: The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
uccheda diṭṭhi	wrong view that death of the physical body is the end of a living being, i.e., disbelief in rebirth process	
udayavaya	arising and destruction of a saṅkhata (sankata in Sinhala): Udayavaya Ñāṇa	
udayavaya or udayabbaya ñāṇa	Udayavaya Ñāṇa	
uddhacca	tendency to be high-minded (restlessness)	
uddesa	very short description: Sutta – Introduction	
upacāra	close to	
upacāra samādhi	samādhi close to jhānic state	
upādāna	clinging, like to hold onto	
upekkha	equanimity, neutrality	
uppatti	birth	
utu	natural change kammaja and cittaja energies to rūpa	
utuja rūpa	rūpa produced via the transformation of kammaja and cittaja rūpa	
vacī	speech	
vaṇṇa (varna in sinhala)	color	
vaya	destruction or deviating to immorality	
vāyāma	effort	
vāyo	element of movement, motion	
vedanā	feeling or more precisely "sensing of an event": Vedanā (Feelings)	
vedanānupassanā	anupassanā on feelings: Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction	
veyyāvacca	paying homage to and taking care of Holy places: Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā	
vibhava	disbelief in rebirth: Kāma Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā	
vicāra	sustained concentration on a thought object	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
vicikicchā	acting without sati; uncertainty of what to do; doing inappropriate things	
vipassanā	insight meditation with and for clear vision: 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?	
vimāna	residence, normally of a deva	
vimansā	contemplation, investigation	
vimutti	release (from the rebirth process)	
vinaya	rules of discipline for bhikkhus: Kamma, Debt, and Meditation	
viññāṇañcāyatana	second arūpi brahma realm: 31 Realms of Existence	
viññata	comprehension via viññāṇa	
viññati	intimation. For example, kāya viññati is express intention via body movement.	
viññāṇa	defiled consciousness	
viññāṇañcāyatana	second arūpa brahma realm: 31 Realms of Existence	
vinodanā	in vinodanaā pahatabba: The Sotāpanna Stage	
vipāka	result (of a kamma)	
viparināma	unexpected change	
vipassanā	removing defilements via insight of Tilakkhaṇa	
vippayutta	appear together, but separable; like a current in a wire	
virati	lose craving for indulgence	
viriya	effort	
visuddhi	purification	
vitakka	initial application of the mind on an object	
vīthi	street; but in a citta vīthi means a "packet of thoughts" with a certain number of citta	
votthapana	determining (citta)	

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Pāli Word	Meaning	Audio
vyāpāda or byāpāda	ill will, stronger than paṭigha	
yojanā	distance of about 7 miles	
yoniso manasikāra	ability to see consequences of one's actions for future rebirths: Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala	

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7.4 List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots

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1. Pāli is a phonetic language. It does not have its own alphabet. *Tipiṭaka* was originally written down in Pāli with the Sinhala alphabet.

- Pāli verses are composed for ease of oral transmission. *Tipiṭaka* was orally transmitted faithfully for several hundred years.
- So, in many cases, root words are hidden in combined words in verses that were composed to rhyme better for easy oral transmission.

2. Rather than trying to find roots in Sanskrit, that is the way to find the roots. As I explained with evidence from the *Tipiṭaka*, **the Buddha prohibited the use of Sanskrit words, or even to translate the *Tipiṭaka* to Sanskrit**; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

- That is because despite some similarities, Sanskrit many words were composed to sound more "impressive", without paying attention to embedded meanings.
- For example, *Pratītyasamutpāda* is the Sanskrit term for *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. *Pratītyasamutpāda* sounds impressive but the meaning is not clear at all.
- On the other hand, it is clear in *pati* + *icca* leading to *sama* + *uppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

3. Pali words are combined in ways to rhyme better. By finding key root-words embedded in such "combined words", one can easily figure out the meaning.

- "*yadaniccam tam dukkham, yam dukkham tadanattā*" verse appears in many *suttā*.
- In order to understand it, we need to "expand it" or "unfold it": "*yad aniccam tam dukkham, yam dukkham tad anattā*."
- Now the meaning becomes clear: "*anicca* nature leads to dukkha, dukkha nature leads to anatta nature"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

4. The following are some examples of combination of words to make a verse rhyme better for oral transmission.

Naidham = *na idham* or "not the case."

Ayamantimā jāti = *ayam* +*antima* + *jāti* or "my last birth."

Nūppajjati = *na* + *uppajjati*: "will not arise."

Cittappasāda = *citta* + *pasāda*; note the two p's in the combined word that allow it to rhyme better.

Similarly in: *Rūpakkhandha* = *rūpa khandha*: "*rūpa* aggregate."

Aveccappasāda = *ava icca pasāda* or "faith that leads to overcoming *taṇhā* (attachment)."

Buddha = *bhava* + *uddha:* one who figured out how to stop existences (*bhava*) from arising.

Bhavaṅga = *bhava* + *aṅga*; intrinsic aspect of *bhava.*

Sakkāya = *sath* + *kāya:* good collections usually referring to the five aggregates. *Sakkāya diṭṭhi* is the view that the five aggregates should be embraced.

Anāpāna = *āna* + *āpāna*: "taking in" and "putting out."

Note the pronunciation of the following words sort of backwards to rhyme better:

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- *Anāgāmi* = *na āgāmi*: not coming back (in reference to not to come back to *kāma loka* for a person who has attained the *Anāgāmi* stage of *Nibbāna.*
- *Anatimāna* = *na* + *atimāna*: *atimāna* is "high-mindedness" and *anatimāna* is opposite or "humble."

5. **Just by knowing what is meant by the root "*san*," many Pāli words can be understood easily**; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)."

- Note that some words are written and pronounced with emphasis on "m" rather than "n", because it rhymes better that way; a good example is *saṃsāra* (*saŋsāra*) which can be written and pronounced either way.
- On the other hand, *sammā* comes from "*san*" + "*mā*," but always pronounced as "*sammā*," because it rhymes easier that way; eg., *sammā diṭṭhi*, *sammā saṅkappa*, etc.
- It must be kept in mind that "*san*" has various levels. First one needs to remove '*san*' that lead to immoral activities that can lead to births in the *apāyā*; after one becomes a *Sotāpanna*, one should strive to eliminate "*san*" involving sense pleasures; after becoming an *Anāgāmi*, the goal is to remove "*san*" associated with *rūpa* and *arūpa jhāna*. I only stated "sense pleasures" in the Table.

6. I plan to add another table for Pāli words with a few more key "roots."

Pāli Words with "San" Root

No	Pāli Word	Roots	Meaning of added word	Meaning of whole word
1	Sammā	san + mā	mā means to "remove"	associated with removing "san"
2	sammāpaṭipatti	san + mā +patipatti	patipatti is a process	method or effort to remove "san"
3	sammāvimutti	san + mā + vimutti	vimutti is complete release	Arahant phala; Nibbāna
4	Sammanti	san + mā	like gaccā to gaccanti	attaining peacefulness by removing "san"
5	samantano	san + anta; rhymes like samananta	anta is end	a process that gets rid of "san"
6	Sammā diṭṭhi	Sammā + diṭṭhi	diṭṭhi is vision (here to see Tilakkhaṇa)	clear vision to see danger of (and how to remove) "san"
7	Sammā saṅkappa	Sammā + saṅkappa	saṅkappa are conscious/unconscious thoughts	thoughts to removing "san"
8	Sammā vācā	Sammā + vācā	vācā is conscious thoughts/speech	speech to remove "san"
9	Sammā kammanta	Sammā + kammanta	kammanta is actions	bodily actions to remove "san"
10	Sammā ajīva	Sammā + ajīva	ajīva is way one lives	living style to remove "san"
11	Sammā vāyāma	Sammā + vāyāma	vāyāma is effort	effort to remove "san"
12	Sammā sati	Sammā + sati	sati is mindfulness (about Tilakkhaṇa)	mindfulness to remove "san"
13	Sammā samādhi	Sammā + samādhi	samādhi is the state of equanimity (sama + adhi)	state of samādhi resulting from removing "san"

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No	Pāli Word	Roots	Meaning of added word	Meaning of whole word
14	Sambhava	san + bhava	bhava is existence	existence due to "san"
15	Sambuddha	san + bhava + uddha	uddha is rooting out	one who rooted out existence in 31 realms
16	Sambodhi			state attained by a sambuddha; Nibbāna
17	Sambhūta	san + bhūta	bhūta refers to satara mahā bhūta	creation of bhūta via "san" in the mind; The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka
18	Sammapaññā	sammā + paññā	paññā is wisdom	wisdom to see the way to remove "san"
19	Sammā-Sambodhi (Sammā-Sambuddha)		Emphasizing the achievement of sambodhi on one's own	reserved for the Buddhas
20	Sammatta	san+mā+atta	atta means the "truths leading to sammā"	Sammatta niyama is a knowledge of a Sotāpanna.
21	Sambojjanga	san +bodhi+aṅga; rhymes as sambojjanga	"aṅga" means factors	Factors that lead to Sambodhi
22	Sampajāna (Sampajanna)	san + pajāna	pajāna is to comprehend	to figure out defilements (san)
23	sammappadhāna	san + mā+ padhāna	mā is to remove; padhāna means "first"	first to do to remove "san"
24	Sambandha	san + bandha	bandha is to bind, associate with	bind with someone/something with "san"
25	sambhāvitā	san + bhāvitā	bhāvitā is to use	engage in "san" or sense pleasures
26	Sambheda	san + bheda	bheda means to quarrel	fighting over pleasurable things or "san"
27	Sambhīta	san + bhīta	bhīta means to terrify	"san" leading to terror (in mind or in future births)
28	Sambhoga	san + bhoga	bhoga means pleasurable things, especially food	sense pleasures
29	Sambhunjati	san + bhunja	bhunja means to eat or consume	engage in sense pleasures
30	sammoha	san + moha	moha is delusion	extreme delusion
31	sampādesi / sampādeta	san + pādesi	pādesi is to sort out and see	to clarify what is "san", as in "vaya dhammā saṅkhāra, appamādena sampādeta".
32	sampahanseti	san +pahāna	pahāna is to remove	to remove "san"
33	sampañño	san + pañño	pañño means with wisdom, possessive of paññā	attained wisdom to see 'san"
34	Sampajāna	san + pajāna	pajāna is to clarify	sort out or to clarify "san"

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No	Pāli Word	Roots	Meaning of added word	Meaning of whole word
35	sampayoga	san + payoga	payoga is a clever plan to get something done	plan to access a pleasurable thing
36	Samphassa	san + phassa	contact with san (in the mind)	Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
37	Sampassati	san + passati	passati means to comprehend	comprehend "san'
38	sankiliṭṭha or saṃkiliṭṭha	san + kilittha	kilittha is to defile	making mind defiled by adding "san"
39	sankilesa or saṃkilesa	san + kilesa	kilesa are defilements	things that defile the mind
40	Samsāra (Saṃsāra)	san + sāra	sāra means "good"	perception that san (things in this world) are good.
41	Sanseva (Samseva)	san + seva	seva means to "associate"	to indulge in worldly pleasures
42	Samucceda (as in samucceda pahāna)	san + ucceda	ucceda means to "remove from the roots"; pahāna is remove	samucceda pahāna means to "get rid of permanently"
43	saṃyoga or sanyoga	san + yoga	yoga is to bind	bound with "san" (to this world)
44	saṃyojanā or sanyojanā	san + yo +ja	"yo' is to bind; "ja" is to produce	factors that leads to bonds to rebirth process
45	samudaya	san + udaya	udaya is to arise	arising due to "san"
46	Samutthāna	san + utthāna	utthāna means "where it arises"	Samutthāna citta is same as cittaja; where "san" originates (mind)
47	samvāsa or sanvāsa	san + vāsa	vāsa live with	live together; sexual intercourse
48	Samvara (Sanvara)	san + vara	vara means to stop, avoid	moral behavior
49	Samvaddha	san + vaddha	vaddha is to "grow"	to add "san", i.e., defilements
50	Samvannanā	san + vannanā	vannanā is to praise	to praise immoral acts
51	Samvattana (Samvattati)	san + vattana	vattana is to "drop"	aiding in removing "san"
52	samvedanā or sanvedanā	san + vedanā	vedanā is to feel	feelings due to "san": samphassa jā vedanā
53	saṃvidhāna or sanvidhāna	san + vidhāna	vidhāna means ordering	giving orders, organize (normally used mundanely)
54	saṃsaraṇa or sansaraṇa	san + sarana	sarana means move around, travel	wandering in saṃsāra
55	Saṃyutta (as in Saṃyutta Nikāya)	san + yutta	yutta means "contains"	Suttā in the Saṃyutta Nikāya explain "san" terms
56	Sancetanā	san + cetanā	cetanā is intention (in a thought)	defiled thoughts

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No	Pāli Word	Roots	Meaning of added word	Meaning of whole word
57	sanditthika	san + diṭṭhi	diṭṭhi is seeing, vision	seeing "san" with Buddha Dhamma
58	Sangāyanā	san + gāyanā	gāyanā is to recite	Buddhist Council where suttā describing "san" are recited.
59	Sanga	san + ga	ga is to attach,	attach to "san"
60	Sangati	san + gati	gati is character, habit	bad character/habits
61	Saṅgha	san + gha	gha is to remove	Those who have removed "san" belong to Sanhga; Nobles or Ariyā, but usu. include bhikkhus
62	Sāṅghika	possessive of Saṅgha		offered to Saṅgha
63	Sangīta (Sangeetha)	san + gīta	gīta is a poem, song	music that bend mind towards sense pleasures
64	sankalpana or saṅkappa	san + kalpana	kalpnana means conscious thoughts	defiled thoughts
65	sankhitta	san + kitta	kitta is action (kriya)	anything done with 'san' (defilements) in mind
66	Sansun	san + sûn (û rhymes like put)	sûn means to destroy	calming the mind via removing "san"
67	Sanvara	san + vara	vara is to stay away from	discipline via staying away from "san", i.e., moral behavior
68	sanvega or samvega	san + vega	vega is speed or rapidity	enhanced javana of a citta due to "san", i.e., highly emotional
69	saṅkhāra (should really be sankāra)	san + kāra	kāra is action (all actions are initiated via thoughts)	Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means
70	Sankata	san + kata	kata is a result	produced via saṅkhāra; anything in this world
71	Sansāra (Saṃsāra)	San + Sāra	Sāra is good, beneficial	What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)
72	Santāpa	san + tāpa	tāpa is heat	heating of the mind due to "san"
73	Santutti (or Santhutti)	san + thutti	thutti is to remove: Arogya Parama Labha..	ease of mind when "san" removed; but commonly used to indicate happiness

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7.5 The 89 (121) Types of Citta

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Citta for Kamaloka (in the 11 sense realms) - 54 in all

There are three main types of citta here: The differentiation is based on whether they have immoral roots (*lobha, dosa, moha*), *kammically* moral roots (*alobha, adosa, amoha*), or are *kammically* neutral, i.e., no roots.

- **12 immoral *citta***: 8 with *lobha* roots; 2 with *dosa* roots; 2 with *moha* roots. All ten immoral acts (*dasa akusala*) are done with these 12 types of *cittā*. Because of these 12 types of immoral *cittā*, **7 rootless (*ahetuka*) *vipāka cittā*** can arise in the future. Thus altogether there are **19 cittā in this category**.
- **8 moral *cittā***: 4 with all three moral roots and 4 with two moral roots (lacking in wisdom). They can give rise to two types of *vipāka citta*: **8 *vipāka cittā* with no roots**, and **8 *vipāka citta* with moral roots** (4 of them have all three moral roots and other 4 are lacking in wisdom). Thus **24 types of citta are mentioned here**, from which 16 have moral roots and 8 are rootless (*ahetuka*).
- When these same **8 moral *citta* arise in *Arahants*, they are called *kriya citta*** or functional *citta*. They just have the same moral roots as the 8 moral citta mentioned above, but do not have any *kammic* potential or *kammic* consequences.
- All those citta with moral roots (8 *kriya cittā* for *Arahants* and 16 for others) are called *sobhana* (beautiful) citta.
- Finally, there are **3 types of *kiriya citta* that arise in *citta vīthi* which are neither *kamma* nor *kamma vipāka***. These are the 3 *kriya citta* without any roots, and thus are rootless (*ahetuka*) *citta*. Two of these perform functions of (i) five-sense-door adverting consciousness (*pancadvaravajjana citta*) and the *vottapana citta*, and (ii) mind-door-adverting consciousness (*manodvaravajjana citta*). (iii)The third one arises in only *Arahants* (when they smile about sense-sphere phenomena).
- Note that none of the 7 *akusala vipāka citta* has roots. Also, 8 *kusala vipāka citta* associated with *pavutti vipāka* (i.e, not giving rise to rebirth) also do not have any roots. Those 15 *citta* together with the three *ahetuka kiriya citta* are involved in the *vipāka* phase of a given *citta vīthi*. They do not have any *sobhana* or *asobhana cetasika* other than the 7 universal *cetasika* and the 6 *pakinnaka* (particualrs) *cetasika*; see, "Cetasika – Connection to Gathi" for various types of *cetasika*. These 18 *citta* are listed on p. 112 of Ref.1 under the second group below the group of *akusala citta*.

Those 54 *kamaloka citta* can be categorized in different ways.

Asobhana (Unbeautiful)		Sobhana (Beautiful)
Immoral- 12	**Rootless – 18**	**Moral -24**
Lobha (8)	Immoral *Vipāka* (7)	*Moral* (8)
Dosa (2)	Moral *Vipāka* (8)	Moral *Vipāka* (8)
Moha (2)	*Kriya* (3)	*Kriya* (8)

Citta for Rupaloka (in the 16 Rūpa realms) - 15 in all

1. There are only 15 citta that are predominantly present in the *Rupaloka*. Five are *jhānic* moral *citta* and five are *vipāka cittā* due to those.

2. The five *jhānic* moral *citta* can be experienced by humans when they develop *samādhi* and attain these (first through fifth) *jhānā*. However, they can experience the corresponding five *vipāka citta* only when they are born in *Rupalokas*.

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3. The five *jhānic* states are characterized by five *jhāna* factors or mental concomitants: *vitakka* (initial application), *vicara* (sustained application), *pīti* (zest), *sukha* (happiness), and *ekaggata* (one-pointedness). All five factors are present in the first *jhāna*, and as one moves to higher *jhānā,* these factors are lost one by one, and in the fifth *jhāna* only *ekaggata* is left.

Pīti (zest) is the happiness in the mind and *sukha* (happiness) is the tranquility of the body.

4. There are five more *jhānic kriya citta* experienced by *Arahants* when they attain these *jhānā*.

Thus there are 15 citta in all that predominantly belong to the *Rupaloka*.

Citta for Arupaloka (in the 4 Arūpa realms)- 12 in all

1. There are only 12 citta that are predominantly present in the *Arupaloka*. Four are jhānic moral *citta* and four are *vipāka citta* due to those.

2. The four *jhānic* moral citta can be experienced by humans when they develop samādhi and attain these (fifth through eighth) *jhānā*. However, they can experience the corresponding four *vipāka citta* only when they are born in *Arupaloka*.

3. The first of the four *Arupaloka jhānā* is the attainment of the base of infinite space (*Akasanancayatana*). A human needs to master the fourth jhāna (*Rupaloka*) in order to be able to attain this *jhāna*.

The second is the base of infinite consciousness (*vinnanacayatana*). The third is the base of nothingness (*akincannayatana*), and the fourth is the base of neither-perception-nor-non-perception (*n' evasanna n'asannayatana*). In this last type of consciousness, the factor of perception (*saññā*) is so subtle that it can no longer perform the function of perception, i.e., one is unaware of the "world." Yet perception is not altogether absent. This is another reason why the ancient *yogis* erroneously assumed this eighth *jhāna* to be *Nibbāna*.

4. There are four more *Arupaloka jhānic kriya citta* experienced by *Arahants* when they attain these *jhānā*.

Thus there are 12 citta in all that predominantly belong to the *Arupaloka*.

Lokuttara (Supermundane) Citta – 8 in all

1. These pertain to the four stages of *Nibbānic* attainment: *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī,* and *Arahant*.

2. Each stage involves two types of *citta*: one is path consciousness (*magga citta*), and the other is fruition consciousness (*phala citta*).The *magga citta* has the function of eradicating or permanently attenuating defilements. The *phala citta* has the function of experiencing the degree of liberation made possible by the *magga citta*.

3. Each *magga citta* arises only once, and endures for one thought-moment. It is never repeated. The corresponding *phala citta* (which corresponds to a *vipāka citta,* but is not called a *vipāka citta*) arises immediately after the *magga citta*. This is in contrast to mundane *vipāka cittā* where they can occur even many lifetimes after the corresponding *kusala* or *akusala citta*.

4. The *phala citta* can be repeated any time after one attains it. With practice, it can be sustained for long times, up to 7 days for an *Arahant*.

Thus, there are 54 + 15 + 12 + 8 = 89 *citta* in all.

How 121 Types of Citta are Possible

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1. It is possible to further analyze the types of citta by refining the above method by taking into the fact that each magga phala can be reached from the vicinity of each jhānic state.

- One can attain *Nibbanic* states via the vicinity of each of the five *rupaloka jhānic* states **(here the *Abhidhamma* method of 5 *jhānā* is used, instead of four mentioned in the *suttā***, where the first two *jhāna* in *Abhidhamma* categorization are taken to be one *jhāna*; in the *Abhidhamma* analysis *vitakka* and *vicara* are removed in two steps, whereas in the *sutta* analysis it is assumed that they are removed in one step).
- Therefore, each of the five *jhānic* states can lead to the four *magga cittā* and four *phala cittā*.
- Thus here there are 40 ways to attain *lokuttara cittā*. Therefore, the total number of citta in this case would be 121 (= 54 + 15 + 12 +40) instead of 89.

2. **Therefore, *magga phala* (including the *Arahant* stage) can be reached via going through any of the *jhānic* states or without going through any *jhānic* state.**

- Of course, the 8 *lokuttara citta* (i.e., the four stages of *Nibbāna*) arrived are the same, regardless of whether arrived via *jhāna* or not.

Important Conclusion Regarding Jhāna and Magga Phala

From the above it is clear that *magga phala* can be attained without *jhāna* (89 *citta* analysis applicable). *Magga phala* can also be attained via each of the five *jhānic* states (in the *Abhidhamma* method), which correspond to the 4 *jhānā* discussed in the *suttā;* here the 89 *citta* analysis is applicable.

- **Furthermore, these *jhānic* states can be reached via either *anāriya jhāna* or *Ariya jhāna*. The experience seems to be the same.**
- The only difference is that while *kāma rāga* is suppressed (*vikkhambhana pahāna*) in *anāriya jhāna*, it is REMOVED (*samucceda pahāna*) in *Ariya jhāna*.
- For details, see, "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

REFERENCE

1. "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma", by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000).

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7.6 Cetasika (Mental Factors)

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Cetasika (mental factors; pronounced "chethasikā") appear concomitantly with *citta* (thoughts; pronounced "chiththā"), and they cease together with *citta*. They define the character (good or bad or neutral) of the *citta*.

- The way to "Lead a Moral Life," or to "Seek Good Rebirths," or to "Seek Nibbāna," is to get rid of the bad (un-beautiful) *cetasika* and to cultivate good (beautiful) *cetasika*. This is done by changing one's habits via learning Dhamma and practicing it: see, "Habits and Goals," "Sansāric Habits and āsavas," and "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā," in that order.

1. There are 7 *cetasika* that are in each and every *citta*. These are called **universals** or (*sabba citta sādhāraṇa*):

- *Phassa* (contact); *vedanā* (feeling); *saññā* (perception); *cetanā* (volition); *Ekaggata* (One-pointedness) can become *Sammā Samādhi*; *jīvitindriya* (life faculty) *manasikāra* (memory).

2. Since they are universals, the above *cetasika* appear in both *kusala* and *akusala citta*. All are important mental factors:

- *Saññā* and *vedanā* are in *pañcakkhandha*.
- *Cetanā* determines *kamma*; it is the *cetasika* that "puts together a *citta*" by automatically incorporating other relevant *cetasika* according to one's "*gati*."
- *Ekaggata* is the salient factor in *samādhi*.
- Consciousness cannot arise without *phassa*. Note that *samphassa* is different from *phassa*; see, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."
- *Jīvitindriya* maintains life, and
- *Manasikāra* can be either *yoniso manasikāra* (important in attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage), and *ayoniso manasikāra* can lead to accumulation of *akusala kamma*.

3. There are six cetasika that also CAN appear in both types of *cittā*: *kusala* and *akusala*. However, they are found in only particular types of cittā. They are called **particulars** or *pakiṇṇaka*: [***pakiṇṇaka*** :(adj.) [*pa+kiṇṇa* (pp. of *kirati*)+*ka*] scattered about; fig. miscellaneous, particular, opp. to *sādhāraṇa*.]

- *vitakka* (focused application) can become *Sammā Saṅkappa*; *vicāra* (sustained application); *adhimokkha* (dominate). *Adhimokkha* is the *cetasika* that makes another *cetasika* in the *citta* to dominate; for example, to get *uddhacca, vicikicchā*, or *paṭigha* to strengthen.
- *viriya* (effort) can become *Sammā Vayāma* ; *pīti* (joy); *chanda* (desire, not greed).
- **These are important *cetasika* and play key roles in morality/immorality since they can appear in both *kusala* and *akusala citta*.** For example, when one's mind is covered with deep ignorance (*moha*), one may enjoy immoral deeds (*pīti*), makes a liking for them (*chanda*), and strive more (*viriya*) to do such acts.

4. Just like universals, these particulars can appear in either type of *cittā*, *kusala* or *akusala*. *Vitakka, vicāra*, and *pīti* are *jhāna* factors as well.

- *Viriya* and *chanda* are two factors in the four bases of mental power; see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada)."
- *Adhimokka* is important in decision making by making another *cetasika* dominant. All these factors can go in an *immoral* direction too.

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5. There are 14 *asobhana cetasika* (**non-beautiful mental factors**) that appear only in *akusala citta*. Out of these, there are four universals that appear in ALL *akusala citta*:

- *Moha* (delusion); *Ahirika* (shamelessness); *Anottapa* (fearlessness in wrong); *uddhacca* (restlessness or agitation).
- Both shamelessness and fearlessness of wrong encourage doing immoral acts. Restlessness causes unwise decision making.

The other 10 are occasional that appear in only particular types of *akusala citta*:

- *Lobha* (greed); *diṭṭhi* (wrong view); *māna* (conceit); *dosa* (hatred); *issā* (envy); *macchariya* (avarice, also pretending one does not have wealth); *kukkucca* (worry, also feeling low); *thīna* (sloth, sluggishness); *middha* (torpor); *vicikicchā* (doubt arising from temptations).
- *Lobha* and *dosa* are two of the three immoral roots. Sloth and torpor normally rise together and are opposite of *viriya*; they are listed as one factor in Five Hindrances; see, "Key to Calming the Mind."

6. There are 25 *sobhana cetasika* (**beautiful mental factors**) that appear only in *kusala citta*. Out of those, 19 of them appear in each and every *kusala citta*, and thus are called beautiful universals:

- *Saddhā* (faith); *sati* (moral mindfulness) can become *Sammā Sati*; *hiri* (shame of wrong); *ottappa* (fear of wrong); *alobha* (absence of greed); *adosa* (absence of hate/anger, of which mettā or "loving-kindness" is a part); *tatramajjhattatā* (neutrality of mind, of which upekkhā is a part); *kāyapassaddhi* (tranquility of mental body); *cittapassaddhi* (tranquility of consciousness); *kāyalahutā* (lightness of mental body); *cittalahutā* (lightness of consciousness); *kāyamudutā* (malleability of mental body); *cittamudutā* (malleability of consciousness); *kāyakammaññatā* (wieldiness of mental body); *cittakammaññatā* (wieldiness of consciousness); *kāyapaguññatā* (proficiency of mental body); *cittapaguññatā* (proficiency of consciousness); *kāyujjukatā* (rectitude of mental body); *cittujjukatā* (rectitude of consciousness).

The other six are occasionals that appear in only particular types of *kusala citta*:

- There are three abstinences: *Sammā Vācā* (right speech); *Sammā Kammanta* (right action); *Sammā Ājīva* (right livelihood).
- Two Illimitables (limit-less): *karuṇā* (compassion); *muditā* (appreciative joy; joy at other's moral success).
- *Paññā* or *paññindriya* (wisdom or wisdom faculty). *Sammā Diṭṭhi* leads to *paññā*.

7. Mental factors in the Noble Eightfold Path are highlighted in green.

8. Immoral roots are highlighted in red. Moral roots are highlighted in purple.

9. As a rule, *sobhana* and *asobhana cetasika* CANNOT appear together in a given *citta*.

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7.7 Rūpa (Material Form) – Table

Revised April 22, 2020; August 16, 2020

We discuss the 28 types of *rūpa* (material form) in Buddha Dhamma. For discussions on *rūpa*, see, "What are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)" and "Rupa (Material Form)."

Concretely Produced (*Nipphanna*)	Abstract (*Anipphanna*) Rūpa
I. Great Elements (*Mahā Bhūta*)	**VII. Limiting Phenomenon**
1. *Pathavi* (Extension/Hardness)	19. *Ākasa dhātu* (space element)
2. *Apo* (Cohesion/Fluidity)	**IX. Communicating (*Viññati*) *Rūpa***
3. *Tejo* (Heat/Hotness)	20. *Kāya Viññati*
4. *Vāyo* (Motion/Pushing & Supporting)	21. *Vacī Viññati*
II. Internal (*Pasāda*) *Rūpa*	**X. Mutable (*Vikāra*) *Rūpa***
5. *Cakkhu* (eye element)	22. *Lahutā* (lightness)
6. *Sota* (ear element)	23. *Mudutā* (Elasticity)
7. *Ghana* (nose element)	24. *Kammaññatā* (weildiness)
8. *Jivhā* (tongue element)	**XI. Material Qualities (*Lakkhaṇa Rūpa*)**
9. Kāya (body element)	25. *Upacaya* (production)
III. *Gocara* (Objective) *Rūpa*	26. *Santati* (continuity)
10. *Vaṇṇa* (visible)	27. *Jaratā* (Decay)
11. *Sadda* (Sound)	28. *Aniccatā* (Dissolving)
12. *Gandha* (Smell)	
13. *Rasa* (Taste)	
* *Phoṭṭhabba* (Tangibility, warmth, and movement) comes from 3 *mahā bhūta* of *pathavi*, *tejo*, *vāyo*	
IV. *Bhāva* (Faculties of sex) *Rūpa*	
14. *Itthi* (Feminine)	
15. *Purisa* (Masculine)	
V. *Hadaya* (Mind Base)	
16. *Hadaya Vatthu* (seat of the mind)	
VI. Life	
17. *Jīvitindriya* (Life faculty)	
VII. Nutritional	

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18. *Oja* (Nutriment)	

Types of *Rupā*

- The four great elements (#1 through #4) and the four *gocara rūpa* (#10 through #13) ALWAYS appear together. They can NEVER be detected by themselves. They come in together as *suddhāṭṭhaka* (meaning the smallest collection of those eight types of *rūpa*.) See, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."
- **There are nine *rūpa* created ONLY by *kammic* energy at the *paṭisandhi* moment.** Those are the five *pasāda rūpa* (#5 through #9), and four other *rūpa* (#14 through #17) including the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*).
- The 16 *rūpa* that are highlighted in blue are fine (*sukuma*) *rūpa*. The other 12 are coarse (*oḷārika*) *rūpa*.
- *Nipphanna rūpa* are caused by *kamma*, *citta*, *utu* (*tejo*), and *āhāra* (*oja*). The other 10 (*anipphanna rūpa*) are not caused or conditioned by *kamma, citta, utu* (*tejo*), and *āhāra* (*oja*).
- The 10 types of *anipphanna rūpa* (on the right side of the Table) are abstract *rūpa*.

Types of *Rūpā* Present in Different Realms

- All the 28 *rūpā* arise in the *kāma*-realms. Eight *rūpā* comprising *sadda*, five *vikāra-rūpā, jaratā-rūpa* and *aniccatā-rūpa*, do not arise at the moment of birth (*paṭisandhi*) whereas, during life time, there is no *rūpa* which is not formed.
- In the 15 *rūpa* realms, with the exception of *Asaññā*-realm, 23 *rūpā* arise (*ghāṇa-pasāda, jivhā-pasāda, kāya-pasāda, itthi-bhava* and *purisa-bhava* being excluded).
- Only 17 *rūpā* arise in the *Asaññā* realm. They are the eight *avinibbhogas* (four *mahā bhūta* and *vaṇṇa, gandha, rasa, oja*), *jivita rūpa, ākāsa dhātu*, three *lahutadi*, and four *lakkhana- rūpā*;
- No *rūpa* above the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level arise(except for *hadaya vatthu*) arise in the *arūpa*-realms. Thus, a trace of matter is present anywhere in the 31 realms. Ancient *yogis*, who attained all eight *anāriya jhānā*, could not see any *rūpa* in the *arūpa loka* and deduced that was *Nibbāna*. But *rūpa* still has a "foothold" in the *arūpa loka* since any being in the *arūpa loka* will be reborn in other realms in the future (unless at least the *Sotāpanna* stage is attained.) Thus linkage to matter has not been severed in *arūpa loka*.

Definitions from *Dhammasaṅgaṇī*

The following are quoted from the "*Rūpavibhatti* DS 2.2.3" section of *Dhammasaṅgaṇī of the Tipiṭaka.*

- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ **itthindriyaṃ**? Yaṃ itthiyā itthiliṅgaṃ itthinimittaṃ itthikuttaṃ itthākappo itthattaṃ itthibhāvo—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ itthindriyaṃ.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ **purisindriyaṃ**? Yaṃ purisassa purisaliṅgaṃ purisanimittaṃ purisakuttaṃ purisākappo purisattaṃ purisabhāvo—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ purisindriyaṃ.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ **jīvitindriyaṃ**? Yo tesaṃ rūpīnaṃ dhammānaṃ āyu ṭhiti yapanā yāpanā iriyanā vattanā pālanā jīvitaṃ jīvitindriyaṃ—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ jīvitindriyaṃ.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ **kāyaviññatti**? Yā kusalacittassa vā akusalacittassa vā abyākatacittassa vā abhikkamantassa vā paṭikkamantassa vā ālokentassa vā vilokentassa vā samiñjentassa vā pasārentassa vā kāyassa thambhanā santhambhanā santhambhitattaṃ viññatti viññāpanā viññāpitattaṃ—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ kāyaviññatti.*

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- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ **vacīviññatti**? Yā kusalacittassa vā akusalacittassa vā abyākatacittassa vā vācā girā byappatho udīraṇaṃ ghoso ghosakammaṃ vācā vacībhedo—ayaṃ vuccati vācā. Yā tāya vācāya viññatti viññāpanā viññāpitattaṃ—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ vacīviññatti.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ **ākāsadhātu**? Yo ākāso ākāsagataṃ aghaṃ aghagataṃ vivaro vivaragataṃ asamphuṭṭhaṃ catūhi mahābhūtehi—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ ākāsadhātu.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa **lahutā**? Yā rūpassa lahutā lahupariṇāmatā adandhanatā avitthanatā—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa lahutā.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa **mudutā**? Yā rūpassa mudutā maddavatā akakkhaḷatā akathinatā —idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa mudutā.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa **kammaññatā**? Yā rūpassa kammaññatā kammaññattaṃ kammaññabhāvo—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa kammaññatā.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa **upacayo**? Yo āyatanānaṃ ācayo, so rūpassa upacayo— idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa upacayo.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa **santati**? Yo rūpassa upacayo, sā rūpassa santati— idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa santati.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa **jaratā**? Yā rūpassa jarā jīraṇatā khaṇḍiccaṃ pāliccaṃ valittacatā āyuno saṃhāni indriyānaṃ paripāko—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa jaratā.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa **aniccatā**? Yo rūpassa khayo vayo bhedo paribhedo aniccatā antaradhānaṃ—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ rūpassa aniccatā.*
- *Katamaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ kabaḷīkāro **āhāro**? Odano kummāso sattu maccho maṃsaṃ khīraṃ dadhi sappi navanītaṃ telaṃ madhu phāṇitaṃ, yaṃ vā panaññampi atthi rūpaṃ yamhi yamhi janapade tesaṃ tesaṃ sattānaṃ mukhāsiyaṃ dantavikhādanaṃ galajjhoharaṇīyaṃ kucchivitthambhanaṃ, yāya ojāya sattā yāpenti—idaṃ taṃ rūpaṃ kabaḷīkāro āhāro.*

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7.8 Rūpa – Generation Mechanisms

1. *Rūpa* (or matter) can be generated by four causes: *kamma, citta, utu,* and *Āhāra* (food). I will discuss these in detail later.

- *Kamma* here refers to volition (*cetanā*). The 25 kinds of *kamma* that produce *rūpā* are the volitions of the 12 *akusala cittā*, 8 great *kusala cittā*, and the five *rūpa loka kusala cittā*. These *rūpa* are created with a time lag, when *kamma vipāka* bear fruits, like at the *paṭisandhi* to a new life. The three *rūpa dasaka* of *vatthu, kāya*, and *bhava* are created at *paṭisandhi* by *kamma vipāka*.
- The *rūpa* produced by the *cittā* arise **at the same time as the *citta*** themselves, and only at the rising part of the *cittā*. Out of the 89 possible *cittā*, 75 *cittā* can produce *rūpa* (4 *arūpa loka vipāka cittā* and the two sets of fivefold sense consciousness cannot produce *rūpa*).
- Thus both *kammaja* and *cittaja* rūpa have mind as the direct cause. Both of these decay rapidly and are converted to *utuja rūpa*. What we normally see are the *utuja rūpa* and *āhārajā rūpa,* which have their origins also in the great elements of *tejo* and *oja.*
- The great element *tejo* is responsible for producing *utu samutthana rūpa*: Beginning from the moment of rebirth-linking, the internal *tejo* element found in the *rūpa kalapas* born of *kamma* combines with the external *tejo* and starts producing organic material phenomena originating from *tejo*. Thereafter the *tejo* element in the *rūpa kalapas* born of all four causes produces organic material phenomena born of *tejo* element throughout the life. Externally, *tejo* element also produces inorganic material phenomena, such as climatic and geological transformations.
- The nutritive essence, *oja*, is present in all *rūpa-kalapas* both inside the body (internal) and outside the body (external). The external food, which is eaten, is digested in the stomach and dispersed through blood to all parts of the body. So the internal *oja* and the external *oja* meet in every part of the body. The combination of internal and external *oja* produce *āhārajā rūpas*.

2. The 8 *rūpā* of *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, vaṇṇa, gandha, rasa,* and *oja* are ALWAYS found together. That unit or *kalapa* is the smallest *rūpa* unit and is called the pure octad (*suddhaṭṭhaka*). **Those 8 *rūpā* and the *ākāsa dhātu* are produced by all four causes**.

3. The four *lakkhaṇa rūpā* of *upacaya, santati, jaratā,* and *aniccatā* are not produced by any cause. They represent the nature of *rūpā*.

4. The remaining 15 *rūpa* are produced by different combination of the four possible causes as shown in the table below:

	Kamma Born	Citta Born	Utu Born	Āhāra Born
Cakkhu (eye)	Yes			
Sota (ear)	Yes			
Ghana (nose)	Yes			
Jivhā (tongue)	Yes			
Kāya (body)	Yes			
Sadda (sound)		Yes	Yes	
Itthi Bhva (femininity)	Yes			

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Purisa (masculine)	Yes			
Hadaya vatthu (heart base)	Yes			
Jivitindriya (life faculty)	Yes			
Kāya viññatti (bodily intimation)		Yes		
Vacī Viññatti (vocal intimation)		Yes		
Lahuta (lightness)		Yes	Yes	Yes
Muduta (malleability)		Yes	Yes	Yes
Kammaññata (wieldiness)		Yes	Yes	Yes

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7.9 Rūpa Kalāpa (Grouping of Matter)

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1. There are 28 types of *rūpa* discussed in *Abhidhamma*: "Rūpa (Material Form) – Table." They are not found separately in nature. They are produced by the four causes in the form of tiny material groups called *rūpa kalāpā* or "elementary groups of matter."

- All *rūpā* have origins in the four great elements of *pathavī, āpo, tejo, vāyo*. However, they all arise together in the smallest unit of matter, a *suddhāṭṭhaka.* See, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka." Four more *rūpā* (*vaṇṇa, gandha, rasa, oja*) derived from the great elements are in a *suddhāṭṭhaka* making it an **octad** (composed of **eight** or an ***aṭṭaka***.)
- There are 15 other elementary units (*rūpa kalāpā*) that derive from *suddhāṭṭhaka.* All 16 types of *rūpa kalāpā* are not further divisible. They are *avinibbhoga rūpa.*
- Let us briefly discuss them.

2. There are three *rūpa kalāpā* that have **nine units**: A *suddhāṭṭhaka* "energized" by *kammic* energy becomes a *jivita* ***navaka*** (vital **nonad**) of nine units. That added unit is an "energy unit" called a *jivita rūpa.* That *jivita rūpa* keeps a physical body alive. Another element of nine units, a *sadda navaka* (sound nonad) is responsible for the sound created by *utu*, i.e., it is an *utuja rūpa.* Another is *kāyaviññatti navaka* created by citta responsible for bodily intimation.

- Eight types of *rūpa kalāpā* have **ten units (*dasaka* or decad)** created by *kammic* energy: Here a *suddhāṭṭhaka* combines with a *jivita rūpa* and another unit created by *kammic* energy to become a *dasaka*. Those eight types of *dasaka* are vital parts of a living being. For example, a *cakkhu pasada rūpa* (together with the other nine units) creates a *cakkhu dasaka* responsible for seeing. In the same way *sota dasaka, ghana dasaka, jivha dasaka, kāya dasaka* arise. *itthibhāva rūpa* and *purisabhāva rūpa* give rise to *itthibhāva dasaka* and *purisabhāva dasaka.* The seat of the mind, *vatthu dasaka* arises with the *hadaya vatthu.*
- The following are created only by *citta* (thoughts): One is *vaciviññatti-sadda-dasaka* (vocal intimation decad) responsible for speech. *Kāyaviññatti-lahutādi-dvadasaka* (dodecad of bodily intimation) of 12 units with *kāyaviññatti* and three *lahutādi rūpa.* Another is *vaciviññatti-sadda-lahutādi-terasaka* (tricad of sound) of 13 units with *vaciviññatti,* three *lahutādi rūpa,* and *sadda.*
- Then there is *lahutādi-ekadasaka* (*suddhāṭṭhaka* + *lahuta* + *muduta* + *kammañña*) with 11 units created by *citta*. There is also *sadda–lahutādi-dvadasaka* (*suddhāṭṭhaka* + *lahuta* + *muduta* + *kammañña* + *sadda*) with 12 units created by *utu*.

3. All *rūpa kalāpā* have the following characteristics.

1. All the *rūpā* in a *rūpa kalāpa* arise together, i.e. they have a common genesis.
2. They also cease or dissolve together, i.e. they have a common cessation.
3. They all depend on the four great essentials present in the *kalāpa* for their arising, i.e. they have a common dependence.
4. They are so thoroughly mixed that they cannot be distinguished, i.e. they co-exist.

4. It should be noted that *kalāpā* are so small that they are indistinguishable from pure energy. The origin of *rūpa* is a *javana citta*, which is formless and mass-less. Science has shown that the smallest "particle" detected, Higgs boson, is indistinguishable from energy. See, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

5. There are 17 types of *kalāpā* produced in 21 ways:

9 *kammaja kalāpā* 6 *cittaja kalāpā* 4 *utuja kalāpā* 2 *āhāraja kalāpā* as shown below:

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	Kamma Born	Citta Born	Utu Born	Āhāra Born
Cakkhu dasaka (eye decad)	Yes			
Sota dasaka (ear decad)	Yes			
Ghana dasaka (nose decad)	Yes			
Jivha dasaka (tongue decad)	Yes			
Kāya dasaka (body decad)	Yes			
Itthi dasaka (female decad)	Yes			
Purisa dasaka (male decad)	Yes			
Vatthu dasaka (base decad)	Yes			
Jivita navaka (vital nonad)	Yes			
Suddhaṭṭaka (pure octad)		Yes	Yes	Yes
Kayavinnati navaka (body intimation nonad		Yes		
Vacī viññati sadda dasaka (vocal intimation decad)		Yes		
Lahutādi eka dasaka (undecad of mutability)		Yes	Yes	Yes
Kayaviññati Lahutādi dva dasaka (undecad of mutability)		Yes	Yes	
Vaciviññati Sadda Lahutādi terasaka (tridecad of mutability)		Yes		
Sadda navaka (sound decad)			Yes	

6. **Internal and External *Kalāpā***

All the 21 *rūpa kalāpā* mentioned above occur internally in living beings. *Itthibhāva-dasaka* does not occur in males. Similarly, *pumbhava-dasaka* (or *purisabhāva-dasaka*) does not occur in females. For those who are born blind or deaf, *cakkhu-dasaka* or *sota-dasaka* are not present.

In the external (*bahiddha*) world, only the two *utuja-kalāpā* are found. All inanimate things such as trees, stones, earth, water, fire, corpses, etc., are made up of *utuja-suddhaṭṭhaka kalāpā*. The sounds produced by beating two sticks together or by rubbing of branches in the wind or by musical instruments such as violin, piano, radio, cassettes, etc., are *utuja-sadda-navaka kalāpā*.

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From the internal *rūpas*, *kāya-pasāda*, *bhava-rūpa* (femininity and masculinity), *cittaja-rūpa, utuja-rūpa* and *āhāraja-rūpa* spread all over the body, and so they will be present in the eye, the ear, the nose, the tongue and in every part of the body.

7. *Rūpa* in *Kamaloka*

All the 28 material qualities occur undiminished, if circumstances permit, in an individual during a lifetime in *kāmaloka* (sense-sphere).

In womb-born creatures, only three *kammaja-kalāpā* comprising body-decad, sex-decad and heart decad are manifested at the moment of conception (at *paṭisandhi*).

Here again the sex-decad may not be manifested in some particular individuals. After conception, during life, the eye-decad and the rest are manifested slowly in due order. Of the groups of material qualities which are produced in four ways, *kammaja-rūpa* starts to form at the moment of conception and it goes on forming incessantly at every minor-instant. *Cittaja-rūpa* begins to form from the second moment of consciousness, i.e. from the arising instant of the first *bhavaṅga* which follows the rebirth-consciousness. *Cittaja-rūpa* continues to be formed at every arising instant of the subsequent *cittā* for the whole life-time.

Utuja-rūpa starts to form from the existing instant of rebirth consciousness. The reason is that the *tejo-dhātu* (*utu*) present in the first *kammaja-kalāpā* comes to the static stage (*thithi*) at that instant. From that time onwards, the *tejo-dhātu* then produces *utuja-rūpa* at every minor-instant. Since *tejo-dhātu* is present in every *kalapa*, every *kalapa*, from the time it reaches the static stage, produces new *utuja-kalāpā* at every minor instant. And the new *utuja- kalāpā*, from the time they reach the static stage, again produce new *utuja-kalāpā* at every minor instant. So this process goes on forever.

Every *kalapa* also contains the nutritive essence, *oja*. But *āhāraja-rūpa* starts to form when internal *oja* meets external *oja* at the time of diffusion of nutritive essence and the combination of internal and external *oja* comes to the static stage. From that instant, *āhāraja-rūpa* is also formed at every minor instant. As new groups of material qualities are incessantly produced, old groups dissolve and disappear when their lifetime of 17 conscious-moments is over. Thus, the material phenomena go on uninterruptedly in the sense-sphere till the end of life like the flame of a lamp, or the stream of a river.

Material Phenomena at Death: At the time of death, psychic life and physical life must cease together. This means that all *kammaja-rūpa* which contains physical life must cease at the time of death. So at the arising instant of the seventeenth *citta* reckoned backward from the death-consciousness (*cuti-citta*), the last *kammaja-rūpa* is formed. This last *kammaja-rūpa* will cease at the dissolving instant of the death-consciousness. *Cittaja-rūpa* is formed till the arising instant of the *cuti-citta*. This last *cittaja-rūpa* will have lasted for a conscious-moment at the dissolution of *cuti-citta*, and thus will perish in another sixteen conscious-moments which happens almost instantly. *āhāraja-rūpa* is formed till the dissolving instant of the *cuti-citta*, because the support required for the formation of *āhāraja-rūpa* can be furnished by citta up to that time. So at death, that last-formed *āhāraja-rūpa* has lasted for only one minor-instant. However in another fifty minor instants (rūpa-lifespan – 51 minor instants or 17 conscious-moments), that *āhāraja-rūpa* also ceases. Thus at the time of death, *kammaja-rūpa*, *cittaja-rūpa* and *āhāraja-rūpa* cease almost instantly.

But *utuja-rūpa* goes on forming and dissolving till the corpse is converted into dust. A corpse consists of only *utuja-rūpa*.

So when a person dies and is reborn in another life, material phenomena similarly arise starting from the instant of conception and go on arising till the time of death.

Arising of Material Phenomena in Rūpa-planes In the rūpa-plane, nose-decad, tongue-decad, body-decad, sex decad and *āhāraja-kalāpā* do not arise. At the time of *opapātika* rebirth, there arise four *kammaja-kalāpā* namely, eye decad, ear decad, heart decad and vital nonad. During life, however, *cittaja kalāpā* and *utuja kalāpā* also arise. To the Asaññā Brahmā, eye-decad, heart-decad and sound-nonad

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(*sadda-navaka*) do not arise. Also, *cittaja-kalāpā* do not arise. Therefore, at the time of their *opapātika*-rebirth, only the vital-nonad (*jivita-navaka*) arises. During life, *utuja-kalāpā*, with the exception of the sound-nonad, arise in addition.

Thus in *kāma loka* and *rūpa loka*, the process of the arising of material phenomena should be understood in two ways, that is (1) at rebirth and (2) during life.

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7.10 Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipaka Citta

All ten *akusala kamma* are done with these 12 *akusala citta*. There are 8 greed-rooted, 2 hatred-rooted, and 2 delusion-rooted *citta*. Of course *citta* (pronounced "chiththā") are thoughts; any speech or bodily action starts with a thought.

- See, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna" for a list of 12 *akusala citta*.

Both greed-rooted and hatred-rooted also have delusion as a root.

	Root	Assoc. with	Dissoc. with	Feeling	*Sasankhārika*?
1	Greed	**Wrong view**	–	Pleasure	No
2	Greed	**Wrong view**	–	Pleasure	Yes
3	Greed	–	Wrong view	Pleasure	No
4	Greed	–	Wrong view	Pleasure	Yes
5	Greed	**Wrong view**	–	Equanimity	No
6	Greed	**Wrong view**	–	Equanimity	Yes
7	Greed	–	Wrong view	Equanimity	No
8	Greed	–	Wrong view	Equanimity	Yes
9	Dislike	Aversion	–	Displeasure	No
10	Dislike	Aversion	–	Displeasure	Yes
11	Delusion	**Vicikicchā**	–	Equanimity	–
12	Delusion	Uddacca	–	Equanimity	–

1. The first *citta* is described as, " a thought rooted in greed (and delusion), associated with wrong views, accompanied by pleasure, and spontaneous." The others can be stated the same way.

- Those *citta* that are associated with wrong views are the worst, even though wrong views are listed as #10 on the ten immoral actions, see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."
- *Citta* generated with pleasure means one is enthusiastic about it because of one's habits (*gathi*) or one starts liking it. For example, one who likes to go fishing has a bad habit; he gets a pleasure by just thinking about it; thus it is stronger than one done with equanimity.
- The hateful *citta* are always done with displeasure, but that displeasure can arise with ignorance. For example, someone who has wrong views may generate displeasure towards a moral person merely because of one's wrong views. I have encountered some people who got upset with me when I pointed out that rebirth has evidence for it.
- *Sasankhārika* means with less *javana* power.
- See, the notes at the end of the post "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna" for details.

2. **Since *vicikicchā* is also due to wrong views, those five *cittā* marked in red are the strongest *akusala citta* done with "wrong views" or '*diṭṭhi*."** Those five *cittā* stop arising in the mind of a *Sotāpanna*.

They can condition one's mind to a "*gathi*" suitable for birth in the *apāyā*; see, "What is in a Thought? Why Gathi are so Important?."

- The *vyāpāda* or the strong hate — that makes one eligible for birth in the *apāyā* –actually arises from the first four types of *lobha citta*. It is also called "*dvesa*" or "*dvesha*" which means "second manifestation"

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or ("*dvi* +"*vesa*") of *lobha*. When one is burdened with extreme greed, it can turn to the second manifestation of extreme hate for anyone in the way.

- Upon attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, such habits or "*gathi*" are removed, and thus no adverse *kamma vipāka* come to the mind at the dying moment, as we point out below. The "*pati+ichcha sama+uppada*" or what is born is similar to what is grasped, is at play at the dying moment. One automatically grasps things one has a habit of liking; they automatically come to the forefront of the mind at the dying moment.

3. The other 7 *akusala citta* are stopped from arising in stages as a *Sotāpanna* cultivates the Path further.

- The two dislike (*paṭigha*)-rooted cittā (together with some potency of the remaining 4 greed-based *citta*, i.e., *kāma rāga*) are reduced at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage.
- Those two dislike-rooted *citta* are stopped from arising at the *Anāgāmī* stage. Also, potency of the remaining 4 greed-based *citta*, i.e., ***kāma rāga*** are reduced to just ***kāma*** level.
- **Finally, the remaining 4 greed-based *citta* and the *uddhacca citta* are removed at the *Arahant* stage.** Thus an *Arahant* will never experience an *akusala citta*.

4. These 12 types of citta lead to 7 types of *vipāka* (resultant) *citta*.

- None of the ***vipāka citta*** has any unwholesome roots (greed, hate, delusion); of course they also do not have the wholesome roots. **Thus they are called rootless (*ahetuka*) *citta*.**

5. Five of these *akusala vipāka citta* are the ones that lead to (undesirable) sense events through the five physical senses. Thus they are responsible for eye consciousness (*cakkhu viññāṇa*), ear consciousness (*sota viññāṇa*), nose consciousness (*ghāṇa viññāṇa*), taste consciousness (*jivhā viññāṇa*), and body consciousness (*kāya viññāṇa*).

- Except for the body consciousness which is accompanied by pain, the other four are accompanied by equanimity; see,"Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa" and "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?"
- Thus any feelings of displeasure etc due to what is seen, heard, smelled, or tasted, are in the thoughts that follow this "event" experienced through one of the physical senses. We will discuss this in detail in the *Abhidhamma* section.

6. The sixth *akusala vipāka citta* is called receiving consciousness accompanied by equanimity (*upekkha-sahagata sampaticcana citta*). This is a citta that accepts the sense impression to the mind (we will discuss in *Abhidhamma* section).

7. The seventh *akusala vipāka citta* is called the investigating consciousness accompanied by equanimity (*upekkha-sahagata santirana citta*). This is the citta that is responsible for the birth in the apāyā (lowest four realms), i.e, it acts as the *paṭisandhi citta* for the birth in the *apāyā*.

8. One may wonder how a *Sotāpanna* avoids the *apāyā*, because he/she is still capable of generating the 7 cittā that are not associated with *diṭṭhi* (see the Table above), and thus it is possible to generate this *apāyagāmī-paṭisandhi citta*.

- The point is that after becoming a *Sotāpanna*, such *vipāka* thoughts do not come to the mind at the last thought processes; only the good *kamma vipāka* come to the forefront of the mind close to the dying moment because he/she no longer has the "*gathi*" suitable for a birth in the *apāyā*.

9. It is hard to give up one's bad habits ("*gathi*"), mainly because one does not fully comprehend the true nature of the world, i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and thus has wrong views about this world with 31 realms. One needs to comprehend that one's actions have consequences not only in this life, but (mainly) in the future lives; also, whatever one gains by such harmful actions is just temporary, AND do not leave one with a peace mind.

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7.11 37 Factors of Enlightenment

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1. The 37 factors of Enlightenment (*Bodhipakkhiya Dhamma*) are the combined number of individual factors in:

- Four Factors of Mindfulness (*Cattāro Satipaṭṭhāna*),
- Four Supreme Efforts (*Cattāro Sammappadhāna*),
- Four Bases of Mental Power (*Cattāro Iddhipāda*),
- Five Faculties (*Pañca Indriya*),
- Five Powers (*Pañca Bala*),
- Seven Factors of Enlightenment (*Satta Bojjhaṅga*), and
- Factors of the Noble Eightfold Path (*Ariya Attangika Magga*).

2. These factors are really mental factors (*cetasika*) and *citta* that incorporate them. They are labeled with different names under each category in the Table below to highlight its application.

- For example, the *paññā cetasika* is labeled as *vīmaṃsā* in Four Bases of Mental Power, as *dhammavicaya* in *Satta Bojjhaṅga*, and as *Sammā Diṭṭhi* in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- Under each category, I have listed the term used for that *cetasika* in that category. For example, in the Noble Eightfold Path, *Sammā Vāyāma* is the *viriya cetasika*.
- Thus even though there are 37 factors of Enlightenment, there are **only 14 cetasika** that will be cultivated while cultivating all seven above categories.
- It is clear that those 7 categories are all inter-related, and thus all 37 factors may be cultivated by focusing only on *Cattāro Satipaṭṭhāna*, *Satta Bojjhaṅga*, or the Noble Eightfold Path.

3. It is also important to realize that *cetasika* are related to one's character (*gathi*): "Cetasika – Connection to Gathi"

4. The Four Supreme Efforts (*Cattāro Sammappadhāna*) are the efforts to purify the mind: (i) **remove** defilement(*akusala*) that have arisen, (ii) **prevent** new defilement (*akusala*) from arising, (iii) **enhance** wholesome states (*kusala*) that have arisen, (iv) **initiate** new wholesome states (*kusala*). WebLink: suttacentral: AN 4.14 Saṃvarasutta (Restraint).

- Not to let an unwholesome thought arise which has not yet arisen. → **restraint**
- Not to let an unwholesome thought continue which has already arisen. → **abandonment**
- To make a wholesome thought arise which has not yet arisen. → **development**
- To make a wholesome thought continue which has already arisen. → **protection (maintaining)**

5. All 37 factors of enlightenment are fulfilled at the Arahant stage.

Item	Parameter Involved	Four Supreme Efforts	Iddhipada	Five Faculties	Five Powers	Four Factors of Mindfulness	7 Factors of Enlightenment	Path Factors	Count
1	Paññā (wisdom)		vīmaṃsā	paññā	paññā		dhammavicaya	sammā diṭṭhi	5
2	Vitakka							sammā saṅkappa	1

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	(initial application)								
3	Sammā vācā							sammā vaca	1
4	Sammā kammanata							sammā kammanata	1
5	Sammā ājīva							sammā ajiva	1
6	Viriya	four efforts (see #4 above)	viriya	viriya	viriya		viriya	sammā vayama	9
7	Sati (mindfulness)			sati	sati	kaya, vedanā, citta, dhamma	sati	sammā sati	8
8	Samādhi (one-pointedness)			samādhi	samādhi		samādhi	sammā samādhi	4
9	Saddhā (faith)			saddhā	saddhā				2
10	Chanda (desire)		chanda						1
11	citta		citta						1
12	Pīti (joy)						pīti		1
13	Passaddhi (tranquility)						passaddhi		1
14	Upekkhā (equinimity)						upekkha		1

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7.12 Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna

Revised August 3, 2016

The following Table shows the conditions to be fulfilled (i.e., factors to be eliminated) to attain each stage of *Nibbāna*. For example, in order to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, three of the ten *saṃyojana* (or the ten fetters) are removed, *akusala citta* #1, 2, 5, 6, and 11 are removed; also the *apāyagāmī* strength in the other *cittā* also removed, etc

Ariya Stage	Samyojana	Akusala Citta	Anusaya	Āsava (Asaya)	Kilesa (Akusala Cetasika)
Sotāpanna	sakkāya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, silabbata parāmāsa	1,2,5,6,11 Also removes apāyagāmi strength in the rest	diṭṭhi, vicikicchā	diṭṭhāsava	**Removed**: diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, thina, middha, issa, maccariya, kukkucca **Reduced**: lobha, dosa, moha to rāga, paṭigha, avijjā
Sakadāgāmī	kāma rāga (reduced) paṭigha (reduced)	weakens 9, 10 also weakens kāma rāga in 3,4,7,8	kāma rāga (reduced) paṭigha (reduced)	kāmāsava (reduced)	**Reduced**: kāma rāga and paṭigha
Anāgāmī	kāma rāga, paṭigha	9,10 also removes kāma rāga in 3,4,7,8	kāma rāga, paṭigha	kāmāsava	**Removed**: kāma rāga and paṭigha
Arahant	rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca, avijjā	3,4,7,8,12 (see below for a list of *akusala* citta)	bhava rāga, māna, avijjā	bhavāsava, avijjāsava	**Removed**: avijjā, ahirika, anatoppa, uddhacca, māna

The ability to commit *akusala kamma* also is removed in stages as one progresses, and are completely removed only at the *Arahant* stage. It is important to note that a *Sotāpanna* completely removes only one *akusala kamma,* that of having wrong views (*micchā diṭṭhi*): "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?." But this leads to the removal of many *kilesa* (mental impurities); see the Table.

Āsava and *anusaya* are discussed in the post, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)." Kilesa are discussed in "Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)." For a discussion on *Dasa Samyojana*, see, "Dasa Samyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process."

The 12 types of akusala citta are listed in, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta." But I thought it would be more explanatory to list them. The numbers below correspond to the numbers in the Table.

Lobha* (Greedy) *Citta (Also has the *moha* root)

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1. *Citta* connected with wrong view, accompanied by pleasure, and done with habit.

2. *Citta* connected with wrong view, accompanied by pleasure, and done reluctantly.

3. *Citta* NOT connected with wrong view, accompanied by pleasure, and done with habit.

4. *Citta* NOT connected with wrong view, accompanied by pleasure, and done reluctantly.

5. *Citta* connected with wrong view, accompanied by neutral mind, and done with habit.

6. *Citta* connected with wrong view, accompanied by neutral mind, and done reluctantly.

7. *Citta* NOT connected with wrong view, accompanied by neutral mind, and done with habit.

8. *Citta* NOT connected with wrong view, accompanied by neutral mind, and done reluctantly.

Dosa* (Hateful) *Citta (Also has the *moha* root)

9. *Citta* associated with hate, accompanied by displeasure, done with habit.

10. *Citta* associated with hate, accompanied by displeasure, done reluctantly.

Moha Citta (only with the *moha* root)

11. *Citta* accompanied by neutral mind, associated with *vicikicchā* (not aware of bad consequences)

12. *Citta* accompanied by neutral mind, associated with *uddhacca* (unfocused).

Notes:

1. Even though recent Abhidhamma literature categorize *lobha* and *dosa citta* as *asankhārika* (unprompted) and *sasankhārika* (prompted), in original Abhidhamma, they were not categorized as such.

2. For example, the two *dosa-mūla cittā* are:

i. *Domanassa sahagata paṭigha-sampayutta citta.*

ii. *Domanassa sahagata sasankhārika paṭigha-sampayutta citta.*

- The first *citta* arises due to *sansāric* habits and thus are more potent. For example, someone who has a tendency to flare-up, normally generates such potent *citta*.
- On the other hand, another person without such a habit, may not generate such a *citta* unless "forced hard"; it is done with reluctance, "when pushed to the limit", or if the perceived "sense pleasures" are enticing. Then he/she is actually "incorporating new "*san*" or initiating a new habit; thus the name "*sasankhārika*."

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7.13 Ultimate Realities – Table

1. This Table lists the three kinds of ultimate realities (*paramatta dhamma*) in this world of 31 realms; they are conditioned, i.e., they arise due to causes and perish subsequently on their own; nothing in this world is permanent. They do not arise if there are no causes, and when that happens *Nibbāna* is the result.

- Nibbāna is the unconditioned reality. It is attained when the six causes (*lobha, dosa, moha, alobha, adosa, amoha*) are not there. Then the mind cannot get a "foothold" anywhere in the material world.
- Cultivating the three causes of *alobha, adosa, amoha* (together with removing *lobha, dosa, moha*) is needed in following the Noble Eightfold Path, and when wisdom grows, all causes will be rejected by the mind automatically at the end.

2. Ultimate realities can be compared to the fundamental particles in physics. Even though it was believed in the early stages that atoms were the fundamental particles, now there are about 32 of such particles; but now the "particle nature" is dissolving into "energy packets" in elementary particle physics. In Buddha Dhamma, the 28 types of rūpa are very fine, and cannot be "seen" even with *abhiññā* powers; they are "energy packets."

3. The table also shows how "this world of 31 realms" can be described via the five aggregates, the twelve sense bases, or 6 *dhatus* and how they incorporate the ultimate realities. There are other ways too. They are all compatible and consistent with each other.

- For example, 89 *citta* and 52 *cetasika* are included in the four "mental" aggregates, or in the mind base and mind objects, or just in the *viññāṇa dhātu*.
- Also note that the correct word is *kandha* and NOT *skandha* for the five "aggregates." The Pāli (and Sinhala) word *kandha* means a "pile" (as in a pile of sand) and is still used to denote a hill in Sinhala. I just look up the meaning of "*skandha*" in Sanskrit and it says "Hindu god of war." This is how the true meanings of the original words have been lost due to incorporation of "sophisticated sounding" Sanskrit words with no relevance.

Table: Analysis of the "world" and Nibbāna in terms of ultimate realities.

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">Lokaya (World of 31 Realms)</td><td>Nibbāna</td></tr>
<tr><td>Ultimate Realities (4 types)</td><td>Citta (89)</td><td>Cetasika (52)</td><td>Rūpa (28)</td><td rowspan="4">Nibbāna</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Aggregates (5)</td><td>Vedanā skandha
Saññā skandha
Saṅkhāra skandha
Viññāṇa skandha</td><td>Rūpa skandha</td></tr>
<tr><td>Sense Bases (12)</td><td>Mind base</td><td>Mind Objects (also includes fine matter or sukuma rūpa)</td><td>5 internal (pasāda) rūpa
5 external rūpa (vaṇṇa, sadda, gandha, rasa, pottabba)</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Dhatu (6)</td><td>Viññāṇa</td><td>pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, akasa</td></tr>
<tr><td></td><td colspan="3">saṅkhata (sankata in Sinhala) include everything in this world (sentient beings have all six dhātu; everything else in the world, like inert objects and plants, do not have viññāṇa)</td><td rowspan="2">asankata</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Notes:
1. Number of citta can be 121 in the alternate scheme; see, The 89 (121) Types of Citta</td></tr>
</table>

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2. Vedanā, saññā are two cetasika; saṅkhāra has the rest of 50 cetasika; for a list of cetasika, see Cetasika (Mental Factors)
3. For fine (sukuma) rūpa, see Rūpa (Material Form) – Table.

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7.14 31 Realms of Existence

May 20, 2016; revised May 30, 2018; December 16, 2019; June 11, 2020; August 24, 2020 (revised #5 and many lifetimes, added #6)

Realm	Description	Cause of Birth in Realm (Note 1)	Lifetime
The Apāyā (Undesired Realms)			
1. Niraya (Hell)	Unimaginable suffering.	Anantariya papa kamma, Ten akusala kamma with established wrong views.	Variable
2. Tiracchāna (Animal; Tirisan in Sinhala)	Microscopic to large animals.	Ten akusala kamma with established wrong views.	Variable
3. Peta (Hungry Ghosts; Preta in Sinhala)	Some live in our world unseen to us.	Ten akusala kamma with established wrong views.	Variable
4. Vinipāta Asuras (Asuras)	Some live in our world unseen to us.	Ten akusala kamma with established wrong views.	Variable
Sugati (Desired *Kāma Loka* Realms)			
5. Manussa (Human)	Most valued birth of all realms.	Puñña abhisaṅkhāra (thihethuka, dvihethuka, and ahethuka)	Variable (Note 2)
6. Cātummahārājika Deva	Fine bodies from this realm; no diseases.	Puñña abhisaṅkhāra.	500 CY 9M HY (Note 3)
7. Tāvatiṃsā deva	Sakka lives in this realm.	Puñña abhisaṅkhāra.	1000 CY 36 HY
8. Yama deva		Puñña abhisaṅkhāra.	2000 CY 144M HY
9. Tusitā deva		Puñña abhisaṅkhāra.	4000 CY 576M HY
10. Nimmānaratī deva		Puñña abhisaṅkhāra.	8000 CY 2304M HY
11. Paranimmita Vasavattī deva		Puñña abhisaṅkhāra.	16000 CY 9216M HY
Rūpa Loka (Fine Material Realms)			
12. Brahma Parisajja deva	Jhānic bliss in this and higher realms.	First jhāna (minor)	1/3 kappa (Note 5)

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Realm	Description	Cause of Birth in Realm (Note 1)	Lifetime
13. Brahma Purohita deva		First jhāna (medium)	1/2 kappa
14. Brahmakayika (Maha Brahma)		First jhāna (highest)	1 kappa
15. Parittaba deva		Second jhāna (minor)	2 kappa
16. Appamanabha deva		Second jhāna (medium)	4 kappa
17. Abhassara deva		Second jhāna (highest)	8 kappa
18. Parittha Subha deva		Third jhāna (minor)	16 kappa
19. Appamana Subha deva		Third jhāna (medium)	32 kappa
20. Subha Kinhaka deva		Third jhāna (highest)	64 kappa
21. Vehappala deva		Fourth jhāna various levels from here and above	500 kappa
22. Asaññā satta	Body only; no mind		500 kappa
23. Aviha deva	Only Anāgāmīs		1000 kappa
24. Atappa deva	Only Anāgāmīs		2000 kappa
25. Sudassa deva	Only Anāgāmīs		4000 kappa
26. Sudassi deva	Only Anāgāmīs		8000 kappa
27. Akanittakha deva	Only Anāgāmīs		16000 kappa
Arūpa Loka (Immaterial Realms); see Note 4			
28. Ākāsānancāyatana deva		Fifth jhāna	20,000 kappa
29. Viññāṇañcāyatana deva		Sixth jhāna	40,000 kappa
30. Ākiñcaññāyatana deva		Seventh jhāna	60,000 kappa
31. Nevasaññānāsaññā deva		Eighth jhāna	84,000 kappa

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Notes:

1. See, "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra." *Akusala kamma* are the same as *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* (*apuñña abhisaṅkhāra*.)

2. The realms and the lifetimes are extracted from various *suttā*: see, for example, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction", WebLink: suttacentral: "Saṅkhārupapatti Sutta (MN 120), and "Paṭhama Mettā Sutta."

- **In particular, WebLink: suttacentral: Sāleyyaka Sutta (MN 41) discusses how different types of *kamma* lead to rebirth among the 31 realms.**
- Lifetimes of various *deva* realms are given in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Visākhā Sutta (AN 8.43)."

3. *Thihetuka* means *kusala kamma* done with *alobha, adosa, amoha*.

- *Dvihetuka* means *kusala kamma* done with *alobha, adosa*.
- *Ahetuka* means *kusala kamma* done with only *alobha, adosa*, but also without enthusiasm.
- See, "Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi" for details.

4. CE = Celestial Years; M HY = Millions of Human Years.

5. A *Mahā Kappa* is the time for the Solar system to go through a complete cycle. A quarter of this (or an *Asaṅkheyya Kappa* or 20 *kappa*) is the life of the Earth or the Solar system. The solar system is born, destroyed, and reborn just like living beings. See, "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)." The length of one *kappa* is described by the Buddha in the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Pabbata Sutta* (SN 15.5)." The lifetimes of many realms given in Ref. 9; in the English translation, the lifetimes can be found in section WebLink: suttacentral: 18.6.2. Age Limit.

6. The connection between various *jhānic* states and the corresponding *Brahma* realms in, "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: The Thirty-one Planes of Existence."

7. The names of the four *arūpa* realms are descriptive of their characteristics.

- *Akāsānancāyatana* comes from "*ākāsa*" + "*ananta*" or infinite + "*āyatana*," or the realm where the infinite space is the focus of the mind (*ārammana*).
- *Vinnānancāyatana* comes from "*viññāṇa*" + "*ananta*" or infinite + "*āyatana*," or the realm where the infinite *viññāṇa* is the focus of the mind (*ārammana*).
- *Ākincannayatana* comes from "*ākin*" + "*ca*" or mind + "*āyatana*," or the realm where the focus of the mind (*ārammaṇa*) is only the mind.
- *Neva saññā nā saññā* comes from "*na*" or not + "*asañña*" or without perception + "*nā*," or not + "*saññā*" or perception, i.e., the realm where one cannot say whether there is either "no perception" or "there is perception." One could go on for a short time without perception (just like in the *asañña* realm), but it comes back since the "*bhava*" is still there.

8. The following video gives a good general description of the 31 realms:

WebLink: youtube: Bhante Anandajoti: The Planes of Exist

9. All the realms and their characteristics detailed at "WebLink: suttacentral: Dhammahadayavibhaṅga"

- English translation at "WebLink: suttacentral: 18. Analysis Of The Heart Of The Teaching."

January 24, 2019: Relevant post: "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)."

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VIII Paṭicca Samuppāda

- "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda""
- **Subsection:** "Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda"
  - "Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit"
  - "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?"
  - "Phassa (Contact) – Contact With Pasāda Rūpa"
  - "Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammaṇa"
- "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Overview"
- "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?"
- "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?"
- **Subsection:** "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles"
  - "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa"
  - "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda"
  - "Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda"
  - "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda"
- **Subsection:** "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English"
  - "Introduction – What is Suffering?"
  - "Introduction -2 – The Three Characteristics of Nature"
  - "Avijjā paccayā Saṅkhāra"
  - "Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 1"
  - "Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 2"
  - "Viññāṇa paccayā Nāmarūpa"
  - "Nāmarūpa paccayā Saḷāyatana"
  - "Difference between Phassa and samphassa"
  - "Phassa paccayā Vedana….to Bhava"
  - "Bhava paccayā Jati….Jara, Marana,…"
- Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti – What Does It Really Mean?
- Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)
- Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Nibbāna
- **Subsection:** "Paṭṭhāna Dhammā"
  - "Paṭṭhāna Dhamma – Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)"
  - "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya"
  - "Asevana and Annamanna Paccaya"
- **Subsection:** "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa"
  - "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa – Introduction"
  - "How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha"

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- "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha"
- "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways"
- "Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa"
- "What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex"
- "Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Jā Vedanā"

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8.1 Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"

Revised November 3, 2018; July 29, 2019

"Yo paticcasamuppādam passati,
so Dhammam passati.
Yo Dhammam passati,
so paticcasamuppādam passati"

One who sees *paticcasamuppāda*
sees the Dhamma.
One who sees the Dhamma
sees *paticcasamuppāda..*

(WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāhatthipadopama Sutta (MN 28); at the end)

Therefore, it is critical to understand what *paṭicca samuppāda* is. It explains how causes lead to effects. NOTHING in this world happens without a reason; see the next post for details: "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Overview."

- Here is the pronunciation of *paṭicca samuppāda*:

  WebLink: Pronunciation of Paṭicca Samuppāda

Paṭicca samuppāda translated into English as "Dependent Origination" does not convey the true, complete meaning of the phrase. It is better to keep the same name and understand what it means.

- **The closest English translation is "Willful attachment leading to the existence of similar kind."**

1. *Paṭicca* = *pati* + *icca*; here "*pati*" is bonding, and "*icca*" is liking.

- Thus *paṭicca* is "bonding to something willingly" or "get attached to something through a liking for it."
- This bonding depends on one's *gati* (habits and likings), which in turn are due to deep-seated *āsavas* (cravings).
- There are many posts on the website on this key Pāli term: "*gati*." One can get a list of relevant posts by typing "gati" in the "Search" box at top right.

2. *Samuppāda* = "*sama*" (same or similar) + "*uppāda*" (generation), i.e., an existence (*bhava*) of similar quality or kind.

- Thus *samuppāda* means leading to existence or experience with similar defilements that used to drive the bondage in the first place.
- Everything in this world arises due to six root causes: ***lobha, dosa, moha*** and ***alobha, adosa, amoha;*** see, "Six Root Causes – Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna)."
- Different types of *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles operate based on which kind of causes are involved; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles."

3. For example, when we generate potent hateful thoughts about a person, we could be in the mindset of an animal. At that moment, we may even act like an animal, hitting and clawing at that person if things get out of hand. Even if we may not act physically, we will have that mindset.

- **At that moment, we generate a *gati* corresponding to "*bhava*" or existence similar to an animal in our mind. That, in turn, leads to grasping a corresponding "*bhava*." Then "*bhava paccayā jāti*" leads to a similar "*jāti*" or birth.**
- Because we got "bonded" to that situation via hateful thoughtful thoughts, we generated a corresponding "*bhava*" in our mind. Results correspond to causes: cause and affect. As we keep creating the same kind of "*bhava,"* that leads to forming "*gati*" or habits. All these are interconnected.

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4. Now if we keep incurring such situations frequently, i.e., get in to fights with that person (or with others) in similar manner, we will be building up that "*bhava*" and this could lead to the formation of very potent *kamma* seeds; see, "Sankhara, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

- Furthermore, it becomes a "*gati*" as well (see, "Sansāric Habits and Asavas"). Then it is easier to get into such situations, and a vicious cycle starts leading to that *gati* to take hold.
- Here, it is critical to understand that "*uppāda*" or "birth" is according to the "bonding with liking" (*paṭi icca*) for CAUSES, not the birth itself. For example, no one wants to be born a dog. But a birth as a dog CANNOT be avoided if one willingly does "lowly things" appropriate for dogs, and thus cultivates "dog *gati*."

5. Now we combine the two terms: **"*paṭicca samuppāda*" means "attachment to something leading to the generation of corresponding "*bhava*" (and thus *gati*).**

- **The establishment of a *bhava,* in turn, leads to a corresponding *jāti* or birth:** "when one gets attached, it sets up the likelihood of a new birth of similar characteristics."
- For example, when someone acts with greed out of habit, he/she is prone to act that way during the lifetime. Furthermore, it could be manifested in a stronger way in a future birth by being born as a *Peta* (hungry ghost).

6. Therefore, the establishment of an "existence" (*bhava*) could be two ways:

- Even during the current lifetime, a similar situation can arise. For example, the "*gati*" formed via above mentioned "fights" with other people, will tend to draw oneself to a similar outcome even with the slightest provocation. That is a "*pavutthi bhava*" (and *jāti*) that lasts for a short time during current life; see, "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."
- If this hateful "*gati*" becomes profoundly ingrained and becomes a potent *kamma* seed, that could come to the mind at the dying moment. That could lead to a hateful "*uppatti bhava*" in the next existence, as an animal or even in the *niraya* (hell); see, "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda."

7. Here one should also be able to make a distinction between "*bhava*" (existence) and "*jāti*" (birth). For example, an *uppatti bhava* may give rise to many births until the *kammic* energy in that *kamma* seed is wears out; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- That is why, even though the human *bhava* is RARE, one may be reborn a human many times at a stretch. Only those who were born in human in previous life (or a few lives) may be able to remember those lives; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- Different types of *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles discussed at: "Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles."

8. By perceiving illusory happiness, we get ourselves willingly attach to pleasurable things. We also attached to stuff via hate, and the root cause for that is an attachment to something related.

- For example, we get "attached" to a person with hate, if that person is blocking our access to something that we like: We keep thinking about how bad he is, etc.
- Thus attachment is possible with greed or hate. That is what "*taṇhā*" (in Sinhala, "තණ්හා" or "get fused or attached to" in English) means; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
- Therefore, it is essential to realize that "*taṇhā*" does not mean just greed. It could also be due to hate or dislike.

9. Ultimately, both greed and hatred arise due to ignorance. Ignorance of not knowing the unfruitful nature of "this world" of 31 realms, i.e, "**Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta**."

- There is unimaginable suffering in the lower four realms (see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm").

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- There is better happiness called *nirāmisa sukha* compared to sense pleasures: "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?."

10. There is no one, or no external force, keeping us bound to "this world" of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Just like an octopus grabbing its prey with all eight legs, we willingly cling to things in "this world" of 31 realms filled with suffering.

- **Unless we see the true unfruitful and even dreadful (in the lower four realms) nature of 'this world" by comprehending "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta," we will not let go of it.**

11. This is an excellent example of the confusion caused by translating Pāli to Sanskrit and then back to English or Sinhala; see the explanation of ***Pratittyasamutpada*** (the Sanskrit word for *Paṭicca samuppāda*) on Wikipedia:

WebLink: wiki: Pratītyasamutpāda

- I think you will agree that it is confusing at best, with multiple possible meanings.
- On the other hand, for someone knowledgeable in Pāli or Sinhala the meaning is very clear in the name itself: pati + icca sama + uppāda.

12. Please read, "Habits and Goals," "Sansāric Habits and āsavas," and "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of āsavas," before reading further postings as they appear below. One should also analyze one's own life experiences to see whether they are compatible with this explanation. That is part of *vipassanā* (insight) meditation.

- If one is genuinely interested in Buddha Dhamma, it is critical to understand *Paṭicca samuppāda.*
- How our thoughts arise AUTOMATICALLY due to *gati* is discussed in the post, "How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."
- Even though the underlying concept seems to be simple, *paṭicca samuppāda* can run very deep. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahānidāna Sutta (DN 15)," the Buddha admonished Ven. Ānanda not to take it lightly.

Next, "Paṭicca samuppāda – Overview," ……

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8.2 Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda

January 6, 2021

Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit

Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?

Phassa (Contact) – Contact With Pasāda Rūpa

Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammaṇa

8.2.1 Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit

January 6, 2021; revised January 10, 2021 (#9)

Citta vithi is the smallest sensory unit that is experienced by the mind. It is a series of *citta* with 17 *citta* for a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi*. A *manodvāra citta vīthi* can have a variable number of *citta*.

Introduction

1. This subsection is a continuation of the series of posts in "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

- In this bottom-up analysis, we will get to the fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma. That involves tackling some basic features of *Abhidhamma*. Thus it will require some effort.
- But it will be a rewarding experience for those who make an effort.

Buddha Dhamma can be understood via the Four Noble Truths or *Tilakkhaṇa* or *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. **If one understands any one of those three, one would understand all three.**

- Our approach here is to look at the fundamental processes involved in a sensory event. That will provide invaluable insights to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

A *Citta* Lasts Only a Billionth of a Second

2. What we call a "thought" is the cumulative effect of billions of *citta* flowing through a mind. The mind — which processes *cittā* — is the fastest entity in the world (Ref. 1)

- Furthermore, a single *citta* does not arise in isolation. A *citta* ALWAYS arise in a ***citta vīthi* (series of *cittā*)**, some with 17 *cittā*; see below. Billions of such *citta vīthi* can flow through a mind in a second. What we "feel" is the cumulative effect of billions of such *citta vīthi*.
- When exposed to a new *ārammaṇa* (new sensory input), the first series of *citta vīthi* arises without even being aware. We will start experiencing them within a short time, and when we do, we CAN have control over the SUBSEQUENT *citta vīthi* related to those that arose first.
- But if we don't pay attention, such *citta vīthi* can progress on their own and induce us to speak badly or even do bad things.
- **That is why the need to be "mindful."**
- For example, when someone says something nasty, we may automatically respond with bad speech or even bodily actions. Some people are prone to do that more than others. But ANYONE can cultivate mindfulness and be able to have control over one's speech or actions. Of course, it will take time to cultivate mindfulness. Our analysis here will help understand that process too.

Roles of *Ārammaṇa* and *Gati* in a Sensory Event

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3. To emphasize, we DO NOT have control over how *citta vīthi* first arise due to new sensory input. They arise AUTOMATICALLY based on two things: The particular *ārammaṇa* (sense object) and one's habits/character (*gati*.) Note that "*gati*" is pronounced "ga**thi**" as in "**Th**ailand." That is easier to explain with a few simple examples.

- Consider a husband who likes alcohol and his wife, who dislikes alcohol. A friend visits them and brings a bottle of alcohol.
- That bottle of alcohol is the *ārammaṇa*. When the husband sees it, he feels happy. His wife sees the bottle at the same moment and becomes unhappy. Therefore, that same *ārammaṇa* induced different types of *citta vīthi* in the husband and the wife's minds! That means different types of *cetasika* (mental factors) arise in the *citta* in those two types of *citta vīthi.*
- Prior experiences of the husband with alcohol are "happy occasions" for the husband. He has a *gati* to be attracted to alcoholic drinks. On the other hand, his wife cannot even stand the smell of alcohol, and she believes alcohol is bad to drink.
- **However, *gati* can change.** At a later time, the husband may give up alcoholic drinks after seeing the bad consequences of drinking. It is also possible that the wife may start associating with a group of friends who drink alcohol and gradually begin to form a liking for alcohol taste.
- See Ref. 2 for details on the critical roles of *ārammaṇa* and *gati.*

One Sensory Unit (*Citta Vīthi*) At a Time – But They Flow Incredibly Fast

4. Let us consider that sensory event of "seeing a bottle of alcohol" when a friend brings that bottle. Let us consider the thoughts that flow through the husband's mind at that time of the visit.

- At the time of seeing the bottle, he is likely to be talking to that friend. It appears that talking, hearing the friend's words, and seeing the bottle in the friend's hands all happen simultaneously.
- They may happen at ABOUT the same time. But even just two sensory events CANNOT happen simultaneously (say, hearing the friend say "hello" and seeing the bottle in his hands).

  Hearing his friend say "hello" happens with a *citta vīthi* of 17 *cittā*. That auditory sensory input **comes through the ears**. It is a **"*sotadvāra citta vīthi*."** The sensation of "hearing" or *sota viññāṇa* arises in such a *sotadvāra citta vīthi.*
- Seeing the friend with the bottle happens with a TOTALLY DIFFERENT *citta vīthi* triggered by the visual event **coming through the eyes**. It is a **"*cakkhudvāra citta vīthi.*"** The sensation of "seeing" or *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises in such a *cakkhudvāra citta vīthi.*

Mind Can Process Numerous *Citta Vīthi* Very Fast

5. A given *citta vīthi* is based on ONE *ārammaṇa*. Until that series of *citta* run its course, another *citta vīthi* WILL NOT start.

- In the above example, hearing the sound "hello" was based on one *citta vīthi.* The sight of the friend was with another *citta vīthi.* But since they happened so fast that one would think they happened simultaneously.
- **Countless *citta-vīthi* involving ALL SIX senses can flow alternatively in a split-second!**
- The mind is capable of "sorting out" different types of *ārammaṇa* (sights, sounds, smells, etc.) That is why the Buddha said that the mind is the fastest entity in the whole world.
- Because these *citta-vithis* flow VERY FAST, and the mind can keep up with fast processing, **we feel as if they all happen simultaneously!** For details, see Ref. 3.

Each "Data Packet" From a Sense Door Analyzed by a *Citta Vīthi*

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6. As discussed in Ref. 3, the following sequence of events happens before we experience a sensory input. Consider seeing the bottle of alcohol in the above example. (1) Eyes capture the scene of the friend holding the bottle. That captured frame is of about 10-millisecond duration. (2) That signal is sent to the brain via the optic nerve. (3) Brain processes that "data packet" and transfers to the *gandhabba*'s "invisible body." (4) That signal is transferred to the "*cakkhu pasāda rūpa*." (5) The *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* transfers the signal to the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind.")

- We also discussed the above aspects briefly in #7 and #8 of Ref. 4. Now, let us see in a bit more detail what happens when the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* hits *hadaya vatthu* and transfers the signal to *hadaya vatthu*.
- The best way to understand this process is to visualize the *hadaya vatthu* surrounded by five *pasāda rūpa*. Only one *pasāda rūpa* can "hit" (or make contact) with the *hadaya vatthu* at any given time.
- Of course, those entities (*pasāda rūpa* and *hadaya vatthu*) can never be seen, even by the most sensitive instruments. **Thus, the following is just an analogy to visualize the process easier.**

The "Bell Analogy"

7. Imagine a big metal ball (*hadaya vatthu*) surrounded by five smaller balls (five *pasāda rūpa.*) When one smaller metal ball hits the big metal ball, that big metal ball will "ring" (vibrate) a certain number of times. For a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi,* that number is ALWAYS 17.

- This is similar to the "ringing" of an old fashioned bell (like the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia) when hit by a metal object.
- **In fact, Buddhist temples have bells that were originally designed to convey this idea of a *citta vīthi*:** One pulls a rope tied to a small metallic ball inside a metal dome so that the metal ball hits the dome, and that emits a "ringing sound."
- **At the very fundamental level, such a "contact" of a *pasāda rūpa* with *hadaya vatthu* is the only brief moment of sensory experience! (see Ref. 5.)**
- **The Pāli word "*phassa*" represents that "contact."**

Phassa – Contact Between a *Pasāda Rūpa* and *Hadaya Vatthu*

8. Therefore, that "contact" (*phassa*) DOES NOT happen, for example, between the physical eyes and a physical object (*rūpa*.) First, the brain processes that picture captured by the eyes and transfers it to the *cakkhu pasāda*; See Ref. 4. It is only then the *cakkhu pasāda* transfers that signal to *hadaya vatthu* by "hitting" the *hadaya vatthu* (just like the dome of a bell getting hit by the mental ball.)

- **This is what is meant by the Pāli term "*phassa*."** For example, in the Pāli verses, "*saḷāyatana paccayā phasso*" and "*phassa paccayā vedanā*" refer to the "contact of an external sensory input with the mind (*hadaya vatthu*)" and "that contact leading to experiencing the sensory input."

Contact (*Phassa*) by a *Pasāda Rūpa* Makes *Hadaya Vatthu* Vibrate 17 Times

9. When the *hadaya vatthu* is "hit" by a given *pasāda rūpa* (i.e., when it transfers the sensory signal to *hadaya vatthu*,) that leads to 17 vibrations of *hadaya vatthu*; no more and no less. That is a ***citta niyāma*** or a universal law. **With each "vibration," the *hadaya vatthu* generates a *citta*.**

- **That is the source of a *citta vīthi* with 17 *cittā* ("thought moments") in a sensory event involving *pañcadvāra* or the five physical doors (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body.)**
- **The duration of those 17 thought-moments is how long that sensory experience lasts in reality (see ref. 5).** It is a billionth of a second! Of course, billions of such *citta vīthi* flow through the mind it

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appears to us as if we are continuously experiencing it. But the mind falls to the *bhavaṅga* state numerous times in between those *citta vīthi*.

- Note that a *pasāda rūpa* plays a role ONLY in signals coming through the *pañcadvāra* (five physical senses), i.e., the rule of 17 *cittā* per *citta vīthi* holds ONLY for *pañcadvāra citta vīthi.*

Manodvāra Citta Vīthi Do Not Have the 17-*Citta* Limit

10. When a *dhammā* comes to the mind or *hadaya vatthu* (via the *mana indriya* in the brain,) there is no *pasāda rūpa* involvement. That signal goes directly to *hadaya vatthu*. Furthermore, the "17-*citta* rule" does not apply to *manodvāra citta vīthi*. They can have ANY number of *citta*, usually more than 10 *citta*.

- For example, in *jhāna samāpatti*, *manodvāra citta vīthi* can run for many hours continuously (as long as one is in that *samāpatti*.)
- But when in a "regular *jhāna,*" there could be *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* running between *manodvāra* (*jhānic*) *citta vīthi*. That means one could hear external sounds, for example, while in a regular *jhāna*.
- But when in a *jhāna samāpatti,* that *jhānic citta vīthi* runs continuously. *Pañcadvāra citta vīthi* do not get a chance to "interfere." Thus, when one is in a *jhāna samāpatti*, one is totally oblivious to what happens around him/her.

Citta Vīthi – Building Block of Thoughts

11. It is a good idea to get some familiarity with *citta vīthi*. That will make it easier to understand future discussions and get a deeper insight into *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Further details on *citta vīthi* in the post, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

- Of course, the descriptions of *citta vīthi* is not in the *Sutta Piṭaka* but the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. The easiest way to review my description above is to consult *Bhikkhu* Bodhi's "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma" (Ref. 6.)
- However, the explanation in #6 - #8 is not in *Bhikkhu* Bodhi's book. That explanation was based on Waharaka *Thero*'s discourses and my own incorporation of current scientific knowledge. I have explained that approach in "Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka – Gandhabba Example."

References

1. Buddha said it is hard to find any phenomena in this world that change faster than the mind: "Aṅguttara Nikāya (1.48)".

   The short sutta says: "*Nāhaṃ, bhikkhave, aññaṃ ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yaṃ evaṃ lahuparivattaṃ yathayidaṃ cittaṃ. Yāvañcidaṃ, bhikkhave, upamāpi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaṃ cittan*"ti."

   Translated: "I consider, *bhikkhus*, that **there is no phenomenon that comes and goes so quickly as *citta***. It is not easy to find an analogy (a simile) to show how quickly *citta* can change."

2. "Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Event."
3. "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."
4. "How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba."
5. This is the very brief sensory experience that the Buddha explained to Bāhiya Dārucīriya with the verse, "*diṭṭhe diṭṭha mattaṃ bhavissati."* It means, **"what is seen is seen only for a brief moment."** *Mattaṃ* is "*mātra"* in Sinhala or Sanskrit or a "trace of something." What we feel is the cumulative effect of such a large number of contacts that take place in a short time. **Yet, the "real experience" lasts only a billionth of a second!** See "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?"

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6. *Bhikkhu* Bodhi, "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma." This downloadable version is from http://www.pariyatti.org. The above material is discussed in detail in Chapter IV (p. 149.)

8.2.2 Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?

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Does Any Object Live Only For 17 Thought-Moments?

1. I have seen the following statement by many when discussing *Abhidhamma*: "Anything in this world lasts only a brief moment. Then it is re-formed, and the process continues ceaselessly."

- Here is a direct quote from a couple of sources, one of which is a popular book on *Abhidhamma*: **"**..a *rūpa* is very short-lived – it endures only for 17 conscious moments. **Whatever object formed is almost instantly gone".** Thus it is a widespread misconception.
- I Googled the following: "*Abhidhamma* ..a *rūpa* is very short-lived – it endures only for 17 conscious moments." Here is the search result: WebLink: google search: Abhidhamma ..a rūpa is very short-lived – it endures only for 17 conscious moments – Google Search. As you can see, several links make that statement.

The origin of Confusion

2. "Anything in this world" has a common name in Buddha Dhamma: a *saṅkhata*.

- A *saṅkhata* arises due to causes and lasts until those causes are there. Therefore, a *saṅkhata* has a finite lifetime. **That lifetime can range from a split-second (for thought) to billions of years (for a star like our Sun.)** Everything in this world is *saṅkhata.*
- The arising of a *saṅkhata* is due to *Paṭicca Samuppāda.* That is the "*udaya"* (or "arise") part described in *udayavaya ñāṇa.*
- A *saṅkhata* can be STOPPED from arising IF the causes and conditions are removed, i.e., by stopping the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process. That is "*vaya*."

Stopping of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* with *Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda*

3. *Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda* is the "reverse" of the standard *Akusala-Mula Paṭicca Samuppāda* process. Which means it is the way to *Nibbāna*. See, "Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Nibbāna."

- In other words, the standard *Akusala-Mula Paṭicca Samuppāda* process leads to the continuation of the rebirth process. It is also known as the *Anulōma Paṭicca Samuppāda.* The opposite (or the stopping of the rebirth process via eliminating *avijjā*) is *Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda.* **That is the "destruction" or "vaya" of the process** that leads to the arising of all *saṅkhata* (including our future births.) [***paṭiloma*** : [adj.] reverse; opposite; contrary.]
- Therefore, *udayavaya ñāṇa* is a deeper concept. It describes, in yet another way, how the rebirth process can be stopped. It is a bit more complicated and is discussed in the section "Udayavaya Ñāṇa."
- So, why do some people say that any *rūpa* (*saṅkhata*) has a lifetime of only 17 thought-moments (lasting only a split-second)?

4. It seems that this misinterpretation comes from taking the life of a "*hadaya rūpa"* and applying that to ANY *rūpa*!

- As we discussed in "Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit," the lifetime of "vibration" of the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) is 17 thought moments. In *Abhidhamma,* that vibration is called a ***hadaya rūpa.***

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- First, let us clarify that a *saṅkhata* (ANY *rūpa* in the external world) may have a lifetime as long as billions of years!

Some *Saṅkhata* May Have Lifetimes of Billions of Years!

5. Different *saṅkhata* have different lifetimes. A fly may live for a few days, a human for about 100 years; a building may last hundreds of years, the Earth will last about 4-5 billion more years, etc. However, a *saṅkhata* will be decaying gradually over time.

- An inert object, like a building, will start slowly decaying. If a building lasts 1000 years, then each day, it will "decay" by a little bit, though the decay will accelerate towards the end.
- From the present time to the final destruction (or until death in the case of a living being), any given *saṅkhata* will change. If we consider a baby born today, it will first grow to become a young person. Then it will gradually start weakening while becoming an older adult and eventually die one day. Therefore, the critical aspect is not destruction but change. While the baby is growing, the cells in the body will multiply; but more cells will be dying in an older person's body.

A *Saṅkhata* Keeps Changing – Not "Appear and Disappear"

6. This constant change is not discernible to us on a real-time basis. A person does not age while we are watching him/her. But we can see the change over several years, especially if they are very young or over the middle age.

- Mayflies have a lifetime of the order of a day (after the larval stage), and some live only several hours; here is a short video by the National Geographic channel:

  WebLink: youtube: The 24-Hour Life of the Mayfly | Nat Geo Wild

- **Thus there is a HUGE difference in saying that a given material object CHANGES moment-to-moment versus saying that the object is "RECREATED" every 17 thought moments**.
- During an *Abhidhamma* discourse that I listened to, the presenter showed a pen and said that the pen is "destroyed and recreated" EVERY 17 thought moments! By extending that logic, one could say that any entity (say, the Earth) is vanished and "recreated" within 17 thought moments! A complete misunderstanding of the *Udayavaya* process of a *saṅkhata*.
- The 17 thought moments' origin is explained in the post "Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit."
- As explained there, those 17 thought moments (or 17 *cittā*) arise when the **seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*)** vibrates 17 times when one of the 5 *pasāda rūpa* transfers a sensory input. Those 17 vibrations make up a "*hadaya rūpa*" in the *Abhidhamma* language. Note that a "***hadaya rūpa***" is different from "***hadaya vatthu***." A ***hadaya rūpa*** arises every time the ***hadaya vatthu*** gets hit by a *pasāda rūpa* in the process of transferring a sensory signal. See "Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit."

A *Hadaya Rūpa* Has a Life of 17 Thought-Moments

7. So, where does this incorrect statement come from? **".. *rūpa* is very short-lived – it endures only for 17 conscious moments. Whatever object formed is almost instantly gone."**

- The confusion arises when one does not understand the concept of a *hadaya rūpa*. A *hadaya rūpa* is generated in the *hadaya vatthu* by a sensory event through one of the five physical senses. **The lifetime of a *hadaya rūpa* is the time taken to experience that external sense event.** That takes 17 thought moments (during which an impression of the external *rūpa* is made in mind by a *citta vīthi*).
- **It is WRONG to take this time to be the lifetime of an external object (a *saṅkhata*).**

Huge Difference Between a *Rūpa* (a *Saṅkhata*) and a *Hadaya Rūpa*

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8. Therefore, It is critical to understand the difference between ANY *rūpa* (*saṅkhata*) and a *hadaya rūpa* that lasts only for a blink of an eye.

- **The lifetime of a *hadaya rūpa* is just the time it takes for the mind to be AWARE of any *saṅkhata*.** We experience outside material things (*saṅkhata*) in our world through our five physical senses. We see with eyes, hear with ears, smell with the nose, taste with the tongue, and touch with our body.
- During the lifetime of a *hadaya rūpa,* our minds only catch a very brief (a thought moments worth) of the seeing, hearing, etc., experience at a time. It is not that the object lives a short time; it is just that we sense it only for a brief moment at a time!
- It is unnecessary to spend time on the concept of a *hadaya rūpa* unless one is deep into *Abhidhamma*. However, it is good to know about it because one may come across it and may confuse it with a *hadaya vatthu.*
- The main point is that any object in the world (conventionally called a *rūpa*) is a *saṅkhata.* Some *saṅkhata* (like the Earth or a star) have lifetimes of billions of years. That is not to be confused with the *hadaya rūpa* (or a *citta vīthi*) that lasts only 17 thought-moments!

8.2.3 Phassa (Contact) – Contact With Pasāda Rūpa

January 15, 2021; revised January 16, 2021

Phassa (Contact) comes in the middle of the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) process. However, PS processes start with "*saḷāyatana paccayā phasso*" or "an *āyatana* making contact." That contact is between a *rūpa* and one of the six *āyatana* (*cakkhu, sota, gandha, jivhā, kāya, mano*.) At the fundamental level, **a *rūpa* makes contact with the mind** via one of the five *pasāda rūpa* or directly with the mind (*hadaya vatthu*.)

Importance of *Phassa* (Contact) in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

1. The standard PS cycle starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*." However, we do not just start generating *saṅkhāra*. Furthermore, *avijjā* is not there in a mind all the time. Only when we see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or think about an enticing "thought object" (*ārammaṇa*) that we start generating *saṅkhāra* due to *avijjā*.

- For example, if we **eat something tasty,** we may generate greedy thoughts (*saṅkhāra*) of eating more even if we are not hungry. If we **see an enemy X**, we may generate angry thoughts (*saṅkhāra*) about that person.
- Do those two "contacts" occur between the **food and the tongue/eyes and person X**?
- In other words, does the *vedanā* (feeling) of "good taste" arise in the tongue? Does "seeing of X" happen in the eyes? No.
- Some say those *vedanā* arise in the brain. But the brain is also made of inert atoms/molecules. Those cannot SENSE anything!
- Only a Buddha can accurately describe the actual sensing process. **That "experience" takes place in the mental body (*gandhabba*.)**

Contact (*Phassa*) Is Between a *Rūpa* and an *Āyatana* (*Pasāda Rūpa*)

2. When we see person X, for example, that is contact (*phassa*) between our internal *āyatana* (eyes or more correctly, *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*) and external *āyatana* (an image of person X in this case). That is the process stated in verse, "*cakkhuñca **paṭicca** rūpe ca uppajjāti cakkhuviññāṇaṃ."* The word "***paṭicca***" here refers to that **contact (*phassa*)**.

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- Due to that contact, a series of *cittā* flow in mind. That is a *citta vīthi*. We discussed that in detail in "Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit." Also, see Ref. 1.
- That leads to a mental phenomenon that we call consciousness (in this case, *cakkhu viññāna*). When we look at person X, we can instantly identify that person. **This is amazing because the image that falls in the back of the eye is tiny.** See Ref. 1.
- Humans and animals generate such "awareness" or consciousness when seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or thinking about an external *rūpā*.

Cakkhāyatana Is *Cakkhu Pasāda Rūpa*

3. *Cakkhāyatana* is not the eyes. The "seeing" takes place in the mind, and the "seat of the mind" is the *hadaya vatthu*. The image captured by the eyes gets transmitted to the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*, which transfers the image to the *hadaya vatthu*. See the previous post, "Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit." It is a good idea to review that post.

- All five physical senses (*cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya*) work that way. See Ref. 2 for a *Tipiṭaka* reference.
- Memories and other concepts come to the mind via *mana indriya* in the brain. Those signals get directly transferred to the *hadaya vatthu*. We may get to those details in future posts.

What Is Meant by "*Cakkhu, bhikkhave, aniccaṃ*"?

4. Many *suttas* state, "***Cakkhu**, bhikkhave, **aniccaṃ**.*" (and similarly for *sota, ghāna*, etc.) It should be clear that "*cakkhu*" does not refer to the physical eyes. The *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* in the *gandhabba* can last many thousands of years.

- After the human *bhava*, we get another *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* (with another mental body corresponding to the new *bhava*).
- However, what kind of *bhava* we get will NOT be due to our liking/expectations. It will be due to our past *kamma* and will be dictated by the *uppatti* PS process; see Ref. 3. That is what is meant by "***anicca**.*"

Vedanā and *Saññā* Can Arise Without a Mind

5. There are a couple of "mental factors" (or *cetasika*) that may arise without a "mind." Crude versions of *vedanā* and *saññā* can arise even without a mind in "living things" (like plants) in the absence of a mind.

- *Vedanā* comes from ("*ve*" + "*danā*") which means "දැනෙනවා" in Sinhala. That means to "become aware of something." **When we make contact with an "external *āyatana*" via our six senses, we become aware of that external *rūpā*;** that is *vedanā*. See, "Vedanā (Feelings)."
- At the fundamental level, *Saññā* means "recognition" of an object or a person, or a concept, for example. In general, it is the recognition of an "external *āyatana*" or "external *rūpā*." See, "Saññā – What It Really Means."
- Therefore, plants and trees have a crude basic form of *vedanā* and *saññā*. **A plant can "feel" when sunlight falls on it (*vedanā*), and "recognize" (*saññā*) that as useful for its survival.**

Awareness in Living Things (Plants) and in Living Beings

6. Therefore, plants and trees also seem to be aware of the external world and can even respond in some cases. For example, a plant or a tree can "turn" towards sunlight. Their roots grow towards water sources and away from dry soil. One may ask: "Then how does a plant turn towards sunlight?."

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- Plants are like robots. A moving robot may have sensors that can detect obstacles in the way. That involves *vedanā* and *saññā* in the elementary sense.
- A robot has a built-in computer that can instruct how to go around an obstacle, for example.
- The working of a plant is very similar. A plant seed has necessary "programs" installed in its cells to deal with the external environment. We discussed this in the section on "Origin of Life."

Plants Do Not Generate *Saṅkhāra* and *Viññāṇa*

7. Therefore, some "live things" like plants can generate rudimentary versions of *vedanā* and *saññā*. However, a plant CANNOT generate *saṅkhārā* (thoughts) about those *vedanā* and *saññā*.

- *Saṅkhārā* arises via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*." Based on *avijjā*, a mind generates defiled thoughts. Plants do not generate *saṅkhārā* and *viññāṇa* via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" and "*saṅkhārā paccayā viññāṇa.*"
- Of course, totally inert things like rocks do not have *vedanā* and *saññā* either.

Living Beings Have All Four *Nāma Dhammā* (*Vedanā*, *Saññā*, *Saṅkhāra*, *Viññāṇa*)

8. Now, let us go back to the discussion in #1 above. A sensory contact (*phassa*) leads to some mental activity in a living being. We are happy to encounter "pleasing sights, sounds, etc." and dislike the opposites.

- As we discussed in #1, if we **eat something tasty,** we may generate greedy thoughts of eating more even if we are not hungry. If we **see an enemy X**, we may generate angry thoughts about that person.
- First, in both cases, an idea about enjoying/disliking that contact comes to mind. That is the *mano saṅkhāra* stage.
- Then we start thinking about enjoying/getting rid of that sensory input. This is the *vacī saṅkhāra* stage, EVEN IF we are not saying anything out loud. Talking oneself — as well as talking — involves *vacī saṅkhāra*. In this case, two types of *cetasika* (*vitakka* and *vicāra*) are involved.
- If one really gets "attached" (via like or dislike) to that *ārammaṇa*, one may take physical actions. Such physical actions are done with *kāya saṅkhāra* that arise in mind.

Two Types of *Viññāṇa*

9. **In the beginning of a *cakkhudvāra citta vīthi***, we "see" the image. This is the *cakkhu viññāṇa*. It is a visual **sensing experience**, and it is a ***vipāka viññāṇa***. These *citta* DO NOT have *javana* power to create new *kamma*. They experience the presence of a *rūpa* (sight, sound, taste, etc.). Thus *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā*, and *kāya viññāṇa* are ALWAYS ***vipāka viññāṇa***.

- If we "attach" to what we saw/ate, etc., we start **generating *vaci* and *kāya saṅkhāra.*** That is when we start acting with *avijjā* and generate ***kamma viññāṇa*** via "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." Such *kamma viññāṇa* are EXCLUSIVELY *mano viññāṇa*. The unique aspect here is the presence of *javana citta*.
- That ***kamma* generation** happens with *javana citta* **in the second stage of a *citta vīthi***, as we will discuss. However, *mano viññāṇa* can be *vipāka viññāṇa* too (for example, when we recall memories).
- Such *javana citta* (generating new *kamma* via ***kamma viññāṇa***) are absent in the *citta vīthi* of *Arahants*. However, *Arahants* do experience the ***vipāka viññāṇa***. That is another way to see the difference between ***kamma viññāṇa*** and ***vipāka viññāṇa***.
- We will be able to clearly see that there are two types of *viññāṇa* when we analyze a *citta vīthi* in upcoming posts.

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References

1. "How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba,"

2. "WebLink: suttacentral: Āyatanavibhaṅga" explains a *āyatana* as follows:

   Dvādasāyatanāni— cakkhāyatanaṃ, sotāyatanaṃ, ghānāyatanaṃ, jivhāyatanaṃ, kāyāyatanaṃ, manāyatanaṃ, rūpāyatanaṃ, saddāyatanaṃ, gandhāyatanaṃ, rasāyatanaṃ, phoṭṭhabbāyatanaṃ, dhammāyatanaṃ.

   ***Tattha katamaṃ cakkhāyatanaṃ**? Yaṃ cakkhu catunnaṃ mahābhūtānaṃ upādāya **pasādo** attabhāvapariyāpanno **anidassano** sappaṭigho, yena cakkhunā anidassanena sappaṭighena rūpaṃ sanidassanaṃ sappaṭighaṃ passi vā passati vā passissati vā passe vā, cakkhumpetaṃ cakkhāyatanampetaṃ cakkhudhātupesā cakkhundriyampetaṃ lokopeso dvārāpesā samuddopeso paṇḍarampetaṃ khettampetaṃ vatthumpetaṃ nettampetaṃ nayanampetaṃ orimaṃ tīrampetaṃ suñño gāmopeso. Idaṃ vuccati "cakkhāyatanaṃ".*

   - The others are explained similarly.
   - In the above verse, "***anidassano***" means "cannot be seen." Thus, ***cakkhāyatana*** is not the physical eye. It refers to ***cakkhu pasāda rūpa*** in the mental body (*gandhabba*) that cannot be seen. As we know, in Out-of-Body Experiences, that *gandhabba* comes out of the physical body and can see without physical eyes. Details at "How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba."

3. "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda."

8.2.4 Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammaṇa

January 20, 2021

Arising of the Five Aggregates (*pañcakkhandha*) happens with the creation of a "mental image" of a thought-object ("*ārammaṇa*.") For example, when we see an object, the mind re-creates its own version of that object. When we taste the food, the mind prepares its own version of that taste. All six sensory inputs work that way. In other words, *pañcakkhandha* ("Five Aggregates") are one's own. **This is why different people respond differently to the same sensory event.** [***ārammaṇa*** (where the mind dwells) is also called ***ālambana*** (to hang [hold] on to)]

- This is a critical post to understand. It may take repeated readings and understanding of previous posts in this series: "Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda" and the references provided here. Don't hesitate to ask questions.

Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) Cycles Start with an *Ārammaṇa* (Focus of Thoughts)

1. The standard PS cycle starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*." However, we do not spontaneously start generating *saṅkhāra*. **We start generating *saṅkhāra* based on an *ārammaṇa* (thought object) that we like or dislike.**

- ***Cakkhu viññāṇa***, for example, arises when *cakkhu* (*cakkhu pasāda rūpa*) makes contact (*phassa*) with the *rupa* (an image of the object seen). In the *suttas*, that is stated as, "*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjāti cakkhuviññāṇaṃ."* See the previous post, "Phassa (Contact) – Contact With Pasāda Rūpa."
- Different people respond differently to the same sensory input. **Furthermore, that response is swift.** We have discussed several examples in Ref. 1.
- A new series of thoughts (*citta vīthi*) starts with a new *ārammaṇa*.

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Figuring Out Which Sense Faculty (*Pañcadvārāvajjana Citta*)

2. For example, suppose person X is relaxing at his desk during his lunch break. His mind is not focused on any specific task. It is said to be in the "*bhavaṅga*" state. I have discussed the "*bhavaṅga*" state in "State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vīthi – Bhavaṅga."

- Now, an unfriendly co-worker walks into the office. Person X looks up from the desk, sees the unfriendly co-worker, and a new series of **angry thoughts** (a *citta vīthi*) start running in his mind **immediately**.
- We discussed the basic aspects of a *citta vīthi* in the previous post; see Ref. 2.
- So, the series of events start with "seeing the unfriendly co-worker." That is a *cakkhu viññāṇa.* That happened without X taking the initiative. Any event that happens without taking the initiative is a *kamma vipāka*. Therefore, that *cakkhu viññāṇa* is a *vipāka viññāṇa.* His focus of attention was shifted due to the sight of the co-worker.
- That sight led to the arising of "bad thoughts with anger" in his mind instantaneously. He may then possibly react by saying something bad to the co-worker. That development (response to the *cakkhu viññāṇa*) **happens at the later stage of the same *citta vīthi*!**
- First, we discuss what happens with a single *citta* bringing a new sensory input.

Initiation of a Sensory Event Can be at One of Six Senses

3. In the above example, seeing the co-worker started with "*cakkhuñca **paṭicca** rūpe ca uppajjāti cakkhuviññāṇaṃ."*

- Our attention abruptly changes when we encounter a new sensory input. That could come via any of the six senses, including the mind by itself. For example, we may be doing something, and all of a sudden, thoughts about an old friend may come to mind. That happens via "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjāti manoviññāṇaṃ*."
- Of course, switching among several different *ārammaṇa* can happen in rapid succession. When we watch a movie, we see the movie screen and hear the dialogues. They switch so rapidly that we feel that watching and hearing happen simultaneously! We discussed a simple example in #4 of Ref. 2.

Two Possible Meanings of "*Paṭicca*"

4. Going back to our example, seeing the co-worker starts with "*cakkhuñca **paṭicca** rūpe ca uppajjāti cakkhu viññāṇaṃ."* Therefore, a *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises when a *rūpa* (the figure of the co-worker) makes contact (*paṭicca*) with *cakkhu pasāda rūpā*.

- That *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises with a single *citta,* which is one of the 17 *cittā* in a *citta vīthi.*
- By the way, "*paticca*" has TWO possible meanings, depending on the context. In the term "***Paṭicca Samuppāda,***" it means "getting attached willingly" or **"*pati*" + "*icca*"** ("*pati*" means to "bind.") See Ref. 3.
- However, in the above verse, ***paticca*** implies **"two entities (that are compatible) making contact."** A *rupa* does not "make contact" with one of the other four *indriya* like ears or nose. Similarly, a sound does not "make contact" with the eyes or the nose. The Buddha explained to Vacchagotta that a wick would soak up oil because wick and oil are compatible and will "*paṭicca*" (Ref. 4.)

The Role of Universal *Cetasika*

5. A complex process happens in mind during the event of "*cakkhuñca **paṭicca** rūpe ca uppajjāti cakkhu viññāṇaṃ."* **That process happens in that single *citta* which lives only for less than a billionth of a**

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second. Only a Buddha can discern something that can happen that fast. We can verify that to be true only by seeing that it is compatible/consistent with nature.

- That "contact" between "the image of a *rūpa*" and "*cakkhu pasāda rūpa"* is made by the "*phassa*" *cetasika* that arises with that *citta*.
- Then that "event" is registered in the mind as a *sukha, dukkha*, or *adukkhamasukha vedanā* (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral feeling.) The "*vedanā*" *cetasika* is responsible for that.
- Then the mind recognizes the object with the "*saññā*" *cetasika*.
- During the SAME *citta* (where *cakkhu viññāṇa* arises,) a bit more complex process happens that involves the "*cetanā*" *cetasika*.

How Does Cognition/Recognition (*Saññā*) Happen In a Single *Citta*?

6. An unimaginably complex process occurs during that SAME *citta*, which lasts only a billionth of a second.

- The mind needed to compare it with previous experiences to identify that object. For example, recognition of the co-worker in the example discussed in #2 above requires comparing the image just received with one's previous experiences. Otherwise, how does the mind recognize the person who walked in to be a co-worker and that one has had bad experiences with him in the past?
- That ultra-fast recognition (*saññā*) happens with the aid of the *manasikāra cetasika*. To get an idea of what happens when we recognize an object, see the video below (especially starting at 3:30 minutes):

  WebLink: youtube: What is a Thought? How the Brain Creates New Ideas | Henning Beck | TEDxHHL

7. At 3:30 minutes, we see a "face" made up of fruits and vegetables. Even though it is not a real human face, it takes us just a split second to realize that it represents a face.

- But as Mr. Beck points out, a computer will never recognize the human face's representation depicted there.
- At 9:00 minutes, he starts a discussion on identifying a chair. Again, a computer runs into a problem identifying "less obvious" structures that can serve as chairs.
- In both these instances, what the computer is missing is *saññā* (loosely translated to English as "perception"). Even animals can recognize objects relevant to their survival. For example, a dog can instantly recognize its owners and any other pets living in the house. It can recognize foods that it likes, etc. See "Saññā – What It Really Means." Also, see Ref. 5.
- During **that same *citta,*** more processes happen to make that recognition possible.

Creation of an Image of the External Object in the Mind by the *Cetanā Cetasika*

8. For that recognition to occur, another important *cetasika* of "*cetana*" comes into play. **It CREATES a "*cittaja rupa*" in mind (a *rupa* created by *citta*) according to one's *gati/anusaya*.** This is a CRITICAL point that we will discuss in more detail. The "*saṅkhārā*" aggregate represents this process. For those familiar with *Abhidhamma*, this is where "*mano saṅkhārā*" arises AUTOMATICALLY.

- It is the *manasikāra cetasika* that helps incorporate one's past experiences, future hopes, etc. (represented by *gati/anusaya*) and helps the *cetana* make that "*cittaja rūpa*" or the "mental picture." **It is that "mental picture" that we "see" or "experience."**
- There are two more *cetasika* that ALWAYS arise with any *citta*: *ekaggatā* and *jīvitindriya*. The *jīvitindriya cetasika* keeps the *hadaya vatthu* alive (with *kammic* energy). *Ekaggatā cetasika* keeps the mind on that particular *ārammaṇa* (in this case, a *rupa rupa* or a sight.)

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- **The above description is at the heart of all mental phenomena**, i.e., creating a "mind-made image." In the recent post, "How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba," we asked the question, "How do we see?" **The answer is in the above description.** Please re-read that post, and things will become more clear.

Connection to the Five Aggregates

9. The above description also explains how the five aggregates arise in that single *cakkhudvāra citta* representing the first instance of "experiencing a visual sensory input."

- The "***rūpa* aggregate**" is represented by the "***phassa***" *cetasika*.
- ***Vedanā*** and ***saññā cetasika*** generate the "***vedanā* aggregate**" and the "***saññā* aggregate**."
- The ***cetanā cetasika*** plays a key role in generating "***saṅkhārā* aggregate**" with the help of the other six *cetasika*. This is where the mind CREATES its own version of the sense object, a visual *rūpa* in this case.
- **We experience only a "mind-made image" of the external *rupa* that is out there in the physical world.** We will discuss that in #7 below. Thus, the ***viññāṇa* aggregate** arises from the above processes' overall effect.
- That is how the Five Aggregates arise with ANY sensory input via one of the six senses.

The Arising of the Five Aggregates (*Pañcakkhandha*) in a Single *Citta*!

10. That is how the five aggregates arise within that single *cakkhudvāra citta.* **The same process takes place for any *ārammaṇa* coming through any of the six senses.**

- The five aggregates arise due to the *cetasika* of *phassa, vedanā, saññā*, and *cetanā*. However, all SEVEN *cetasika* (*phassa, vedanā, saññā, cetanā, manasikāra, ekaggatā,* and *jīvitindriya*) are essential ingredients of ANY *citta*.
- **Those 7 *cetasika* arise with all *citta* and thus are universal (*sabba citta sādhāraṇa*) *cetasika*.**
- The above process takes place in all types of sensory experiences. The sound we hear is not the "real sound," but it is "modified" according to one's *gati/anusaya*. The same **is true for all 6 sensory experiences, including smells, tastes, touches, and concepts (*dhammā*.)**

The Same Person Could be Perceived as Likeable or Distasteful

11. Suppose two strangers (with opposite political views) watch TV in a bar while having their drinks. A famous politician comes on TV.

- At that moment, one person's face gets darkened, and angry thoughts arise in him. Simultaneously, the other person's face brightens up, and pleasant thoughts arise in him.
- How is that possible? It was the same picture that they were looking at.
- The reason is what we discussed above. The "mental image" formed in one person's mind depicts a "bad person." On the other hand, the other person's mind had created a "bad picture" that gave rise to bad thoughts.
- We can think of many examples. I have discussed another example in Ref. 1.

Viññāṇa Is a Magician!

12. The above description explains why the Buddha called *viññāṇa* a "magician" (Ref. 6). What we experience as *cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya*, and *mano viññāṇa* DO NOT represent reality. It is like

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looking at the world with tinted glasses. Depending on how strongly-defiled the mind is (i.e., *gati/anusaya*), the sensory experience is biased.

- This was explained with examples in the posts, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" (especially see #4 to #6) and "The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)." It is essential to read all relevant posts and understand these fundamental ideas.
- I will continue the discussion in the next post. Please make sure to read all the relevant posts. Otherwise, future posts will not make sense.
- The mind is an amazing entity. It is unbelievably fast. That is why we are fooled into thinking that there are fruitful things that will please us. However, the reality is different. There is unimaginable suffering hidden in enticing "sense pleasures" or *kāma rāga*.
- **That can be seen not with eyes but with wisdom.** That is the *yathābhūta ñāṇa*, the wisdom to "see" the real nature with wisdom. As we discuss further, that real picture will become clear.

References

1. See #4 through #6 in "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
2. "Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit."
3. "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"
4. In the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Saṃyojana Sutta* (SN 44.9)," the Buddha explains, "*Seyyathāpi, bhikkhave, telañca* ***paṭicca*** *vaṭṭiñca paṭicca telappadīpo jhāyeyya*" OR "*Bhikkhus*, an oil lamp burns **in dependence** on oil and a wick." In an old fashioned oil lamp has a wick partially immersed in oil. That oil soaks the wick and gets to the tip of the burning wick, and sustains the flame. Therefore, oil and wick are compatible and will "*paṭicca*." If one puts a metal rod in oil, the oil will not soak the metal, i.e., they are not compatible and thus would not *paticca*.
5. The above video is also discussed in "Citta – Basis of Our Experience and Actions." It is a good idea to read that post too.
6. 6. "WebLink: suttacentral: *Phenapiṇḍūpama Sutta* (SN 22.95)"

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8.3 Paṭicca Samuppāda – Overview

Revised November 4, 2018

1. Nothing can happen without a cause ("*hetu*" in Pāli or Sinhala). Everything happens for reasons or causes. Normally, many things simultaneously arise due to multiple causes.

- However, one cause or one effect could dominate and thus sometimes it appears that one thing happened due to one cause.

2. Due to our ignorance of the true nature of this world, we keep initiating new causes. If we do not add fuel to a fire, the fire will extinguish when the fuel runs out.

- We have been on this *sansāric* journey from the beginning-less time because we have been adding "fuel to the fire" without any pause.

3. The *paṭicca samuppāda* **(let us shorten it as PS)** describes all aspects of life moment-to-moment: how we suffer the consequences of our past deeds, and how we make new causes or add more fuel.

- Acariya Buddhaghosa understood only one aspect (the *akusala-mūla* PS) of the innumerable applications of PS, and since the time Theravāda sect adopted Visuddhimagga as the basis of Dhamma, this wonderful knowledge of PS has been hidden.
- Many variations of PS are discussed in the WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppādavibhaṅga of the *Vibhangappakarana* in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

4. Here are the main subsections in this section:

- Several PS cycles are discussed in this section: "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles." However, please read #7 below, before going there.
- For those who really want to avoid too many Pāli words: "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English."
- What is meant by "*paccayā*" (conditions), and discussions on different types of conditions: "Pattana Dhamma." An introduction to "*paccayā*" is given in #5 below.
- "Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti – What Does It Really Mean?"

5. Even if there is a cause, its result (effect) does not manifest until the right conditions ("*paccayā*" in Pāli) appear.

- This is discussed in detail in, "What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?." We can get the basic idea form a few examples here.
- A matchstick has the potential to bring about a fire. But unless it is heated by striking on a hard surface, fire does not appear.
- A bomb can explode and create much destruction. But it will not go off until triggered.
- We all have bad habits, but they do not manifest until it is triggered by an object (a picture, sound, smell, touch, or a thought).

6. Therefore, if one acts mindfully, one can PREVENT many *akusala vipāka* and FORCE many *kusala vipāka*. We all have an innumerable numbers of both accumulated in this *sansara*; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Asavas)," and "The Law of Attraction, Habits (Gathi), and Cravings (Asavas)."

- Details at: "Pattana Dhamma."

7. It is necessary to understand that the terms in the standard PS cycle: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra; saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa; viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana, saḷāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna*

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paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti" **are highly condensed.**

- One could write a book on each term.
- At a minimum, one needs to get the basic idea of each keyword: *avijjā, saṅkhāra, ..bhava, jāti.*

8. Most modern texts in English just translate those keywords to single words in English, which leads to misinterpretations in many cases.

- **It is better to understand the meaning of each of those Pāli worlds and just use those words. Their meanings can have different meanings based on the context.**

9. In the following, I will provide a selected few posts to read in order to get an idea of what is meant by those Pāli words. **The following terms are associated with the *akusala-mūla* PS.**

Avijjā: "What is Avijjā (Ignorance)?."

Saṅkhāra: In most cases, what comes to play is *abhisaṅkhāra* or "strong *saṅkhāra*." But it is necessary to get the basic idea of "*saṅkhāra*" first: "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

Viññāna: One of the complex Pāli words: "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

Nāmarūpa: Another complex word: "Viññāṇa paccayā Nāmarūpa."

Saḷāyatana: *Saḷāyatana* (six *āyatana*) are not six sense faculties, "Nāmarūpa paccayā Saḷāyatana."

Phassa: What really comes into play in PS is not "*phassa*," but "defiled contact" or *samphassa*, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."

Vedanā: *Vedanā* in PS does not really mean "feelings", but "*samphassa jā vedana*": "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

Tanhā: "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

Upādāna: "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna."

Bhava* and *Jāti: "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control."

- Of course, *gati* is another key Pāli word that is not discussed much these days. More posts on each word can be found by using the "Search" box at top right.

10. It is clear from #7 above that all future suffering (*jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti*) will be stopped when the *akusala-mūla* PS is stopped from arising.

- **It is also clear that all future suffering ends when there is no rebirth**, i.e., when the step "*bhava paccayā jāti*" stops and thus "*jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā*" step stops.
- As long as there *jāti* (or births), the suffering will not end.

11. The *akusala-mūla* PS can be terminated by working on two main targets: *avijjā* and *taṇhā*.

- It is quite clear why we need to remove *avijjā*. If there is no *avijjā* (i.e., if one comprehends the Four Noble Truths), then an *akusala-mūla* PS will not even get started.
- The second one of removing *taṇhā* is not that clear. It is actually gradually reduced by changing our *gati*. This is discussed in the post: "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna."

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8.4 How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?

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Paṭicca Samuppāda (PS) cycles have many varieties and can be analyzed in great detail and can reveal subtle aspects and clarify our understanding about the world we live in.

Two Categories of PS Cycles

1. There are two broad categories of PS cycles.

i. The standard *Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes how our actions (*saṅkhāra*) lead to the generation of new *kammā*. Thus they could be called "*kammā* generating" PS cycles.

ii. The other category of PS cycles is responsible for bringing in *kammā vipāka*, and thus could be called "*vipāka* generating" PS; this type of a PS cycle is labelled in the *Tipiṭaka* as an *avyākata* PS; *avyākata* means "kammicaly neutral"; not generating new *kammā*. The Pāli word is *avyākata*, and the Sinhala word is *avyākruta*. But in many places, it is written as *abyākata*.

Sensory Experience Starts With *Avyākata* PS

2. Everything that we INITIALLY EXPERIENCE is due to a *kammā vipāka* and is brought in by an *avyākata* PS. That PS process makes us see, hear, smell, taste, experience bodily sensations, and bring in new thoughts to the mind.

- However, the feelings (*vedanā*) that we experience due to such sense inputs are not the same for different persons, except in the case of bodily sensations. Everyone feels the same if getting hit (pain), or getting a good massage (pleasure).
- In other five sense inputs, the *vedanā* generated depends on the person. For example, a teenager may like a heavy metal song, but his grandfather may not.
- In all cases, each person RESPONDS to the sensory input in one's own way. This response may lead to new *kammā* and is described by the "*kammā* generating" PS cycles.

We Don't Have Control Over *Avyākata* PS

3. We do not have control over the *avyākata* PS — which brings *kammā vipāka* by initiating new sense events; once started, they cannot be stopped. Even *Arahants* cannot avoid *kammā vipāka*.

- But the "*kammā* generating" PS cycles that arise as our response to such sense events can be controlled by us based on our *gati* (*saṃsāric* habits). This is the basis of *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna* meditations.
- *Avyākata* PS bring *kammā vipāka* when suitable conditions are available; see, "Anantara Samanantara Paccaya."

Avyākata PS May Lead to New *Kamma*

4. Now, depending on what we see, hear, etc due to a *kammā vipāka*, we MAY start making *saṅkhāra* and a new "*kammā* generating" PS cycle may be initiated; then we make more *kammā vipāka.*

- For example, **when we see** an appealing object, we may generate *lobha* (greedy) thoughts (*apuññābhi saṅkhāra*); **when we see** a distasteful object, we may generate hateful thoughts (*apuññābhi saṅkhāra*). **If we see** a beggar on the street, we may generate *alobha* thoughts (*puññābhi saṅkhāra*), which may lead to a meritorious act (giving some money to that person).

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- All those "seeing events" arose due to *avyākata* PS cycles. But those different responses, generating *saṅkhāra*, were done by "*kammā* generating" PS cycles, that operate based on one's *gati* (*saṃsāric* habits), as will discuss below.

Not All *Avyākata* PS Lead to New *Kamma*

5. **ALL our actions are initiated by *avyākata* PS cycles; but not all *avyākata* PS cycles lead to "*kammā* generating" PS cycles generating new *kammā*.** You may want to think about this and see that indeed that is true.

- Thousands of people see an item on display in a shop. Many glance at it and don't give it another thought. Some will stop and take another look since they like it. There could also be someone who really wanted it, but may not have money, and even think about stealing it!
- There is no "fixed person with *avijjā*." *Avijjā* can arise in any normal human (without *magga phala*), if the sensory input is strong enough! You may also want to read the post on "'Self' and 'no-self': A Simple Analysis – Do We Always Act with Avijjā?."
- Whether *avijjā* arises depends on the particular sense input and the person (more correctly, the person's *gati*).

6. We do not even notice most of these sense events. When we travel in a car, we see a million things, but only a few "catch our attention." Only those few events lead to the initiation of "*kammā* generating" PS cycles.

- But even one initiation of a "*kammā* generating" PS cycle can, in turn, initiate many "follow-up" PS cycles. For example, while walking, we may see a house by the road we really like (due to a *kammā vipāka*). We may get attached to it (form *taṇhā*), and then start thinking about building a house like that. Then we may remember a nice house that belongs to a friend, and then start thinking about that friend, which could lead to thinking about a common enemy. Suddenly, we have started a stronger "*kammā* generating" PS cycle that could lead to a worse *kammā vipāka*.
- This is the "wheeling process" that we discussed in the post, "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?" and many other posts; enter the keywords "wheeling process" in the Search box at the top right, and you will get many posts. Our *sansaric* journey is fueled by an uncountable "*kammā* generating" PS cycles.

Kamma to *Vipāka* to *Kamma* – Saṃsāric Journey

7. This vicious cycle of "*vipāka*" leading to "*kammā*" leading to more "*vipāka*" is the process that binds us to the *saṃsāra* of endless rebirths, or perpetuates our "world" of suffering.

- The Buddha describes this as, "*kammā vipākā vaddanti, vipāko kamma sambhavo, tasmā punabbhavo hoti, evan loko pavattati.*"
- That means, "*kammā* lead to *vipāka*, *vipāka*, in turn, lead to *kammā* and thus to rebirth (*punabbhavo*), and that is how the world (existence) is maintained."
- There "*sambhava*" is "*san*" + "*bhava*," or "adding more existences." Also, "*loka*" is the world, and "*pavatta*" means "maintain."

"Moral" Is Relative – Any Pothujjana Can Act Morally or Immorally

8. We normally call a person "moral" when he/she acts morally in most cases.

However, that does not mean that a "moral person" will not generate immoral thoughts at times. If a "tempting sense input comes in" via any of the six senses, he/she may act with *avijjā* and start an *akusala-mūla* PS.

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- Similarly, one labeled as a criminal (because of his prior acts) may see someone in danger and act with kindness, initiating a meritorious deed.
- This is why the Buddha said that there is no "unchanging self," but there is no "self" either. What happens at a given moment depends on what kind of PS cycle is "triggered," and the level of *avijjā* triggered. *avijjā* can range from *mōha* (morally blind) to just not knowing the *anicca* nature.
- **Any "average human (*pothujjana*) is considered to be "moral" might act with *mōha* and commit a severely immoral act if the trigger was tempting enough.**

Stopping the *Saṃsāric* Journey

9. The key point is that unless one has at least attained the *Sotāpanna* stage, one COULD act with *avijjā* at the level of *moha*, and generate *kammā* (*saṅkhāra*) that COULD generate *kammā bhava* corresponding to possible birth in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*).

- In other words, depending on the trigger, it is possible for the *pancanīvarana* to "cover the mind" and initiate strong *akusala-mūla* PS cycles for any human being not yet attained the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- For example, we have heard stories about people with "good moral backgrounds" committing rape, under conditions that led to *kāmacchanda nīvarana* taking over their minds. *Kāmaccandha* comes from "*kāma* + *icca* + *andha*," where *icca* is liking and *andha* is blind; thus *kāmacchanda* means "blinded by liking for *kāma* or sense pleasures."
- We have also heard stories about murders that were committed by "moral people" who were enraged by the sight of their spouse in bed with another person. Here the second *nīvarana*, *vyāpada*, covered their minds.
- Those two are the strongest *nīvarana*, but we can think about cases when the other three also could lead to immoral acts: *thina middha* (frozen or lazy mind), *uddhacca kukkucca* (tendency to do lowly things with high-mindedness), and *vicikicchā* (tendency to do unwise things due to not knowing the *anicca* nature).

10. When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, these *pañcanīvaraṇa* are permanently removed.

- That is why **potent *akusala-mūla* PS cycles** — which could lead to rebirths in the *apāyā* — are not triggered for a *Sotāpanna;* see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."
- One's *gati* permanently change with *magga phala*. More changes happen at higher *magga phala*.

More Information

11. Different types of PS cycles are discussed at: "Paticca Samuppāda Cycles."

- The "*vipāka* generating" *avyākata* PS is discussed in the post, "Avyākata Paticca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa."
- The "*kammā* generating" PS processes can be divided into two broad categories again: those generating "bad *kammā*" and "good *kammā*": "Akusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda" and "Kusala-mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- Those "*kammā* generating" PS processes where one can see the consequences during this life itself are discussed in "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda."
- There can be many other types too. But one can get a good idea of how PS works in different situations can be grasped by understanding those key processes.
- A bottom-up approach to PS processes discussed at "Understanding the Terms in Paticca Samuppāda."

12. Finally, there is another important way that we get started with generating new *kamma*. This is when we "get random thoughts coming to our minds that get us started on a pleasurable activity."

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- For example, we may be doing something, and all of a sudden, we get a thought about watching a movie or even start thinking about an enemy and what can be done to him/her. These are initiated by "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*," where *dhammā* coming to our minds; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!."
- These are also *kamma vipāka*. But these are more common than just seeing an enemy by chance or hearing something that one likes, etc.
- In either case, we need to be mindful always, and catch such "new kamma generations." This is the key to *Ānāpāna/Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā*.

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8.5 What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?

Revised April 27, 2016; August 25, 2019

Before we start discussing the various forms of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (**PS**), it is essential to be clear about what is meant by "*paccayā*" (pronounced "pachchayā"). *Paṭṭhāna Dhamma* provides a complete description. We will introduce the concept here.

Introduction

1. The PS cycle starts as: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa, viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana,…..*"

- And since PS describes the "cause and effect" in Buddha Dhamma, most people think "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" means "*avijjā* causes *saṅkhāra*" or "ignorance causes one to acts that generate bad *kamma*."
- Even an ordinary person has *avijjā*, he/she will not ALWAYS act accordingly; most of the time, people act appropriately or morally. However, as long as *avijjā* is there, at times one WILL likely act with *avijjā* and do inappropriate or immoral things.
- Similarly, many people think that "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" means "*saṅkhāra* causes *viññāṇa*" or "bad *kamma* lead to corresponding consciousness", and so on down the whole PS cycle.
- As we discuss below, the steps should be translated as, "with *avijjā* (ignorance) as **condition**, *saṅkhāra* arise", "with *saṅkhāra* as **condition** *viññāṇa*, etc.

Key Role Of Conditions

2. It will clarify a lot of things down the line if one understood that PS does not refer to a "direct link" between causes and effects. Just because we have done many good/bad *kamma* (generated via *saṅkhāra*) DOES NOT mean they ALL lead to *kamma vipāka*.

- That was pointed out in item #5 in the previous post "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Overview." But in case the point was missed, I wanted to emphasize the point in this post.
- Any effect **must have** a cause. But there can be possible causes without leading to any results. Otherwise, *Nibbāna* would not be possible. That needs some contemplation, and I will give some examples below.
- However, without suitable CONDITIONS, causes (*kamma*) cannot automatically bring results (*vipāka*).

3. The easiest way is to consider the following example: A seed contains necessary causes (ingredients) for bringing up a new tree. But just because a seed is there, a tree is not going to come to existence. If the seed is in a cool, dry place, one could keep it that way for a long time. Or one could burn or crush it, and it will not bring up a tree.

- SUITABLE CONDITIONS must be present for causes to bring about corresponding effects. That is what *paccayā* means.
- When such suitable conditions are present, causes WILL bring about corresponding effects. Thus when some effect is brought about, it is called "*paccuppanna*", i.e., born ("*uppanna*") via suitable conditions ("*paccayā*"); of course, if the root causes must be there, to begin with).
- In the above example, the seed could germinate and grow to a tree if one plants that seed (cause) in the ground and provides water, nutrients, and sunlight (suitable conditions).

Not All *Kamma* Lead to *Kamma Vipāka*

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4. When causes are there, corresponding effects (results) are LIKELY if suitable conditions for the effects of taking place. **That is why *kamma* is not deterministic;** see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

- However, the critical point in PS is that the effect – IF AND WHEN IT HAPPENS – is in accordance with the cause, and also the CONDITIONS was one's choosing: "*Pati ichcha*" leads to "*sama uppāda*" or simply: "when one gets attached, that leads to a new birth of similar characteristics." **If and when the causes bring forth the consequences, they will be of the similar nature.**

5. It is not necessary to get into further details unless one is interested in "digging deeper", but there are 24 "*paccayā*" or "conditions" that can actually cause the effect to materialize; these are "*Paṭṭhāna Dhamma*").

- Let us briefly discuss three such *paccayā*, "*hetu paccayā*", "*anantara samanantara paccayā*", and "*aññamañña paccayā*" to see what happens.

Three Important Conditions (*Paccayā*)

6. Nothing happens without a root cause or a *hetu* (pronounced "*hāthu*"; see the pronunciation key in "Pāli Glossary (A-K) and Pāli Glossary (L-Z)").

- For example, a bomb causes damage because of the explosives in it; but someone has to trigger it to go off. If the bomb sits somewhere for a long time, its propellants may degrade, and then the "cause" may disappear; most *kamma* seeds are like that too.
- Thus, without the root cause, there will not be an explosion. **That is "*hetu paccayā*."**

7. My favorite example of the **"*anantara samanantara paccayā*"** is the germination of a seed that I discussed above in #3. Just because there is an apple seed, it will not cause an apple tree to appear.

- An apple seed will stay without germinating for many years in a cool, dry place. But if planted in the ground with water and sunlight present, it will sprout and give rise to an apple tree; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya" for details.
- Of course, just like with the bomb, if the apple seed sits there for too long, it may lose its potency and may not yield an apple tree at all. Thus the *hetu paccayā* must always be satisfied.

8. The third one, **"*aññamañña paccayā*,"** means dependent on each other: For example, *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* depend on each other:

- It usually is stated that "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" or "depending on the *viññāṇa*, *nāmarūpa* arise." For example, *viññāṇa* of the *cuti citta* at the moment of death causes a matching *nāmarūpa* to rise in the next birth: a hateful thought could lead to birth in the *niraya* or the animal realm.
- However, *viññāṇa* in turn, depends on the type of *nāmarūpa*: with the *nāmarūpa* of an animal, it is not possible to get into *jhāna*. Only certain types of *nāmarūpa* can "support" certain types of *viññāṇa*.
- Depending on the situations one or more of 24 *paccayā* (or conditions) can simultaneously come into play. We will discuss this in future posts.

Paṭṭhāna Dhamma

9. I just wanted to give a brief introduction to the complex "*Paṭṭhāna Dhamma*" which describes 24 such "*paccayā*" involved in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. In other words, cause(s) and effect(s) have complicated relationships. We can only discern significant relationships. Only a Buddha can sort out all such complexities.

- But there is no need to analyze everything in great detail to understand the message of the Buddha. One can become a *Sotāpanna* just by comprehending the *Tilakkhaṇa: anicca, dukkha, anatta.*

10. So why am I also providing information on these complex topics? It is for three reasons:

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- First, it helps build *saddhā* (faith) in Buddha Dhamma. Anyone who takes time to examine these concepts can see that it provides a COMPLETE explanation for everything that we experience and more.
- Secondly, it is intellectually satisfying to see how all pieces nicely fit into the "big picture": I hope I have been able to give the sense of joy that I have experienced in "seeing how these pieces fall into place."
- Finally, this "self-consistency" is critical in the process of sorting out which version of Buddha Dhamma is the correct one. As the Buddha himself pointed out, any version that is not self-consistent should be discarded; see, "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis."

Next in the series, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya", ..

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8.6 Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles

Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa

Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda

Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda

Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

8.6.1 Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna

October 17, 2017

1. First, a word about the nomenclature: The Pāli word is *avyākata* (or *abyākata*) and the Sinhala word is *avyākruta*. It means "not designated as *kusala* or *akusala*, i.e., *kammicaly* neutral": there are no *javana citta* involved that generate *abhisaṅkhāra.*

- *Kamma vipāka* are kammically neutral. But based on those *kamma vipāka*, we initiate new *kamma*; see, "How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?." I recommend reading that first, before continuing on this post.
- Both categories — *kamma vipāka* and *kamma* generation — can be described by *paṭicca samuppāda* (PS).
- Another key point I want to point out is that *avyākata* PS cycles NEVER start with a *pabhassara citta* [Radiant Mind]; see below.

2. Past *kamma vipāka* bring sense inputs via the six senses and IF we get attached — *taṇhā* — to those sense inputs, THEN that leads to new *kamma* by us. That is why it is a never-ending process, until one attains *Nibbāna*. After the *Arahanthood*, one will still experience such *kamma vipāka*, but WILL NOT get attached to them, i.e., no new *kamma* will be generated.

This cyclic process can be described in three steps:

i. One sees, hears, smells, tastes, makes body contacts, or a "*dhamma*" comes to one's mind. These do not "just happen"; they happen due to reasons (causes). They come about due to *kamma vipāka*, and those thoughts that arise due to them are called ***vipāka citta* OR *avyākata citta,*** since they are *kammically* neutral.

ii. Then, based on one's *gati* (pronounced "gathi"), *āsava, anusaya*, one's mind may automatically get interested in a sense input (called an *ārammana*), and may get attached to that sensory input. This happens within a billionth of a second and we DO NOT have control over that initial response either; *mano saṅkhāra* are generated AUTOMATICALLY in one's mind. These are also part of the ***avyākata citta* since they arise AUTOMATICALLY within the same *citta vīthi*.**

iii. **IF we one gets attached, then one starts generating new *kamma*** by thinking CONSCIOUSLY about that sense input (generating *vacī saṅkhāra*), i.e., one starts "wheeling around" accumulating "*san*" that contribute to new *kamma*; see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka." That new *kamma* can get stronger if we may also start doing *kāya saṅkhāra* via speech and bodily actions.

3. **All those three steps may start even before our minds register that we have started accumulating new *kamma*.** This is because *citta vīthi* are very fast, and all those happen within a single *citta vīthi*; see below. But if we are mindful, we can "catch" such "wheeling around" within a few seconds and stop just the *apuññābhi saṅkhāra* (we should not stop *puññābhi saṅkhāra* or moral thoughts).

- But that requires careful monitoring of our "automatic responses" to such sense inputs; this is what is called "being mindful." With practice, one can "catch" them quickly and stop bad thoughts/speech/actions.

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- If we keep doing that, then OVER TIME, our *gati* will change for the better, and our attachments to "bad things" will fade away; see, "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna." What is described in that post is the basis of *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna Bhāvanā*. If one can grasp this concept, and implement it diligently over a few months, one will be able to see for oneself the benefits!
- Also see, "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti" to read about the very important concept of *gati*. **It is not correct to say we have a "self" or "no-self"; we just have *gati* that can be changed.**
- That is the basis of *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna bhāvanā*. If one can grasp this concept, and implement it diligently over a few months, one will be able to see for oneself the benefits!
- One can try it with "bad habits" (smoking, drugs, over-eating, etc) first to see the power of it, and then extend to other *dasa akusala*. This is also the way to *Sotāpanna* stage because then one will be able to grasp *Tilakkhaṇa* too.

4. It is very important to understand the above steps, and the post "Tanhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance" is a necessary first read too. What happens is explained in a bit more detail in "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways," "Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa paccayā vedanā or Samphassa Jā vedanā," and has been discussed in a more fundamental way in the subsection: Living Dhamma – Fundamentals."

- Grasping this cyclic process of how we have traversed this suffering-filled rebirth process can be quite helpful but one must be willing to spend some time on those posts.

5. All PS processes can be broadly divided into three categories:

i. What we will discuss in this post is how past *kamma vipāka* bring in sense inputs via *avyākata* (Sinhala: *avyākruta*) PS process, and also automatically generate *mano saṅkhāra*.

ii. Then *akusala-mūla* PS processes may contribute to generating new *kamma* that extends the rebirth process. These also start within seconds, but as mentioned above, we can catch and stop them if we are mindful (*Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna*).

iii. The *kusala-mūla* PS process describes how one can accumulate new "good *kamma*" that will eventually help us attain *Nibbāna* by following the Noble Path. If the *kamma vipāka* generated such a "good PS" process, we should cultivate those. That is also part of *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna*.

The *akusala-mūla* and *kusala-mūla* PS processes are discussed in: "Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles." So, this post on avyakata (*abyākata* in Sanskrit) (Sinhala: *avyakruta*) PS process will complete that subsection.

6. Now we can make the connection between the categories in #2 to categories in #5.

- The sense inputs initiation #2 (i), and the initial response to it #2(ii), are generated by the *avyākata* PS process of #5(i).
- Our CONSCIOUS response to those sense inputs in creating new *kamma* (*apuññābhisaṅkhāra* or *puññābhisaṅkhāra*) in #2(iii), are carried out by the two kinds of PS processes in #5(ii) and #5(iii).

7. This *avyākata* PS process is not discussed in current *Theravāda* texts including *Visuddhimagga*. It is of course in the *Tipiṭaka,* and only the Pāli version is available at: "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭicca Samuppāda Vibhaṅga" (Section 2.11 on *Abyākata Niddesa* is about three-quarters of the way down from the top).

- I have not seen any current texts or internet sites in English that describe the *avyākata* PS process. But is needed to complete the picture of how *kamma vipāka* bring in sensory inputs to us AND initiate new *kamma*.

8. Here is the initiation of the *avyākata* PS process per *Tipiṭaka* reference in #7 above: "..*vipākaṃ cakkhuviññāṇaṃ uppannaṃ hoti* ***upekkhā sahagataṃ*** *rūpārammaṇaṃ, tasmiṃ samaye* ***saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇa paccayā nāmaṃ, nāma paccayā chaṭṭhāyatanaṃ, chaṭṭhāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti***." [Weblink: suttacentral:

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2.11. Abyākataniddesa 2.11 Ahetukakusalavipākacitta 2.11.1.1 Ahetukakusalavipākacitta 2.11.1.1.1. Cakkhuviññāṇacitta]

- We can translate the initial part of this verse as, "..when a *rupārammana* (seeing an object) gives rise to a *vipāka cakkhu viññāṇa with* **neutral feelings** (i.e., just seeing)..."
- Thus, "seeing" event is a neutral *vedanā*, as are all *vipāka* that come through all senses except the body: Only *kāya viññāṇa* — coming through the physical body — can directly generate *sukha* or *dukha vedanā* due to *kamma vipāka* (as in getting hit by something or getting a massage).
- The other five types sensory inputs, at the moment of receiving, generate only neutral feelings (*upekkha vedanā*). This is an important point to grasp. All these like seeing, hearing, could generate "good or bad feelings" based on our *gati*, and those secondary feelings arise moments later (even though we cannot perceive that because it is so quick).
- But we can clearly see that, for example, some may generate "good feelings" and others may generate "bad feelings" upon hearing the same song. Seeing the same politician may cause "good feelings" in his supporters and "bad feelings" in those in the opposite party, and neutral feelings in others.

9. Unless it is pre-planned, a seeing event (any sense event) is initiated by a *kamma vipāka*. (However, going to see a movie is a deliberate action, in which case the real starting point is an idea or a *dhamma* coming to the mind as a *kamma vipāka*; think about it!)

- Again, it is important to grasp that a seeing event itself is a neutral event (*upekkhāsahagataṃ rūpārammaṇaṃ*) EVEN IF it is the seeing of a good object or a bad object. "Good or bad" is a relative thing depending not on the object but only on one's *gati*, as explained in #8 above.
- One way to think about it, this initial *cakkhu viññāṇa* is just the "seeing", i.e., it is like taking a picture with a camera.

10. In the same way, *sota viññāṇa* is just the "hearing", *ghāṇa viññāṇa* is just the "smelling," etc. Whether they are "good or bad *vedanā*" depends on the individual.

- When that image is presented to the mind, it instantly matches the image with one's cravings, likes, dislikes (i.e., *gati*), and *mano saṅkhāra* are generated AUTOMATICALLY, leading to *viññāṇa*.
- Now, this second *viññāṇa* is the *viññāṇa* which has incorporated one's *gati*, not the *cakkhu viññāṇa* captured by the eyes; of course, *cakkhu viññāṇa* is also **registered** in the mind.

11. This is explained in the next step in #8 above, "*tasmiṃ samaye* (at that time) ***saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇa paccayā nāmaṃ, nāma paccayā chaṭṭhāyatanaṃ, chaṭṭhāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā bhavo*, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarāmaraṇaṃ. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti.*"

This is the *avyākata* PS due to the *kamma vipāka*.

- Note that this PS process is different than the *akusala-mūla* and *kusala-mūla* PS processes; see the highlighted part of the *abyākata* PS above.
- First, **it does not start with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra.*"** There will be no *kamma* done with *avijjā*. This is just a *kamma vipāka*.

12. Without going into this complex process, only the mindset of the person is changed based on the contact (*phassa*) of the *ārammana* with the *gati* of the individual.

- We note here that there are no "*nāmarūpa*" involved here, but just "*nāma*." This is a deeper point, but the generation of "*nāmarūpa*" involves *javana citta* which actually performs *kamma*. In this *vipāka* cycle, no *kamma* is done by the mind; the mind just matches the "picture" that it received against one's *gati*, and automatically recognizes if it is an object that one likes/dislikes.

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- For example, if an alcoholic sees a bottle of his favorite alcohol, he will be temporarily be "born" (*jāti*) as an alcoholic at that instant. But if it was a person who has no such *gati*, this process will end right there (just seeing).
- But if it did lead to the person being born in the "alcoholic state", then a new *akusala-mūla* PS process will run inside that *avyākata* PS process starting at "*bhava paccayā jāti*" step.

13. Therefore, subsequent to that *avyākata* PS, new *akusala-mūla* PS processes may start. That is the "new *kamma* generation." Even though an *Arahant* will experience a similar *avyākata* PS, that WILL NOT lead to an *akusala-mūla* PS process.

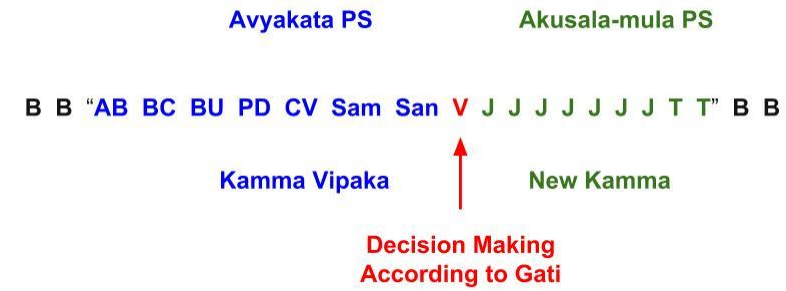
- An *akusala-mūla* PS process MAY NOT be initiated even in a normal human if he/she did not have *gati* to be attached to that sense input (*ārammana*).
- But that does NOT mean that the *avyākata* PS in that case involved "*pabhassara citta*" [Radiant Mind] or "pure uncontaminated *citta*." It just means that person did not have *gati* to be interested in that particular sensory input.

14. Both the initial *avyākata* PS and the subsequent *akusala-mūla* PS process will take place within the same *citta vīthi* (in the above example a *cakkhudvāra citta vīthi* with 17 *citta*), which lasts only a billionth of a second!

- Such fast processes are not discernible to any human other than a Buddha. But we have the ability to study it and realize that indeed that must be correct. In that sense, we must not focus on just this process, but realize that it fits in nicely with any phenomenon that we experience.
- As one learns deeper concepts, it will be difficult not to be amazed by the capabilities of a Buddha. This is how one builds one's faith (*saddhā*).
- The following discussion will illustrate how the processes that we discussed above fit in nicely with the concept of a *citta vīthi*.

15. The following may not be fully graspable by someone who is not familiar with the details of *citta vīthi*. But just read on and try to get the basic idea without worrying about the details.

- The following figure shows a typical thought process (*citta vīthi*) that is started when eyes capture a "seeing event" (*rūpa aramanna* or *rūpārammana*).



B = bhavanga, AB = atita bhavanga, BC = bhavanga calana,

BU = bhavanga upacceda, PD = pancadvara vajjana, CV = cakkhu vinnana,

Sam = sampticcana, San = santirana, V = vottapana, J = javana, T = tadanga

Click the following link to magnify and download: WebLink: PDF File: Avyākata Piṭicca Samuppāda

- For a discussion on *citta vīthi*, see, "Citta vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

16. In between *citta vīthi*, the mind is in the "*bhavaṅga* state"; see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga." That post is also a bit advanced, and I will try to make a new section on "simple *Abhidhamma*" in the future.

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- If you see someone not active and just staring into space (not really thinking or concentrating on an idea), then that person's mind is likely to be in the *bhavaṅga* state (**B** in the figure). This is also explained in the post, "Citta vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."
- When the mind switches from this *bhavaṅga* state to a picture that is brought to its attention, it takes three thought moments to "break away" from that *bhavaṅga* state and to focus the attention on the new sensory input.
- With the **PD** *citta*, the mind sees that it is coming through the "eye door" (*cakkhu dvāra*) and in the next *citta* captures that picture. This is the initiation of the *avyākata* PS process: "..*vipākaṃ cakkhuviññāṇaṃ uppannaṃ hoti"* in #8 above.

17. Then, during the next two *citta* ("**Sam**" for *sampaticcana*, and "**San**" for *santirana*), the mind matches that picture (sense input) with its own *gati* and may get attached to it. This is what is described in "*tasmiṃ samaye* ***saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ, viññāṇa paccayā nāmaṃ, nāma paccayā chaṭṭhāyatanaṃ, chaṭṭhāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti*.**"**

- Then the person is "temporarily born" in a different state (a person with "alcoholic *gati*" will be born instantly as an alcoholic upon seeing his/her favorite drink), and may start a new *akusala-mūla* PS process, as discussed below.
- That decision to acting with *avijjā* based on that "matching" happens at the all-important *votthapana* (V) *citta*.

18. Then a new *akusala-mūla* (or *kusala-mūla*) PS process starts and one starts generating *kamma* with *javana citta* (**J**), as shown in the above figure. So, this new PS process starts with the standard, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*…."

- When this initial *citta vīthi* ends, more such *akusala-mūla* PS cycles will follow, if one got "attached." Even within a second, there could be thousands of such *akusala-mūla* PS cycles running (and each becoming stronger due to the past ones), even before one is fully consciously aware of it.
- But as humans (with the neocortex that slows down this fast processing; see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits," we have the ability to stop those *akusala-mūla* PS cycles from building up to doing bad speech and bad actions.
- This is the key to *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna Bhāvanā*: to be mindful and catch any "impulsive wrong actions" before they get out of hand. With practice, one will be able to "catch oneself" very early in this process.

19. This is also why *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna bhāvanā* cannot just be limited to a "sitting meditation session." One needs to be engaged during all waking hours and be mindful. Then with time, our *gati* will change for the better, and we will stop doing "foolish and damaging things."

- Then our minds will become pure and we will be able to grasp more of Buddha Dhamma. It is a gradual process, especially initially.
- Now it should also be clear that one will NOT have a "*pabhassara citta*" [Radiant Mind] at any time unless one is an *Arahant*. It should be clear that one can never stop that initial *avyākata citta vīthi*. It is gone within a billionth of a second.
- However, we do need to stop those *akusala-mūla* PS processes, as soon as we become aware of them. Terminology does not matter if one is doing the correct procedure.

20. Don't be discouraged if you find this post too technical. *Paṭicca samuppāda* can go to very deep levels. Just get the overall idea and things will become clear with time if you read the other posts referenced.

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8.6.2 Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda

This is an early post; revised May 10, 2018

Akusala-mūla version is the only version of *paṭicca samuppāda* (PS) described in even the current Theravāda texts, even though the other versions are in the *Tipiṭaka*.

1. One is born in this world due to the **six root causes**.

- One is born in the *apāyā* or *dugati* (and also subjected to suffering even when born in good realms) due to bad *gati* arising mainly due to ***lobha, dosa, moha***. The *akusala-mūla* PS operates when actions, speech, and thoughts take place with these three root causes.
- One is born in the remaining "good realms" or *sugati* (and also experience mundane sense pleasures) due to good *gati* due to ***alobha, adosa, amoha***. The *kusala-mūla* PS operates when actions, speech, and thoughts take place with these three root causes; see, "Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppada."

2. *Akusala-mūla* PS describes the PS process when one acts with *lobha, dosa, moha,* the three root causes that bring "bad outcomes." It is also two fold:

- The ***uppatti* PS** describes how a "life-stream" or a being makes the *sansāric* journey via repeated births in the 31 realms.
- The ***pavutti* (or *pravurti*) PS** describes moment-to-moment progression of a "life-stream" or a being. This is discussed at, "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda."

3. Let us first discuss the *uppatti* PS, which describes how the PS cycle goes through a new birth at the end of current life. The steps in this cycle are:

"*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra; saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa; viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana, saḷāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā taṇhā, taṇhā paccayā upādāna, upādāna paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jarā, marana, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupāyasā sambhavan'ti*" [Weblink: suttacentral: Majjhima Nikāya 115 Bahudhātukasutta]

And that is how this whole mass of suffering arises: *"Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hoti "*

Let us briefly translate them:

4. With ignorance as condition, one accumulates *saṅkhāra*. It must be noted that these are really *abhisaṅkhāra*, i.e., they are strong *saṅkhāra*; *abhi* means "strong."

- When we are born, we are born without ANYTHING material other than our tiny baby body, which actually started as **a single cell** in the mother's womb. We grow up and start acquiring "stuff" both material and non-material: knowledge, material things, friends, spouse, children, fame, etc.
- While we acquire these "things" we also acquire new habits (*gati*) or strengthen ones that we brought from previous lives; these take place according to the *pavutti* PS at every moment: "*pati + icca sama uppāda*," i.e., we do things that we like and get similar kind of results.
- When we die, we take with us only the *kamma* seeds (both good and bad) from our actions; the habits (*gati*) and cravings (*āsavā*) are embedded in them. **These are in the *manomaya kāya*, and the *manomaya kāya* leaves the dead physical body with those "updated" kamma seeds; see the next post.** This is basically the "net result" of our life here.
- One of existing *kamma* seeds (from this life or from previous lives) gives rise to the next life, where we acquire more of them BASED ON the *gati* and *āsavas*. So the cycle perpetuates.

5. With *saṅkhāra* as condition, energy for a new *bhava* or a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* arises.

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- This *viññāṇa* of the new life arises according to the nature of the *kamma* seed that gave rise to it. If that *kamma* seed was acquired by doing some hateful act(s), then the *viññāṇa* will be matching: "*pati + icca sama uppāda*." If it is a seed due to an act of a generosity done with loving kindness, it could be the *viññāṇa* of a Brahma.
- Thus the "base level of *viññāṇa*" for an animal life is VERY DIFFERENT from that of a human life, even for the same "lifestream", i.e., when a human is reborn as an animal the "base level of *viññāṇa*" makes a huge downward transition. This is why it is NOT correct to say that "*viññāṇa* is transferred from life to life."

6. With *viññāṇa* as condition, *nāmarūpa* arise.
   - Again, the nature of the "*nāmarūpa*" of the new life is according to "*pati + icca sama uppāda*." In the above mentioned cases, the new life form may be that of an animal of a being in the niraya (hell) or that of a Brahma with a fine body.

7. With *nāmarūpa* as condition, *saḷāyatana* arise.
   - The *saḷāyatana* (six sense doors) arise accordingly too: In the above mentioned cases, all six sense doors suitable for the kind of animal form or just three sense doors (eye,ear, and mind) suitable for a Brahma.

8. With *saḷāyatana* as condition, *phasso* arise.
   - Here *phassa* is really "*samphassa*" or "*san phassa*"; see step #2 in "Taṇhā -How We Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
   - This is why this "*Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda*" is not applicable for an *Arahant* (and also for other *Ariyā* too at most times). An *Arahant* does not generate "*samphassa*" but just "*phassa*" without "*san*."

9. With (*san*) *phassa* as condition, *vedanā* arise.
   - Such interactions with the external world lead to feelings (*vedanā*) of different kinds. **Here, it is important to realize that NOT all *vedanā* play a role here. Those *vedanā* that arise due to *kamma vipāka* arise just due to *phassa*; only those *vedanā* that arise due to *samphassa* ("*samphassa ja vedanā*") play a role here.**
   - Such "*samphassa ja vedanā*" depend on the *gathi* and *āsavas*: see, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways." Also, see step #3 in, "Taṇhā -How We Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."
   - We can get rid of this part of *vedanā* (suffering) in this very life by getting rid of "bad habits", by becoming a "*sampajanno*"; see, "Kayanupassana – The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)."

10. With *vedanā* as condition, *taṇhā* arise.
    - *Taṇhā* arise, when one gets "attached" or 'fused" into a thing or situation: with *sukha vedanā*, one attaches with greed; with displeasure, one attaches with hate; one also attaches with not knowing what to do (with a highly agitated mind); see, "Taṇhā -How We Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

11. With *taṇhā* as condition, *upādāna* arise.
    - **At the moment of death,** in the last *citta vīthi*, the dying person gets a *kamma nimitta*. This is normally a vision or a sound that depicts the nature of the strong kamma seed that came to the forefront of the mind. For example, if the *kamma* seed that is about to give the next birth was due to a killing, then the person may see a gun or hear the sound of it, or even see himself as getting ready to shoot; thus the person will have the same hateful thoughts arise and just like at the time the crime was committed, the person embraces that situation automatically (*upādāna*), because one has such "*gati*" or habits.

12. With *upādāna* as condition, *bhavo* arise.

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- The next *citta vīthi* starts with the new existence or "*bhava*" matching that state of mind: "*pati + icca sama uppāda*." Depending on the *kamma nimitta* that was grasped, a matching existence, a human, animal, *deva*, etc. arise; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

13. With *bhava* as condition, *jāti* (new birth) arise.

- Then a birth matching the *bhava* starts. If the *bhava* is human realm, then a human birth will result. Now, here is the difference between *bhava* and *jāti:* The duration of the selected "human *bhava*" will last until the *kammic* energy associated with that *kamma* seed is exhausted. Thus if the *kamma* seed has potential for thousand years of life, when the current life ends the next birth will be still in the human realm. This is UNLESS one commits a *anantariya kamma* or even a very strong other type of *kamma*. For example, if one attains *Anāgāmī* or *Arahant* stages, the person will not be reborn in the human realm; or if one kills a parent, for example; all these are *anantariya* kamma.

14. With *jāti* as condition, "*jara, maranan, soka-parideva-dukkha-domanassupayasa sambhavan'ti*" arise.

- *Jāti* inevitably results in decay and eventual death, and this is how *dukkha* originates.
- No matter where one is born in the 31 realms, one ages and eventually dies; in between one goes through all kinds of suffering, in particular at human realm and below. Aging and death are certainties. And at death the whole cycle re-starts.

15. The above steps describe the *uppatti* PS. The other aspect, i.e., what happens during a given lifetime, is described in, "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda."

All the steps in the *Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* are described in detail in the series: "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English."

Next, "Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda", ……..

8.6.3 Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda

This is an early post; revised May 10, 2018

1. *Kusala-mūla* version of *paṭicca samuppāda* (PS) is not described in even the current Theravāda texts, even though it is in the *Tipiṭaka*. This is because since the time Buddhghosa wrote Visuddhimagga, all Theravāda texts followed that and his other books instead of *Tipiṭaka*.

- That means the PS process for attaining *Nibbāna* has NOT been described for over 1500 years. No wonder the *Nibbāna* has been hidden for all these years.
- *Kusala-mūla* (pronounced *kusala–mūla*) PS describes the PS process for acting with *alobha, adosa, and amoha* (which is the same as saying staying away from *dasa akusala* or acting without *lobha, dosa,* and *moha.*

2. One is born in this world due to the **six root causes**.

- One is born in the *apāyā* or *dugati* (and also subjected to suffering even when born in good realms) due to bad *gati* arising mainly due to ***lobha, dosa, moha***. The *akusala-mūla* PS operates when actions, speech, and thoughts take place with these three root causes; see, "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- One is born in the "good realms" or *sugati* (and also experience mundane sense pleasures) due to "good *gati*" developed by acting with ***alobha, adosa, amoha***. *Kusala-mūla* PS cycles operate when actions, speech, and thoughts take place with these three root causes that bring "good outcomes."
- *Kusala-mūla* PS describes the PS process when one acts with *alobha, adosa, amoha,* the three root causes that bring "good outcomes."

3. The steps in this *kusala-mūla* cycle are:

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"*kusala-mūla paccayā saṅkhāra; saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa; viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa, nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana, saḷāyatana paccayā phasso, phassa paccayā vedanā, vedanā paccayā cittapasado, cittapasada paccayā adhimokkho, adhimokkho paccayā bhavo, bhava paccayā jāti, jāti paccayā jara, maranan, eva me tassa dhammanan samudhayo hoti*" [Weblink: suttacentral: 2.10.1 Kāmāvacarakusalacitta 2.10.1.1. Mahākusalacitta]

Here I have marked in red the terms that are different from the terms in the *akusala-mūla* PS. Let us briefly translate the terms. **Here I am describing both *pavutti* and *uppatti* PS together.**

4. With *kusala-mūla* as condition, one accumulates *puññabhi saṅkhāra*.

- Here *kusala-mūla* are deeds done with *alobha, adosa, amoha*, AND one does not wish for anything because one's mind is automatically rejecting anything within the 31 realms.

5. With *puññabhi saṅkhāra* as condition, a *puññabhi viññāṇa* arises. This *puññabhi viññāṇa* is accumulated as *kamma bhava* and could lead to corresponding "good" *nāmarūpa* in *pavutti paṭicca samuppāda* or a new "good birth" in *uppatti paṭicca samuppāda*.

- Because the *saṅkhāra* was generated with a *kusala-mūla* deed, only a *kusala-mūla viññāṇa* arises: "*pati + icca sama uppaāda*." The characteristic of this *kusala-mūla viññāṇa* is the desire (*chanda*, not *kāmachanda*) for *Nibbāna*.

6. With *puññabhi viññāṇa* as condition, *nāmarūpa* arise.

- The *nāmarūpa* are generated accordingly: one thinks accordingly and one's mind and body are attuned for meritorious deeds. At death, the *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* is again according to the *kusala-mūla viññāṇa* and thus a birth in the lower four realms is avoided for a *Sotāpanna*, and a birth in the lower 11 realms (*kāma loka*) is avoided for an *Anāgāmī*, for example.

7. With *nāmarūpa* as condition, *saḷāyatana* arise.

- The *saḷāyatana* (six sense doors) arise accordingly too: they are attuned for only meritorious deeds. At a new birth, the sense faculties arise accordingly.

8. With *saḷāyatana* as condition, *phasso* arise.

- Note that this is just "*phassa*" and NOT "*san phassa*" or "*samphassa*" as in "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- The contacts with the outside world are attuned for seeking *Nibbāna*: learning dhamma and practicing dhamma.

9. With *phassa* as condition, *vedanā* arise.

- Through such interactions, one enjoys the contact with *dhamma*, true knowledge and understanding.

10. With *vedanā* as condition, *cittapasadi* arises.

- Tranquility of consciousness is the standard translation for *cittapasadi*; it is a type of joyous feeling, lightness of heart.

11. With *cittapasadi* as condition, *adhimokkho* arises.

- *Adhimokko* is normally translated as "decision" or "resolve" where *saddhā* becomes peaked; here it means the mind is decisively attracted towards *Nibbāna*. The mind cools down.

12. With *adhimokkho* as condition, *bhava* arises.

- The resulting existence or "*bhava*" matching that state of mind: "*pati + icca sama uppāda*"; one "lives" that experience. If it is rebirth at *paṭisandhi*, an appropriate "*bhava*" is selected according to the *kamma nimitta*. Here any "*apāyagāmī*" *kamma* seeds that may have been acquired in the distant past do not get a chance to come to forefront, and thus a rebirth in the lower four realms is prevented.

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13. With *bhava* as condition, *jāti* arise.

- The appropriate *jāti* (*Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī*) will result in an appropriate realm.

14. With *jāti* as condition, *jara, maranan, eva me tassa dhammanan samudhayo hoti.*"

- Any *Ariya* is also subject to decay and death as long as he/she is in one of the 31 realms. But here the connection to *dukkha* is not shown, because one is destined to attain *Nibbāna*.

Next, "Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body", ……

8.6.4 Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda

Re-written with a new title May 18, 2019; revised May 20, 2019

Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda is another important teaching that has been hidden for hundreds of years. The word "*Idappaccayatā"* comes from "*ida*" for "here" and the closest English word for "*paccaya*" is "condition." Thus *Idappaccayatā* implies "based on this condition at this moment." Therefore, *Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda* describes how "*pati icca*" leads to "*sama uppāda*" moment by moment based on the conditions present at that moment; see, "Paticca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"."

- The additional "p" in "*idappacayatā*" comes from the combination of "*ida*" and "*paccaya*." This is similar to "*dammacakka*" and "*pavattana*" combined to yield "*dhammacakkappavattana*" in the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.
- Another important point is that "'A first point of ignorance, *bhikkhus*, is not seen such that before this there was no ignorance and afterward it came into being. **Ignorance arises at any time when the conditions are right**" or "*Purimā, bhikkhave, koṭi na paññāyati avijjāya: 'ito pubbe avijjā nāhosi, atha pacchā samabhavī'ti. Evañcetaṃ, bhikkhave, vuccati, atha ca pana paññāyati: '**idappaccayā avijjā'ti**.*"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Avijjā Sutta (AN 10.61)."

1. As mentioned in earlier posts (see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda"), *paṭicca samuppāda* (PS) or "cause and effect" can describe various stages of life in multiple ways: from a very fast 16 PS cycles operating inside a thought moment to a long-term PS process that describes how a "living being" is born in one of an uncountable number of species in the 31 realms in the rebirth process.

- The Buddha said that the PS is deep as a deep ocean and it can be applied to any situation, because everything "in this world" obeys the basic principle of cause and effect. It is no wonder that only one PS has been studied for over thousand years while the true Dhamma remained hidden.
- In the previous post we discussed the ***uppatti* PS** which describes that latter process, i.e., how the PS cycle operates between lives; see, "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda."
- The other extreme of a very fast PS process involved within a thought moment is very complex and we do not need to examine it right now. We can learn it, but it can be "seen" only by a Buddha.
- In this post we will discuss the ***idappaccayatā* PS** cycle, which describes phenomena inreal time without getting into what happens within a *citta* (within a thought moment). This process — just like the PS cycle operates between lives — can be easily understood by anyone.

2. As mentioned in the introduction to PS, whenever we willingly grasp something, whatever results from that action has a corresponding nature. Because one got attached willingly, a similar *bhava* will result: i.e., *pati+icca* leading to *sama+uppada* or *paṭicca samuppāda* (PS). Here, "*icca*" is pronounced "ichcha."

- In the most fundamental sense, a "greedy state of mind" will result when we get attach with greed, i.e., one develops **a habit or *gati* or *bhava*** corresponding to that state of mind; a "hateful state" (habit/*gathi*/*bhava*) results via hateful attachment; acts of greed and/or hate are always done with ignorance.

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- Three examples of *uppatti bhava* for those three cases illustrate the principle: An excessively greedy person is likely to get a "*peta bhava*" and be born as a *peta* (hungry ghost); a person who is often engaged in hateful actions towards other beings is likely to develop a "hateful *bhava*" and is likely to be born in the *niraya* (hell) where there is lot of hate due to extreme suffering; an animal *bhava* is developed with both greed and hate. Since ignorance is always there, an animal bhava is cultivated with all three "*sans*"; this is the root of the word "*tirisan* = three sans" for an animal in Sinhala.

3. Now let us look at the *idappaccayatā* PS, which describes how we develop certain habits or *bhava* or *gati* during a given lifetime. It is often easier to use an example to illustrate these PS cycles. Let us examine how a teenager becomes an alcoholic.

- The teenager become friendly with a group of other teenagers who are into drinking. Initially, he may be reluctant to join in, but due to ignorance he joins them and starts drinking.
- If a good friend or a family member came to know about the situation they could have prevented the teenager from associating with such bad company, i.e., ignorance could have been dispelled by explaining to him the adverse effects of not only drinking, but also of associating with such a group.

4. The PS cycle thus starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*"; due to ignorance of the adverse results, the teenager starts drinking with that group (*saṅkhāra* = "*san* + *khāra*" or actions of accumulating, in this case bad *kamma*).

- The more he is involved with such drinking activities, the more he thinks about it and develops a "mindset" or *viññāṇa* for that activity. This is "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*"; see, "Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra."

5. When he really begins to like drinking, he starts thinking about it even while doing other things. This is "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*."

- In this case, *nāmarūpa* are the mental images associated with that *viññāṇa*, i.e., the names and shape of particular alcohol bottles, the places where he normally drinks, the friends who drink with him, etc.
- He thinks about the next "event" and visualizes the scene, **all these are associated *nāmarūpa*. Thus, here *nāmarūpa* are the mental images of "things" and "concepts" that one would like to enjoy.**

6. Now his six senses become "involved" to provide a reality to those *nāmarūpa*; to provide the desired sense pleasures.

- In Pāli terms, the six *indriya* (senses) become "*āyatana*." For a lack of a single English word, I will call an "*āyatana*" an "import/export facility", and really get involved in the actions associated with drinking events.
- His mind is often thinking about the next "event" (where, when, with whom, etc), he makes necessary preparations for the "event" using all six senses (now *āyatanas*), that are in accordance with the *nāmarūpa* in the previous step, i.e., "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*," where ***saḷāyatana* means the six *āyatana***: the eye is now not merely for seeing, it has become an assistant in the lookout for a "good drink" or a "good friend to chat with", etc.

7. Thus we have "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*," i.e., all six *āyatana* become actively engaged making contact with relevant sense objects. His eyes are on the lookout for a favorite drink or a favorite person to chat with, etc.

- However, "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*" is just the "uddesa" or short version given in the standard PS steps. As in many cases, it needs to be explained in detail; see, "Sutta – Introduction."
- Here instead of *phassa*, it is really called "*samphassa*" (= "*san*" + "*phassa*"), where "*san*" implies it not just contact, but a "*san*" contact; see, "What is "San"? – Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."

8. Such "*samphassa*" lead to *vedanā*, i.e., "*(san)phassa paccayā vedanā*." He experiences "good (but immoral) feelings" with all those sense contacts.

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- Because of such "good feelings", he gets further attached: "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*"; see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

9. Now comes, "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*." *Upādāna* means "grabbing or pulling it close" like an octopus grabbing its prey with all its eight legs.

- In the present case, the teenager wants very much to re-live this experience, and he gets immersed in it; when he is experiencing the event his mind is totally absorbed in it; he does not think, and does not have the mindset to think about, any adverse consequences.
- This is the critical "habit forming" or "*bhava* forming" step.
- If this habit becomes very strong, it could lead to a new *bhava* as an animal via the ***uppatti paṭicca samuppāda*** process;see,"Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda."

10. So, the next inevitable step is, "*upādāna paccayā bhavo*"; this particular state of getting drunk becomes more and more ingrained in his mind. It becomes "a *bhava*" or "existence" or habit that is of importance to him. He very much wants to re-live that experience.

- And that is exactly what he gets: "*bhava paccayā jāti*." This "*bhava*" or the *kamma* seed is now well established, and he can be born in that "drunken state" quite easily. All he needs is an invitation from a friend, or even a sight of a bar while travelling, for example.
- It is natural to get into that state, or be "born" in that state. So, he gets drunk at every opportunity. See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein" for more details.

11. However, like everything else, any birth is subjected to decay and suffering: "*jāti paccayā jarā, marana,... dukkhakkhanda samudhayō hōti*." This happens in many stages as we describe below.

- But in the case of a single drinking event, that state of intoxication comes to an end, possibly with a big headache and a huge hangover. That episode ends with nothing to show for it, but a hangover.
- Even worse, now he is "hooked'; he has formed a bad habit, which only strengthens even more if he does it again and again. Because each time, the PS runs, the *viññāṇa* for that habit gets more fuel, and the *bhava* gets stronger.

14. It is important to realize that the above PS cycle does not run to its conclusion when the drinking "event" is over. Rather the cycle can occur repeatedly unless it is stopped willfully, deliberately.

- And the way to do that is to learn Dhamma and develop good habits and become a "*sampajannō*"; see, "Kayanupassana – The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)."
- However, if the teenager keeps his bad habit, he gets trapped in that *bhava*, the more *jāti* that occurs, i.e., more frequently he will be drunk. When one gets really drunk, one tends to behave like an animal without any sense of decency, and the long-term consequences could be rebirth as an animal; see below.

15. And it is not even necessary to participate in a "drinking event" to run another PS cycle. He may be sitting at a desk trying to study, and may start going through the PS cycle MENTALLY.

- He would start with *mano saṅkhāra* and *vacī saṅkhāra* (*vitakka/vicāra* or planning), thus generating (and strengthening) the *viññāṇa* for drinking, generating *nāmarūpa* (visuals of places, friends, alcohol bottles, etc), and thus going through the rest of the cycle: *saḷāyatana, samphassa, vedanā, taṇhā, upādāna, bhava, jāti* ("living it"), repeatedly.
- Thus numerous such PS cycles can run at any time, probably increasing its frequency as the *bhava* or the habit builds up.
- The stronger the *bhava* or habit is, it will be harder to break it. This is why meditation together with another good habit to work on should be undertaken to replace a bad habit. While in meditation, one can contemplate the adverse consequences of the bad habit. Developing a good habit will keep the mind away from the bad habit. See, "Habits and Goals" and also "Bhāvanā (Meditation)."

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16. If the teenager keeps his bad habit, that "*viññāṇa* of a drunkard" will only grow with time. If it stays strong at the *cuti-patisandhi* moment (at the end of his human *bhava*), it could lead to a new *uppatti bhava* via the *uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda* process mentioned in #1 above: "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda."

- Such a *viññāṇa* is likely to give rise to rebirth in the animal realm, as mentioned in # 14.

Note: This post was re-written to replace an early post, "Akusala-Mūla Pavutti (or Pravurthi) Paṭicca Samuppāda." I had not realized at that time that what the Waharaka *Thero* had described in Sinhala as "*Pavutti* (or *Pravurthi*) *Paṭicca Samuppāda*" is really the *idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda* in the *Tipiṭaka*.

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8.7 Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English

Introduction – What is Suffering?

Introduction -2 – The Three Characteristics of Nature

Avijjā paccayā Saṅkhāra

Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 1

Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 2

Viññāṇa paccayā Nāmarūpa

Nāmarūpa paccayā Saḷāyatana

Difference between Phassa and samphassa

Phassa paccayā Vedana….to Bhava

Bhava paccayā Jati….Jara, Marana,…

8.7.1 Introduction – What is Suffering?

1. There are two opposing factors to deal with when one is trying to convey the message of the Buddha to others:

- Foremost, the other person needs to be able to comprehend what I write. If I use too many Pāli words some people, especially those in the Western world, may not understand fully and also may get discouraged.
- On the other hand, I need to be careful not to distort the meaning of some key Pāli words. Sometimes there is no English word that truly conveys the meaning of a Pāli word. Providing incorrect information is worse than doing nothing.

2. I would like to test this new approach where I will describe concepts with minimal Pāli words. When one gets the basic idea, one could "dig in deeper" by reading regular posts.

3. Buddha Dhamma is all about ending suffering and finding permanent happiness IN THIS VERY LIFE. *Paṭicca samuppāda* describes how root causes for suffering lead to suffering step by step. If we understand these root causes for suffering, we can avoid such causes and make sure suffering would not arise in the future.

- The Buddha said, we suffer when we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction. Therefore, the main idea is to see whether there is ANYTHING in this WORLD that CAN BE maintained to our satisfaction.
- However, before analyzing the steps in the *Paṭicca samuppāda,* it is necessary to sort out what suffering is.

Three Categories of Suffering

The three categories of suffering are described in the *Dukkhata Sutta* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*. A short conventional "*padaparama*" description is available at:

WebLink: Dukkhata Sutta: Suffering

Here we will discuss it in detail, so that we can get a good understanding of what the Buddha meant by "suffering." It is not the feeling (*vedanā*) of suffering.

1. What is our world? Our existence, our lives, are basically what we experience: we sense things through our five physical senses and then think about them using our minds. Thus our world can be summed up by

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saying that it is what we experience through our INTERNAL six senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, mind). If we can have "good experiences" we are happy, otherwise, we get sad and suffer.

- Now what we experience depends on WHAT WE SENSE through our physical senses (visuals, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables) and also WHAT WE THINK ABOUT such experiences (thoughts and concepts).
- Those twelve (six INTERNAL and six EXTERNAL) make up "our world". Everything is included in those twelve.
- **Mind is complex, so let us first focus on the body and the five physical senses.** Before the end of the essay we will inevitably get to the mind.

2. Let us start our analysis with the simplest ten out of twelve that make up our world:

- Can we keep our internal physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body) to our satisfaction?
- Can we keep those that we like to experience that are in the outside world (visuals, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables) to our satisfaction?

3. Let us discuss these two issue one by one. First, let us think about whether we can keep our physical bodies and its associated senses to our satisfaction.

- It is true that we can maintain our five physical senses to our satisfaction for many years. And this is why people do not even take time to think about these ideas. There are many temptations out there and we cannot wait to "get back to such senses pleasures." This is why the Buddha said that the suffering is "hidden behind a veil of apparent pleasures."
- We start feeling this hidden suffering when we pass the middle age. Our five physical senses start getting weaker. The eyesight start dropping, hearing may start decreasing, our tongues may start losing its ability to taste, our noses becomes less sensitive, and our bodies start sagging, we may start losing hair, teeth, etc.
- So, what do most of us do? We start looking for ways to "prop them up": We can take temporary measures by wearing glasses, hearing aids, adding more spices/flavor to food, and doing cosmetic procedures to try to maintain the body appearance. There is absolutely nothing wrong with some of these "fixes"; for example, we need to be able to see, so we need to take precautions to protect our eyes and start wearing glasses. Ditto for hearing aids, and even for adding spices to food. Even doing some cosmetic procedures (coloring the hair, for example) may be needed to maintain a level of self-confidence as may be the case.

4. But the point is that no matter what we do, there comes a time when nothing works. The whole body starts falling apart. We may lose all the hair, the skin sagging may no longer be prevented by surgery; we may lose all hearing; the food may become tasteless. The best way to realize this first hand is to visit a home for the elderly.

- We also tend to get sick and come down with diseases easily as we get old.
- But the worst part is that our brains will start getting weaker which will lead to memory loss and most importantly the ability to think.
- If we wait until we get to that stage, it WILL BE TOO LATE. By the time we realize that our minds are weak, then we become really helpless.

5. Some people just die of unexpected causes before getting to old age. But that is also the same thing: they could not maintain things the way they expected. We could have prevented at least some of this suffering if we understood the root causes for suffering, and focused our attention on doing "fruitful things" while doing some of those temporary measures to keep our sense faculties in good shape. We will discuss such 'fruitful deeds" after discussing the suffering associated with external things in this world.

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- The suffering that we discussed so far arises due to one aspect of *anicca*: things are subjected to decay and destruction, and nothing in this world is exempt from that; this is part of what is called "***viparināma dukkhā***", suffering that arises due to change and decay.

6. Now let us look at the EXTERNAL things that make up "our physical world": visuals, sounds, smells, tastes, touchables are experienced with our five physical senses.

- The suffering associated with external things arise NOT necessarily because they are "impermanent" as is incorrectly believed by many. There are many external things that are permanent, at least compared to our lifetime in this life. For example, a gold necklace will last for even millions of years. If there is any suffering arises in anyone due to a gold necklace that is definitely NOT because that necklace is "impermanent." We will discuss some examples below.

7. Of course there are many truly "impermanent" things that we use. And we do become distraught when they break down. For example, we buy a nice set of dinner plates and if they get broken we become distraught. But we can always buy another, and that is not a problem especially if one is wealthy. Even if a wealthy person's whole house is burned down, that person can easily buy a better one. So, one would think that wealthy people will be subjected to less suffering.

- But that is not the case. Even though having wealth helps, as far as suffering is concerned, wealth is not a big factor. We hear wealthy and famous people even committing suicide all the time.
- Most of the suffering associated with external things arise due to "unfruitful thoughts" in our minds: Suffering arises mainly due to things we are attached to, and things that we like to hate. This is a KEY POINT and needs a lot of thought.

8. Let us consider some examples to clarify this important point.

- A hurricane lands and destroys a large cultivated area that results in a significant damage. Most people who live close-by would be just glad that their homes were not damaged but they will not become distraught over the loss to that particular land. The only one who suffers is the one who is the owner of that land. **Suffering arises due to a loss or damage or destruction of something one is attached to.** The suffering was not embedded in that land; the only person who suffered was the one who had an attachment to it.

Let us take another example. A wealthy person A hires person B to live in his house and to take care of the house and the gardens. Person A may not even live in that house. Person B lives in the house and takes good care of the house and the gardens. Anyone who does not know the real owner would think that person B is the owner, the way he takes good care of the house. Person B goes out-of-town to visit his family for a few days and an enemy of person A burns down the house. Who is the one that suffers? Person B may feel bad about his employer's loss, but it is person A who will mostly suffer due to the loss of the house. Even though person B may have lived in that house for many years on his own, he did not have any sense of "ownership" to the house; he may become somewhat distraught because of him having lived there and formed a lesser attachment to the house.

- In the case of the gold necklace that we mentioned earlier, someone may suffer if she lost it. The suffering was not due to an "impermanence" associated with the necklace; rather it was due to the inability of that person to "maintain it to her satisfaction."

9. Does this mean a person who does not own anything is the happiest? Not at all. Even though one may not have ownership to anything valuable, that person still has cravings for pleasurable things. Much of his suffering is due to the INABILITY to GET what he wants. He may want a big house, a nice car, tasty foods, etc. He suffers not due to a loss of physical items, but his inability to get such items.

- Thus whether wealthy or poor does not matter. The real cause of suffering is in our MINDS. A wealthy person may suffer due to a loss of something he had, and a poor person may suffer due to the inability to get what he wants. Either person becomes distraught due to his/her mind activities: attachment to what one has or craving for what one desires. This is another aspect of the Pāli term *anicca*. It is mostly mental

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and is called "***saṅkhāra dukkhā***." It arises through the struggles we engage in trying to maintain things to our satisfaction.

- For example, when we buy a nice house there are endless things that need to be done to "maintain it to our satisfaction"; this is also part of *saṅkhāra dukkha*. Sometimes we don't even realize this suffering. Think about how much work we do to prepare a nice meal; then we enjoy it in 10-15 minutes, and then we need to spend more time cleaning up. We slaved through hours to get a brief sense pleasure.

10. External things also include people. The amount of suffering due to a loss of a person is directly proportional to how close that person was to oneself. When person X dies, those who suffer the most are the closest family; for friends and distant relatives, suffering is less, and for those who do not even know X, there is no suffering.

- But it is important to understand that one CANNOT get rid of this suffering by abandoning one's family; that would be an immoral act with bad consequences. The attachment becomes less as wisdom grows, when one starts understanding deeper aspects of Dhamma: **Basically, there is a difference between fulfilling responsibilities, paying back debts, and having attachment due to greed.** But this also will become much more clear as we proceed with *paṭicca samuppāda*.

11. Of course *saṅkhāra dukkha* also arises due to hate. This is a bit deeper, since hate arises as a "second aspect" of greed. Hate arises when something or someone gets in the way of us getting what we crave for. We will examine the root causes for hate in *paṭicca samuppāda*, but for now we need to keep in mind that someone may be doing something bad (getting in our way), because we may have done something bad to that person in the past. Things ALWAYS happen for one or more reasons, and we may not be able to see the reason (or the cause) in many cases, because the rebirth process keeps things hidden from us.

- In any case, when we start thinking about a hateful person or a thing, it is ourselves that suffer. The mere mention of the name of someone that we despise will immediately make us think about those bad things that the person did, and get "worked up." We cause this suffering to ourselves. If we retaliate, then things get even worse.
- It is good to analyze some of one's own experiences.

We discuss "***dukkha dukkha***" , the third and final category of suffering, in the next post: Introduction 2 – The Three Characteristics of Nature.

8.7.2 Introduction 2 – The Three Characteristics of Nature

1. In the previous post, we discussed two of the three main ways that suffering arises, the ***viparinama dukkha*** (suffering due to our inability to maintain things to one's satisfaction) and the ***saṅkhāra dukkha*** (suffering due to our excess attachment for things). **Both these are experienced in this very life**, but unless we take time and contemplate on those, we may not even be aware of those.

- There is nothing much we can do about the *viparinama dukkha*, other than to eat well, exercise regularly, and keep up with healthy habits for maintaining a healthy body and a mind.
- We can lessen the *saṅkhāra dukkha* by gradually losing excess attachment to worldly things. This happens automatically when we start grasping the Three Characteristics of nature, which we will discuss below.

2. The third category of suffering arises directly: getting burned, stabbed/shot, etc. Beings in the *apāyā* encounter this more, and in the *niraya* (lowest realm) that is all one feels. For example, a person who made money by killing another or by stealing from another may live well in this life (at least outwardly), but will be subjected to much suffering in the upcoming births. This is the worst category of ***dukkha dukkha***, **which arises due to immoral actions of the past. Until the death of the physical body, even an *Arahant* is subjected to** *dukkha dukkha*.

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- Therefore, the third category of suffering, *dukkha dukkha*, arises basically due to immoral acts; see below. The severity of suffering of course depends on the severity of the violation. We will discuss this in detail in the *paṭicca samuppāda* ("*pati+ichcha*" leading to "*sama*"+"*uppada*") steps in future posts; see, "Paticca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda"," where it is briefly discussed how one's actions lead to effects that are similar "in kind."

3. All our acts (including speech and thoughts) are *saṅkhāra*, thus *dukkha dukkha* arises due to the worst forms of *saṅkhāra*, which we call immoral acts.

Everything happens due to a reason (cause). If one does a good deed, that will lead to good results, and bad deeds will lead to bad results. This is the basis of science and also how nature works. "Every action has a reaction"; it is guaranteed, sooner or later.

- This is why rebirth is a reality of nature. There are people who live lavishly with money earned by immoral deeds; the consequences will be realized in the future rebirths.
- It also explains why different people are born with different levels of health, wealth, beauty, etc., and also why there are innumerable varieties of animals with different levels of suffering.

The Three Characteristics

4. Most people can distinguish between moral and immoral acts. Immoral acts are killing, stealing, inappropriate sexual behavior, lying, slandering, gossiping, harsh speech, and getting "drunk" with not only drugs or alcohol, but also with wealth, fame, power, etc (The BIG EIGHT as discussed in the Meditation section).

- When we also include the wrong views/hate in the mind, there are ten, which are called the ten defilements or "*dasa akusala*" in Pāli. These acts not only are inappropriate but also will have adverse consequences for the well being of everyone. Societies cannot function well if people act immorally.

5. Most religions teach how to live a moral life, may be with some exceptions for example of killing of animals as immoral. Basically all religions encourage "building better societies." Therefore morality and moral laws are common to all cultures and religions.

- Without having this moral foundation, it is hard to comprehend the deeper aspects that we will discuss next, and analyze in the *paṭicca samuppāda*.
- However, it is important to realize that one will be free of all ten defilements only upon reaching the *Arahant* stage. Keeping the five conventional precepts is a good start.
- When one starts following the Path, one is bound to break the trend once in a while. A child learning to walk will fall many times. Many people get discouraged when they do an immoral act occasionally; but just to realize that one did a mistake, and that it bothers one's mind, means one HAS MADE PROGRESS.

6. The uniqueness in Buddha Dhamma is to show that in the wider world view, building better societies (i.e., living a moral life) is NOT ENOUGH in the LONG TERM in the rebirth process. In this wider world view, anyone can be born anywhere in the 31 realms, including those dreaded lower four realms. It is a much bigger world than we normally experience.

- Doing immoral acts makes one eligible to be born in the lower four realms, and be subjected to *dukkha dukkha*. **However, even if one does not do a single immoral act in this life, that does not guarantee avoidance of rebirth in the lower four realms, BECAUSE we all have done immoral deeds in our previous lives.** What we have in the past remain until that *kammic* power is exhausted OR until one attains *Nibbāna*. Again this is part of the "bigger world view" now spanning time.

7. This was the core message of the Buddha: That no matter how well we live this life (and it is essential to do that), that does not guarantee a "suffering-free" future. Until one attains at the least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*, one is not free from suffering in the four lower worlds.

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- We can look at it this way too: Even if we live a good, moral life in this life, we do not know under what conditions we will be born in the next life, even if it is a human life. If we are born to an immoral family, or be exposed to immoral friends, in the next life we may commit acts that deserves birth in the four lower realms.
- This is why we need to strive to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage in this very life.

8. This is what is embedded in the three characteristics of "this wider world" of 31 realms. We may be born in the highest Brahma world, but one day that life will end and we will inevitably get to the four lowest realms (*apāyā*) at some point. The Buddha said, "there is no refuge" anywhere in these 31 realms.

9. In the previous post we discussed why we "cannot keep any part of our physical body to our satisfaction." If we think through how *dukkha dukkha* arises, we can see that "we cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction" **anywhere** in these 31 realms in the long term. This is the first characteristic of "this world of 31 realms": ***anicca***. Just one word says it all.

- Because of *anicca*, no matter how much we struggle to achieve sense pleasures, we will eventually encounter suffering, especially in the four lower realms. We always have *viparinama dukkha* and *saṅkhāra dukkha* (both may be hidden in the apparent sense pleasures temporarily), and we cannot avoid *dukkha dukkha* without attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.
- Thus *anicca* leads to the second characteristic of ***dukkha***.
- Therefore, as long as we crave for existence and sense pleasures "in this world", we are truly helpless in the LONG TERM; this is the third characteristic of ***anatta***. There is "no refuge" in this world of 31 realms.

10. At first it is difficult to see why these three characteristics are a such a big deal. They are the KEY to stop the causes for suffering.

- Just the realization that it is **harmful and unfruitful** to attach to things in this world leads to the first stage of *Nibbāna*, the *Sotāpanna* stage. Buddha Dhamma is a complete description of nature. **Just being able to comprehend the unfruitfulness of attachment to worldly things (and aversion, which arises from attachment as we will see), is the first and most important step in the Noble Eightfold Path, *Sammā Diṭṭhi* or "clear comprehension."**

11. It is important to realize that detachment to worldly things CANNOT be done by forcing the mind. If someone tries to give away one's wealth without truly realizing the benefits of that, one will likely to generate friction or remorse later, which could have adverse effects.

- It may be hard to believe, but the real happiness ARISES (and one will be able to donate things with joy, because one will automatically see the fruitless of craving for worldly things) as one starts comprehending the true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and realize that it is possible to stop all three form of suffering. It is permanent sense of relief, and not like a sense pleasure that lasts only for a short time.
- As we go through the steps in the *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles, the meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* will become clear. One could and should read other related posts too. At some point, things will start "clicking" into place and then it will become easier. Just a glimpse of the "light" will make it easier to "see."

12. The lack of this knowledge (or even better stated as wisdom or *paññā*), is called ignorance (*avijjā*). Thus the whole *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle starts with ignorance (*avijjā*), and explains how *avijjā* gives rise to *dukkha* under different conditions. There is another *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle that explains how *dukkha* can be stopped from arising. We will discuss both starting with the next post. **Thus *avijjā* leads not only to immoral acts, but also to unfruitful acts; both immoral and unfruitful actions are included in *saṅkhāra*.**

13. I know I am using more and more Pāli words as we proceed. But by now one should be able to grasp the meaning of those key words; one can always go back to earlier posts in this series to refresh memory. It

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is cumbersome to keep stating "it is not possible to maintain things to one's satisfaction"; it is much easier to say, "*anicca*." No other language can succinctly state the nature of the "whole world" in just three words: *anicca* (pronounced "anichcha"), *dukkha, anatta* (pronounced "anaththa").

- As we saw above, *dukkha* has much deeper meaning than the "feeling of discomfort or pain."
- Even *avijjā* and *paññā* do not have corresponding words in English to convey the exact meaning. As we discuss further, the meanings will become more clear.
- Thus my goal to is to first describe these key Pāli words in plain English and then use them in the subsequent posts, while staying away from other Pāli words that are not critical for understanding the core message of the Buddha.

Next, "Avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra", ……..

8.7.3 Avijjā Paccayā Saṅkhārā

Revised April 26, 2019; August 29, 2019

"Avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā"* (Ignorance as root cause for immoral/unfruitful actions and thoughts).** That is the same as saying "*avijjā nirodha*" leads to "*saṅkhāra nirodha*." All following terms in the *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycle will stop arising and **thus all suffering stop arising with the complete removal of *avijjā.

1. *Avijjā* (loosely translated as ignorance), is defined in many ways: not knowing the Four Noble Truths, not understanding the Noble Eightfold Path, not understanding the Three Characteristics of nature, not understanding *dukkha*, etc.

- All these are correct, but just reading about them is not going to help. The mind needs sees how suffering arises due to immoral and unwise actions (and thoughts).
- The *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle clarifies how the three kinds of suffering arise. One does not comprehend the true nature of the world, and think (and do) immoral/unfruitful things.

2. You may be wondering whether I was untruthful when I said this series will be in "plain English." Especially If you have not read the first two posts. I did describe these three terms in plain English, and there is no easy way to get the same meaning across without using Pāli words.

- So, once I clarify them, I have to use these Pāli terms in order to keep a post to a reasonable length. One can always go back and read previous introductory posts to refresh memory.

3. The standard interpretation of "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" reads "ignorance leads to mental formations." That does not get the underlying ideas across and also misleading. I believe that "ignorance as root cause and condition for immoral/unfruitful actions" is a better translation, and I will explain why.

First let us look at the difference between immoral acts and unfruitful acts.

- We saw that *dukkha dukkha* in the four lower realms is the worst form of suffering. And we saw the cause of that as the immoral acts done with the ten defilement or *dasa akusala*. Thus worst types of *saṅkhāra* are responsible for *dukkha dukkha* in the lower four realms.
- Why do we do any of such potent immoral acts that give rise to *dukkha dukkha* of the worst kinds in the lower four realms? Because to a very high degree of ignorance of the consequences of such acts. For example, if one does not believe in rebirth, then it is hard to see how such immoral acts can have consequences. After all, there are many people engaged in unethical behavior who seem to be enjoying life.
- Such high level of ignorance is called *moha* (which means totally covered, totally blind mind), and the closest English word is "delusion."

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- A murderer who PLANS and kills another human is a good example. He thinks that if he can plan it well, he can avoid "getting caught" by the justice system and then will not have to pay for his actions. There are MUCH WORSE consequences waiting for him, regardless of whether the police catch him or not. He does not know that he is likely to get killed a thousand times in return in future births.

4. Thus **immoral actions** like killing, stealing, etc are responsible for the worst outcomes, the worst kinds of future suffering; these are the worst forms of *saṅkhārā*.

- On the other side of the spectrum for *saṅkhāra* are the **unfruitful actions** that lead to lower levels of *saṅkhāra dukkha* in this very life. For example, when we get attached to things/people via strong attachments or dislikes, that can lead to mental suffering in this life.
- However, such unfruitful actions can also form bad habits that can grow into more significant problems with time. Someone acting with greed or dislikes habitually can tend to make those stronger and eventually grow into stronger forms of excess greed and hate, leading to immoral acts. We will discuss how this happens via the *paṭicca samuppāda* steps.
- Of course the severity of the consequences will be according to the severity and nature of the act: "*pati+ichcha*" leading to "*sama*" + "*uppada*", as we will discuss in detail later. See, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati + ichcha" + "Sama + uppāda"" for the meaning of *paṭicca samuppāda*. When one is even willing to do immoral acts to get what one wants, the consequences will also be stronger and "in-kind." Then there are "unfruitful acts" that can lead to comparatively minor forms of suffering in the near term but can also add up to more significant effects in the long run.
- Thus one has to think beyond the five precepts to understand the origin of *saṅkhāra dukkha.* I know I am repeating some statements, but I want to make sure to get these essential ideas across.

I hope it is clear now why "immoral/unfruitful actions, speech and thoughts" is a better translation for *saṅkhāra* than "mental formations." *Saṅkhārā* are all mental; *kāya* and *vacī saṅkhārā* are those thoughts that LEAD TO actions and speech.

5. Now let us discuss the other erroneous aspect of the translation of "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra"* as "ignorance leads to mental formations." For further details, see, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?."

- Ignorance (*avijjā*) is not there all the time. Even the worst criminal does not do immoral acts or even unfruitful acts ALL THE TIME. **But when he does**, such actions are done with ignorance as a root cause.
- It applies to all of us: The more we learn Dhamma, the more we get rid of ignorance. Then will we not think or do either immoral or unfruitful things, i.e., any type of (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra.*

6. **A closely related issue to think about is what kind of control we have over *saṅkhāra*.** There are three types of *saṅkhāra*: *kāya saṅkhāra* (those that lead to physical acts), *vacī saṅkhāra* (those that lead to speech), and *mano saṅkhāra* (those that automatically arise due to our *gati*).

- If we know right from wrong, we can control MOST of our **physical actions and speech**. We may even start saying something terrible and stop ourselves in the middle of the sentence.
- Depending on the emotional state of the mind, it may be not possible to control our actions under extreme stressful situations. Even a normally calm person may get into a rage if he catches his wife engaging in sex with another man. He may even kill that man in the heat of the moment.
- We also know "good people" who were tempted to do immoral things. That is especially true if the "payout or the perceived pleasure" was big enough. That is the danger of "not being free of the four lower realms."
- More information at: "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

7. The third category, *mano saṅkhāra,* are also hard to control by will power instantly. I think we all can think about situations where it was hard to control greedy/hateful thoughts. We may start thinking about

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something, and the mind takes us all over the place. Such thoughts normally involve "what we could have," and also fantasize about all kinds of sense pleasures. One needs to stop such thoughts and think about their consequences willfully.

- **These can only be lessened and ultimately stopped by changing one's habits ("*gathi*") and cravings ("*āsavas*"). That applies to *kāya* and *vacī saṅkhāra* done on "impulse" or "temptations" discussed above.**
- And that comes about by realizing the unfruitfulness of any *saṅkhāra*. That is strongly related to comprehending the Three Characteristics. We will be analyzing this in the upcoming steps of *paṭicca samuppāda*.

8. Thus the key is to change one's bad habits over time. Then, gradually, even such *mano saṅkhāra* will STOP FROM ARISING.

- It may be hard to believe, but a significant part of this change of habits and cravings comes from comprehending the Three Characteristics of this world. One would realize that it does not MAKE SENSE to hurt others (including animals) to get sense pleasure for oneself. That makes a BIG DIFFERENCE in one's outlook about what a "good life is."
- Contrary to what most people believe, a life filled with sense pleasures is not a "good, peaceful, life." An extravagant life can eventually become a "burdened life" because our body's ability to accommodate sense pleasures goes down as we age. This realization itself leads to "cooling down" of the mind. Anyway, as we discuss further, and if one contemplates more along with these ideas, these concepts will slowly become apparent.

9. In summary, all three kinds of suffering arise due to *saṅkhāra* that range from highly immoral acts to seemingly innocent unfruitful actions. All *saṅkhāra* arise due to *avijjā*.

- That is why "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhārā*" is the first step in the *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle, which ends with "*jara, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha, ...*" all kinds of suffering.
- At the *Arahant* stage, one has removed *avijjā* (i.e., optimized *paññā*), and thus *abhisaṅkhāra* that lead to rebirth cannot arise; that is *Saupadisesa Nibbāna*. At the death of the physical body, the *Arahant* is not reborn and thus, at that time, all *saṅkhāra* cease to arise (*Anupadisesa Nibbāna* or *Parinibbāna* or "complete *Nibbāna*").
- **That is how "*avijjā nirodha*" leads to "*saṅkhāra nirodha*."**

Thus we can see in a simple way how suffering arises with immoral/unfruitful actions as causes. One engages in such activities due to ignorance of the true nature of the world: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Here we discussed how ignorance gives rise to *saṅkhāra*. In the next post, we will discuss how *saṅkhārā* leads to *viññāṇa* (or defiled consciousness). That is the next step leading to *dukkha* (suffering).

Next, "Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 1", …….

8.7.4 Saṅkhāra Paccayā Viññāṇa – 1

1. "***Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa***" is normally translated something like, "with mental formations as condition, consciousness arises." But I will show that a more accurate translation is, "Immoral/unfruitful actions and thoughts as root condition for **defiled consciousness**."

- I will just keep the word *viññāṇa* without translating as "defiled/unfruitful consciousness" (which could become cumbersome to repeat also), because the word "consciousness" cannot fully embody the meaning of *viññāṇa*. Furthermore, *vipāka viññāṇa* (those that arise outside of "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*") are "just consciousness"; see #4 below.

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- *Viññāṇa* is a step in the *paṭicca samuppāda* that describes how suffering arises; thus *viññāṇa* is NOT neutral or innocuous as the word "consciousness" or "awareness" implies; it is DEFILED consciousness, contaminated with immoral mental factors such as greed and hate.
- In contrast, an *Arahant* has undefiled, pure consciousness; thus an *Arahant* experiences the world without any defilements. He/she can see, hear, etc without making any type of judgement, attachment, or repulsion to what is seen, heard, etc.

Thus we need to realize that *viññāṇa* is DIFFERENT from "knowing" or "being aware", which is what "consciousness" implies. This is very important.

2. For example, two people with opposing political views (A and B) may encounter a politician C on the street who has views compatible with those of A. Person A will be happy to meet C and may go up to C, shake his hand and talk to him enthusiastically. On the other hand, Person B will automatically have irritable thoughts about C and is likely to avoid C. In this case, A and B generated two very different kinds of *viññāṇa* upon seeing the same person.

- On the other hand, suppose there is a fourth person, D, who also knows the politician C AND suppose D is an *Arahant*. Now, person D will recognize C as that politician but will not generate any likes or dislikes about C. That is what "consciousness" is, just recognizing who or what it is without generating any biases.

3. The other main point is that *viññāṇa* is multi-faceted. **It has embedded in it one's memories as well as one's future hopes and plans**, and those lie under the surface. This is what Sigmund Freud called the subconscious. But there is no separate "subconscious"; there is only one *citta* at a time.

- The mind does this with the help of several mental factors (*cetasika*) like memory (*manasikara*) and perception (*saññā*). We will discuss that in the future.

4. For example, when I am looking at a picture I have what is called *cakkhu viññāṇa*, i.e., "visual consciousness." This is a *vipāka viññāṇa* and is "just consciousness."

However, if I have been planning a trip overseas that is still in the "back of my mind"; if I have been thinking about calling an old friend about whom I just thought of recently, that is also in the "back of my mind." Thus at a given time there may be several or even many *viññāṇa* waiting to come to the surface.

- And some of those "subconscious" *viññāṇa* may disappear, if the reason for it to be there goes away for some reason. For example, if civil war breaks out in the country that I was planning to visit, I will abandon that trip and my "*viññāṇa*" for that will go away. If I stop thinking about my old friend, that *viññāṇa* for calling him up may also go away with time. Thus if a given *viññāṇa* stops getting "its food" it will die off gradually.
- The difference between *kamma viññāṇa* (those that arise due to "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*") and *vipāka viññāṇa* is discussed in "Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations."

5. **Now we can see how "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" works.** The more I think about my old friend, the more *saṅkhāra* I am generating; thus I keep "feeding that *viññāṇa*" and that *viññāṇa* for calling him gets stronger.

- The breaking out of the civil war in that country basically deprived the "*viññāṇa* for making a trip to that country" of any food (i.e., now it is not possible to visit that country), and thus the news effectively killed that *viññāṇa*.
- As always, it is best to think about your own situations and see how "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" works, and also how one can have many types of *viññāṇa* at the same time, even though only one is at the forefront at any given time.

6. **There is another way that *viññāṇa* can be divided into two main categories.** One is the "base level" of *viññāṇa* for an existence or *bhava*. For example, if a deer is reborn as a human, then that lifestream will now have a "higher base level of *viññāṇa*" suitable for a human. Whereas a deer cannot sort out right from

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wrong, a human can. Thus at the end of a given "*bhava*" (say as a deer), that lifestream gets new, higher "base level" of *viññāṇa*.

- The other main category of *viññāṇa* is the numerous types of *viññāṇa* that arise in a given existence that we discussed above. What we perceive through the six senses (eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind) gives rise to six types of consciousness: vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch, and concepts. Based on those, we can have infinite types of *viññāṇa* as we discussed above. These types of *viññāṇa* are now in accordance with the type of existence or "*bhava*." For example, a deer does not perceive what is seen at the same level of consciousness as a human, even if both are looking at the same thing. Sometimes there may be differences in sense faculties too: a bat cannot see but uses sonar to find its way around. Furthermore, as we discussed above, there are many types of "subconscious" *viññāṇa* as well.
- There are many new concepts introduced in these introductory posts that are critical. One may need to go back to previous posts and re-read in order to grasps these important concepts.

7. Based on those two categories, there are two main *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles that describe life "in this world of 31 realms":

- One describes how the "base level" of *viññāṇa* changes at the end of a "*bhava*", say when a deer is reborn as a human. Here a given lifestream can make a transition from a lower base level of *viññāṇa* to a higher (e.g., deer reborn as a human) or vice versa (e.g., human reborn as a deer). This is the "*paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda*" cycle.
- The other *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle describes how a given life-stream accumulates conditions for suffering during a given "*bhava*." This is where we experience *viññāṇa* through our daily activities. This is the "*idappaccayatā paṭicca samuppāda*" cycle; see, "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda."

Let us discuss the *viññāṇa* associated with this latter one first.

1. *Saṅkhāra paccayā Idappaccayatā Viññāṇa*

Let us first look at how our consciousness changes basically every moment in an active day. We are being bombarded with pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, body touches, and we think about all sorts of things throughout the day. In each single case, we experience a different *viññāṇa*. This is why *viññāṇa* is very complex and multi-faceted.

1. If we take a simple example of looking at a person, there are multiple events that happens in the mind: the physical eye captures an image of the mind which is processed by the brain and sent to the mind (details of this will be discussed in the *Abhidhamma* section later). The mind instantly compares that image with previous experiences and recognizes that it is a close friend. Happy feelings may arise instantly too. If we had not seen him for a while, some old memories associated with him may also instantly pop into our mind. The sum total of all mental factors (feelings, perception, joy, etc) associated with that "seeing event" is the "eye consciousness" or "*cakkhu viññāṇa*" at that moment.

- And this is an example of a "*vipāka viññāṇa*." We did not plan to see him, but just bumped into him.

2. But now based on this *vipāka viññāṇa*, we may decide to take some actions. We may run to meet him, give him a hug, and follow-up with even more actions. Most of these could be harmless *saṅkhāra* and our experience, consciousness, or *viññāṇa* is mostly harmless.

- However, if we instead ran into a person with whom we recently had a serious argument, that *vipāka viññāṇa* may lead to a series of "bad *saṅkhāra*" in our minds and thus lead to a totally different *viññāṇa* BASED ON those bad *saṅkhāra*. we may decide to say something bad to that person. Now we are doing *vacī saṅkhāra* that may have adverse consequences. Now our *viññāṇa* is different and we feel differently from the above case. We have an agitated state of mind, and with the slightest provocation from him, we may say or do even more harmful things.

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3. When a thought arises in the mind, it has associated with it many mental factors (*cetasika*) which characterize how we feel: joy, sadness, greed, generosity, hate, kindness, etc. *Viññāṇa* encompasses all such relevant mental factors.

- In the previous example of persons A and B meeting the politician C, person A's thoughts embody happiness while person B's thoughts embody dislike.
- For a *viññāṇa* to arise, there must be some interest in the sense object. For example, we are bombarded with millions of sense inputs in a day, but we "pay attention to" only a fraction of those. Each mind has a set of "preferred items" in the background or "in the subconscious" based on the person's habits and cravings.

4. Then, the more we "feed a given *viññāṇa*" by thinking, speaking, doing things related to that, the more strong it gets. Thus we can see how "habit building" is tightly associated with *saṅkhāra*. In the same way, we can "remove a habit" by depriving that associated *viññāṇa* of its food, i.e., by stopping thinking or doing things related to it.

- And that can be done only realizing the benefits of a good habit or adverse consequences of a bad habit, which was the first step in the *paṭicca samuppāda*, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*." A bit of thought should make this clear. Comprehending Buddha Dhamma takes time to think deeply about how all these things fit together.Just being able to recite the *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle does not bring any benefits.

5. A simple example is "building a *viññāṇa* for getting drunk": A teenager may not like the taste of his first drink, but if he keeps doing it due to "peer pressure", he is likely to build a new *viññāṇa* for it. As he builds this *viññāṇa*, he will keep accumulating *saṅkhāra* to "feed that *viññāṇa*." He will be thinking about it, talking about it, and of course whenever has the chance he will be drinking. The more he does any of those *saṅkhāra*, that *viññāṇa* will grow. AND even when he is doing something else, that viññāṇa will be at close to top of the subconscious waiting for an opportunity to come up and induce him to get drunk.

- And it works the same way for any type of activity. A teenager studying for an exam, will have a *viññāṇa* for it. If he is serious about it, he will be thinking about it more, talking about it, and studying hard; all those are *saṅkhāra* too, in this case for his benefit.

The idea is to first not to do any *abhisaṅkhāra* (strong immoral *saṅkhāra*) that could lead to birth in the four lower realms. These kinds of *saṅkhāra* are the immoral acts, speech, and thoughts. We will discuss this in the next post.

8.7.5 Saṅkhāra Paccayā Viññāṇa – 2

If you are reading this without reading the earlier posts, you may be wondering whether I was being untruthful when I said this series will be in "plain English." I did describe any of the terms used here in plain English in the previous posts. There is no easy way to get the same meaning across without using such key Pāli words.

- So, once I clarify them, I have to use these Pāli terms in order to keep a post to a reasonable length, AND readable. One can always go back and read previous posts to refresh memory.

In the previous post, we discussed how *saṅkhāra* can feed and build different types of *viññāṇa* during our lifetime. The *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle which describes that process is the *idappaccayatā paṭicca samuppāda* and we discussed the step "*saṅkhāra paccayā idappaccayatā viññāṇa*" for that *paṭicca samuppāda*.

- Now we will discuss how such *idappaccayatā viññāṇa* can become strong and be "carried over" to the future lives; not only that, one of such strong viññāṇa can even determine the next birth. That is why such strong *viññāṇa* can become "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*" by providing the "link" to the next next life (that is what "*paṭisandhi*" means: "*sandhi*" is connection and "*paṭi*" is bond or making the connection).

2. *Saṅkhāra paccayā Patisandhi Viññāṇa*

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1. When we build *idappaccayatā viññāṇa* during our lifetime as described in the previous post, such *viññāṇa* can get very strong and even get carry over to the next lives.

- In fact, some of the *viññāṇa* that we easily get "attached to" very well could be coming from previous lives.

2. For example, different people have "natural tendencies" for certain tasks (music, art, science, business, basically any type of activity). Similarly, some people are attracted to gambling, drinking, sports, etc more than others. All these are *sansāric* habits, that have been cultivated by "feeding that *viññāṇa*" over many lives.

- Unless one reduces and eventually gets rid of one's bad habits, they can lead to bad births in the lower four realms where one can get trapped for long times. Similarly, developing good habits can lead to good births, in case one is unable to attain at least the *Sotāpanna* stage in this life.
- This is why it is very important to get rid of "bad habits" and to cultivate "good habits." There are many posts at the site on this important topic. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of this need to change habits.

3. Following the Noble Eightfold Path is all about changing to a "good person" first; doing "*ānāpānasati bhāvanā*" does the same thing. When one does this, one **develops wisdom** to see through the Three Characteristics: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. And that also leads to the *Sotāpanna* stage, where one is guaranteed to be free of rebirths in the lower four realms.

- By the way, many people are introduced to the wrong concept of "there is no self" (incorrect translation of the term *anatta*). Thus they get stuck, saying the term, "good person", does not make sense (because there is no "self"); that could become a huge obstacle to any progress. While the Buddha rejected the concept of "self", he also rejected the concept of "no-self", because there is definitely some key personal characteristics that "flow" from one life to the next; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."

4. Once one is free of the four lower realms (i.e., attains the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*), only then one will truly realize that it is unfruitful even to wish for or work to seek rebirths in higher realms.

- But, until one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one MUST avoid immoral *abhisaṅkhāra* (strong immoral actions) to avoid immoral *viññāṇa* and also engage in moral *abhisaṅkhāra* in order to cultivate moral *viññāṇa*; this will keep one firmly on the Path and to avoid rebirth in the lower four realms until the *Sotāpanna* stage is attained.

5. If we think deeply about the suffering that we encounter in this life, *dukkha dukkha* has arisen due to whatever immoral *saṅkhāra* done in a previous life. An animal suffers more than a human, because the cause for an animal birth was a stronger immoral action done previously.

- *Dukkha dukkha* associated with higher realms (*deva, brahma*) is less than the *dukkha dukkha* for a human life, because the *saṅkhāra* that led to the *deva/brahma* births were merely unfruitful, they were not immoral.

6. Any birth anywhere in the 31 realms is due to a *abhisaṅkhāra*. If it is due to a worst form of *abhisaṅkhāra* (immoral actions) then that leads to a birth in the lowest four realms via a strong and bad *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*. Lesser *abhisaṅkhāra* (unfruitful actions) lead to births in higher realms via "moral" *abhisaṅkhāra viññāṇa*.

- Thus cultivating "immoral" *abhisaṅkhāra viññāṇa* must be avoided by not engaging in immoral activities. Otherwise, "*saṅkhāra paccayā paṭisandhi viññāṇa*" could lead to "bad births", where *dukkha dukkha* is very intense.

7. Viparinama dukkha associated with the current life is also mainly determined by previous action (*abhisaṅkhāra*) that led to this life, and can be analyzed the same way as for *dukkha dukkha.*

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- But the *saṅkhāra dukkha* associated with this life is due to actions (*saṅkhāra*) that we do in this life. Also, the same *saṅkhāra* that could cause future *dukkha dukkha* or *viparinama dukkha* can also give rise to *saṅkhāra dukkha* in this life as well. This is an important point to be realized; if not clear, you may want to go back and review the previous posts.
- Therefore, we CAN get rid of part of the *dukkha* (the *saṅkhāra dukkha*) in THIS LIFE by understanding Dhamma and acting and thinking accordingly. We can also stop or reduce ALL types of *dukkha* in FUTURE LIVES by this process.

If you have forgotten what these terms mean, it is a good idea to go back and refresh memory, because otherwise it will be difficult to comprehend the upcoming posts in this series as well. And these terms are critically important for grasping the message of the Buddha. *Avijjā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* are key terms that must be comprehended; they do not have corresponding English words.

More on *viññāṇa* can be found at, "3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."

Next, Viññāṇa paccayā Nāmarūpa, ……..

8.7.6 Viññāṇa Paccayā Nāmarūpa

Revised May 19, 2019

Introduction

1. *Nāmarūpa* can have different, but related, meanings in different contexts. *Nāmarūpa* in the standard *Paṭicca Samuppāda* is different from the "*nāmarūpa*" involved in *idappaccayā Paṭicca Samuppāda* which takes place moment-to-moment.

- Basically, *idappaccayā* means "what happens at this moment depending on the conditions at this moment." Thus, it describes "events in real time" that bring *vipāka* in real time, as well as *vipāka* in the future.
- The standard *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process describes how *viññāṇa* energy created within this lifetime leads to future births (i.e., *vipāka* in future lives via future births).

2. Therefore, the standard *Paṭicca Samuppāda* can be called "Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda" and the other can be called "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda"; here "*uppatti*" means "birth."

- Let us first discuss *nāmarūpa* involved in *idappaccayā Paṭicca Samuppāda*, i.e., how a *jāti* can arise in the current life, based on one's *avijjā* (ignorance) and *saṅkhāra* (thoughts, speech, and actions).
- *Jāti* is not restricted to "births as a human, a deva, an animal." Many different *jāti* (births) arise during the current life itself; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Jātidhammādi Sutta Dasaka (SN 35.33)."
- We will discuss two examples below which explain how a "thief" and a "drunkard" are "born" during the current life itself.

Viññāṇa Paccayā Nāmarūpa During a Lifetime

1. The "*nāmarūpa*" involved in *Idappaccayā Paṭicca Samuppāda* mainly refer to those "visual images" created by the person when making an "expectation" (*viññāṇa*) to achieve/maintain a certain goal.

- Here, "*nāma*" refers to whatever the "name" given to the subject involved in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process, and "*rūpa*" are the associated objects themselves. **Thus, the corresponding "*nāmarūpa*" are the mental images of the subjects in question**.

2. Let us take an example. When a thief plans to steal something (say a watch from a store), the process starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*"; he starts thinking about the plan because of his ignorance of the consequences.

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- Here "*nāma*" or the name is "watch" and "*rūpa*" is the watch itself. **But "*nāmarūpa*" is the mental image of that watch: That is formed in HIS MIND.**
- He starts doing *vacī saṅkhāra* first: thinking to himself about how to go about stealing the watch. This is "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" and that gives rise to *viññāṇa* for stealing the watch.

3. With that *viññāṇa* (expectation), now he starts visualizing the stealing process. How he would find a suitable time, and may be distract store employees someway and to pick it up.

- Now more *nāmarūpa* become involved: he also makes visuals of how he will be actually doing the stealing: "*nāmarūpa*" are the visuals he has in his mind to get the job done.

4. The more he thinks and makes plans (i.e., makes more and more *nāmarūpa* in his mind, that future expectation for stealing that object (i.e., the *viññāṇa* for it) will get stronger.

- Here the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process runs backwards, "*nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇa*." This is called an "*aññamañña paṭicca samuppāda*." [***aññamañña*** : (adj.), mutual.]
- These forward and backward steps may run back and forth while he is planning the robbery, and the Buddha said that both *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* get stronger due to this feedback. **They depend on each other and feed on each other.**
- The more he thinks about it, the stronger those *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa.*
- Ven. Sariputta provided a simile for this inter-dependence between *viññāṇa* and *nāmarūpa* saying it is like two bundles of hay leaning against each other and supporting each other without any other support.

5. Let us take another case of a teenager who is influenced by his peers to drink alcohol. Because of his ignorance about the consequences, he engages in such activities and also in planning activities: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."

- Here *saṅkhāra* include not only drinking activities but also planning. Therefore, all three types of *saṅkhāra* are involved: *mano, vacī,* and *kāya saṅkhāra.*
- While he is participating in drinking he is doing *kāya saṅkhāra*; he will be constantly talking about having such parties and those are *vacī saṅkhāra*; it is also in the subconscious and many times a day they come back to his mind as *mano saṅkhāra*. All these are included in "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."

6. Most people do not realize it, but that process of "thinking and talking to oneself" (*vacī saṅkhāra*) can make a big impact in the formation of *nāmarūpa* and the cultivation of *viññāṇa*. Many people spend hours and hours doing that assuming it does not contribute to "*viññāṇa* (or *kamma*) formation"; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."

- In the above example, even when he is not drinking, those *mano saṅkhāra* come to the mind automatically and he starts consciously thinking about drinking activities: he visualizes pictures of "party scenes", including friends, bottles of his favorite drink, any food that goes with it, etc.
- That conscious thinking is also *vacī saṅkhāra*, and those also strengthen the *viññāṇa* via, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."
- Now those mental pictures that arise during that process are *nāmarūpa* that arise due to "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*." Therefore, *Paṭicca Samuppāda* steps do not just flow in one way. They can run forward and backward.

7. If the teenager keeps his bad habit of drinking, he gets trapped in that *bhava* (state of mind of a drunkard), the more *jāti* that occurs, i.e., more frequently he will be drunk. When one gets really drunk, one tends to behave like an animal without any sense of decency, and the long-term consequences could be rebirth as an animal.

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- If that "*viññāṇa* of a drunkard" stays strong to the time of death (*cuti-paṭisandhi* moment at the end of his human *bhava*), it could lead to a new *uppatti bhava* via the *uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda* process mentioned in #1 above. We will discuss this second type of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*
- The important point is that such a *paṭisandhi viññāṇa* is likely to give rise to rebirth in the animal realm, as mentioned above.

8. In both these examples, it is clear that those reverse steps also occur: "*nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇa*," can happen, and does happen, together with "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*." The more one visualizes related *nāmarūpa*, the stronger that *viññāṇa* gets.

- As we saw above, this happens in other steps too (for example, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" and "*viññāṇa paccayā saṅkhāra*") and such is referred to as an "*aññamaññā paṭicca samuppāda* step." Here "*aññamaññā*" means "inter-dependent."
- This is especially true also for the "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." The more stronger the *viññāṇa* gets, one is more likely to engage in same kind of acts, i.e., *saṅkhāra,* i.e., "*viññāṇa paccayā saṅkhāra*." They feed on each other. This happens a lot in habit formation; see, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

Viññāṇa Paccayā Nāmarūpa at *Paṭisandhi*

1. At the end of an existence (*bhava*), a given lifestream is making a quantum transition (meaning a large instantaneous jump) from one kind of an existence to another; for example, from a deer to a human or vice versa. The basic level of *viññāṇa* changes from that of a deer to a much higher level of a human in the first case.

- That transition happens in the latter part of the last *citta vīthi* of the life of the deer. This is discussed in a bit more detail in the post "Cuti-Paṭisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

2. The key point is that at the end of the last *citta vīthi* of the deer, a very fine human body called *gandhabba* emerges from the dead body of the deer. This fine body cannot be seen with the naked eye. This *gandhabba* is formed by the *kamma vipāka* that gave rise to this new human life, and blueprint of the grown human is in that *gandhabba*. This is the new "*nāmarūpa*" of that lifestream.

- This blueprint of the human physical body thus has all the important details of the new life (*jāti*); for example, sex type, the height, shape, any major physical disability, etc. Some minor features such a skin color or hair color may depend on the parents, but even those may be influenced by the *kamma vipāka* that gave rise to this new existence.

3. Thus as soon as the *viññāṇa* for the next existence was determined at the last *citta vīthi* by the step "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*", the next step of "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa"* gives rise to the *nāmarūpa* for the next life.

- Thus here "*nāma*" includes the basic level of *viññāṇa* for the new human existence, which is much different from the "*nāma*" of a deer. Obviously, the "*rūpa*" is that of a human form and not of a deer. Thus "*nāmarūpa*" makes a huge transition at the end of the "*bhava*" as a deer.

4. I have discussed previously how a deer could be reborn many times as a deer until the *kammic* energy of the "deer *bhava*" is exhausted; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- In such instances, at the death of the deer, another "deer *gandhabba*" emerges from the dead body and waits for a suitable womb for "deer mother" becomes available. Here the new "*nāmarūpa*" may be somewhat different, but still that of a deer, so any change would be minor.
- Therefore, the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" gives rise to a new set of "*nāmarūpa*" only at the *paṭisandhi* to a new existence.

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Viññāṇa is a key concept in Buddha Dhamma. It can be analyzed at various levels, and a deeper analysis is at "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

Next, "Nāmarūpa Paccayā Saḷāyatana", ...

8.7.7 Nāmarūpa Paccayā Saḷāyatana

Revised May 25, 2019; August 31, 2019

Āyatana and *Indriya*

1. First, let us discuss the difference between an *āyatana* and an *indriya*.

- We have six sense faculties: eyes (*cakkhu*), ears (*sota*), nose (*ghāṇa*), tongue (*jivhā*), body (*kāya*), and the mind (*mano*). These are the *indriya*.
- Our initial sense inputs (what we see, hear, etc) are due to *kamma vipāka.* When we experience them, we are using our sense faculties as *indriya.* For example, when we see an attractive person while on the road, that is just "seeing the event" with the *cakkhu indriya*.
- However, based on those initial sense experience, we may INTENTIONALLY use those *indriya* to do more of those acts. Then those *indriya* become *āyatana.* In the above example, if we get attached to that attractive person and keep looking at that person, then we are using our eyes as *cakkhāyatana*.
- They are called *saḷāyatana*, since there are six of them.
- **There is no equivalent English word for *āyatana*, so we will keep using *indriya* and *āyatana* from now on.**

2. For example, I am walking on the road and see a nice house. I just happened to see it due to a *kamma vipāka*, and my eyes were working as *indriya*; they just presented a picture of that house to my mind. It is a neutral event.

- But now, if I form an attachment to the house, I start looking at it for a while (with *cakkhāyatana*). I am thinking about how nice that house is and even about building one like that. At the point, I am using my mind as a *āyatana* too (*mana indriya* now becomes *manāyatana*).
- I have formed greedy thoughts about the house and now I am accumulating new *kamma* by generating *vacī saṅkhāra* (talking to my self with *vitakka*/*vicāra*). I am using my eyes and mind both as *āyatana* (*cakkhāyatana* and *manāyatana*): I keep looking at the house and keep thinking greedy thoughts.

Indriya Become *Āyatana* With *Abhisaṅkhāra*

3. In many cases, when we experience a sense event due to one *indriya*, we may start using some or all of the *indriya* as *āyatana*. In another example, someone offers us a piece of a tasty cake (which is a *kamma vipāka*), and like it so much we may use all six *āyatanas* to accumulate more *kamma* (smell and touch it and then ask for the recipe and think about how to make it or where to buy it).

- Those "extra activities" that we do with *āyatana* could be *abhisaṅkhāra*. But just eating a cake is not *abhisaṅkhāra;* see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha."
- Most of the time we use our sense faculties as *indriya*: we see, hear, etc many things in a day but ignore most of them. But when we experience something that has a craving (*anusaya*) for, then we start using our sense faculties as *āyatana*. The *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycle operates only when we use our sense faculties as *āyatana*.
- An *Arahant* ALWAYS uses his/her sense faculties as *indriya*. He/she will see, hear, etc just like us, but will not get "attached to" anything.

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4. *Saḷāyatana* has somewhat different meanings in the *idapaccayatā* and *paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda* cycles. That is very much like for *nāmarūpa* that we described in the previous post.

- At birth (especially in a new *bhava* or existence), we get a "new set of sense faculties" or *indriya*. For example, if a human is reborn as a *brahma*, that *brahma* will have only eyes, ears, and the mind; there will be only three *indriya* (or *āyatana*), instead of six for the human. But we keep the term "*saḷāyatana*" in the *paṭicca samuppāda* as a generic term.
- Thus in *paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda*, we are concerned with formation of a brand new set of *āyatana* for the new existence (*bhava*).
- However, when we consider the *idapaccayatā paṭicca samuppāda* series, we are concerned with how the six *āyatanas* for a human change from even moment to moment. One may be looking at something, listening, tasting, etc.

Nāmarūpa paccayā Saḷāyatana at *Paṭisandhi*

5. At the end of existence (*bhava*), a given lifestream is making a quantum transition (meaning a large instantaneous jump) from one kind of an existence to another. At that time, the base level of *viññāṇa* for the lifestream makes a quantum jump and this is basically the "*nama*" of the *nāmarūpa*. The *nāmarūpa* for the new existence also has the blueprint for the new physical body, which is the "*rūpa*" part.

- As we did in the previous post, let us consider the case of a lifestream making a transition from a deer to a human. The basic level of *viññāṇa* changes from that of a deer to a much higher level of a human; this new level of *viññāṇa* together with the blueprint for the new human shape is in the new *nāmarūpa* of the *gandhabba* that comes out of the body of the dead deer, as we saw before.
- Now when this *gandhabba* descends to the womb of a human mother, the human baby starts to grow. Six sense faculties (*indriya*) suitable for a human grows in the womb, which will become *saḷāyatana* **at times** in the future after the birth.

6. In another example, a human who exhausted his *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* at death, and becomes a *deva* in one of the *deva* realms. At the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition in the last *citta vīthi* of that human, the human *gandhabba* dies. In the next moment, a *deva gandhabba* is born.

- All *devas* are born fully-formed. There is no need for a mother's womb. This is an *opapātika* birth.
- When that human dies, his body becomes inert like a log. At the very instant, a fully-formed *deva* appears in the appropriate *deva* world.
- This *deva* will have sense faculties appropriate for a *deva*. Those are the *indriya* for the new existence. Those *indriya* **can become** *āyatana* at times depending on the activities of that *deva*.

Nāmarūpa paccayā Saḷāyatana during a Lifetime

7. During a given lifetime of a deer, human, or a brahma, that lifestream will have a basic set of *indriya* (that become *āyatana* at times) appropriate for that existence: the sense faculties for a human are different from that of a deer or a *brahma*.

- But during that lifetime, those *āyatana* will have minor changes (compared to the drastic changes at *paṭisandhi*) depending on the activity. *Idapaccayatā paṭicca samuppāda* cycle describes such changes.

8. In the previous posts, we discussed the case of a thief who is planning a theft. His *viññāṇa* about the theft led him to generate appropriate *nāmarūpa* (the visuals in his mind of how the theft is carried out).

- When he is planning the theft, he will use his sense faculties as *āyatana* to do the "preparatory work." He will read about the place to be robbed or ask around for relevant information, etc. Each time he does a

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specific act (whether thinking, seeing, hearing, etc), a separate *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle operates. We will discuss this later, after going through all the steps in a number of more posts.

- Now when he is about to carry out the theft, his *indriya* transform or attune for the task and become *āyatana*. All his sense faculties will be on high alert. He is watching and listening carefully for anything unexpected, and his whole body becomes tense pumped with adrenaline.
- All his *āyatana* will be employed to carry out the task. He will be using his body, eyes, and ears as *āyatana*. For example, if he is about to be caught, he will use the body to run away.
- At the planning and execution stages, there are many, many *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles associated with each stage. We will discuss that at the end of the series as mentioned above.

Next, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa", …….

8.7.8 Difference between Phassa and Samphassa

Revised November 6, 2018; June 2, 2019

1. No differentiation is made between "*phassa*" and "*samphassa*" in most current explanations of *paṭicca samuppāda.* Both word *phassa* and *samphassa* are most times translated as "contact" in many English translations; see, for example, "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)" and the English translation there: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Six Sets of Six."

- **However, as we will see below, "*samphassa*" has a very different meaning than "*phassa*" and makes the connection of how our instinctive reactions to external sense experiences arise based on our "*sansāric* habits" or "*gati*."**
- With the distinction made between "*phassa*" and "*samphassa*," the true meanings become clear in *suttā* like "WebLink: suttacentral: Chachakka Sutta (MN 148)."

2. When our eyes make contact with an external object, that is not "*phassa*." That is just like a camera taking a picture; that picture is sent to the brain, which processes and sends that "snapshot" to the mind. The mind then makes contact with this "snapshot" or "image" and this is what "*phassa*" really is: **It is the mental contact.**

- When the mind makes that contact with that image of the external object, a *citta* (actually a series of *citta* called *citta vīthi*; see, "What is a Thought?") arises and that is what we experience; in fact what we experience is the cumulative effect of many such *citta vīthis* that arise in a very short time, and this cumulative effect we call a "thought."
- Some of the seven universal mental factors that arise with the *citta* instantaneously identifies the object. **Furthermore, based on our "*gati*" (character/habits) the mind forms an opinion on what is seen and will generate "additional feelings" of joy or sorrow.**
- For example, a young lady looking at a dress may form a liking for it. Another person seeing his enemy will form a dislike. A teenager, upon hearing a song may form a liking for it, etc.
- This mental contact happens instantaneously. We do not have any control over it, and it is purely based on our "*gati*." But since our actions based on that initial reaction takes some time, we still have time to control our speech or bodily actions. Even if bad thoughts come to our mind, we can stop any speech or bodily actions. This is what is supposed to be done with "*kāyānupassanā*" in "*satipaṭṭhāna* meditation."

3. Now, let consider what happens when an *Arahant* sees or hears similar things. He/she will see or hear the same thing as any other person. But since an *Arahant* has removed all such *sansāric* habits or "*gati*," he/she will not be attracted to it or repelled by it.

- An *Arahant* has removed all such defiled "*gati*" which are closely related to cravings or "*āsava*." An *Arahant* has removed all "*āsava*"; this is what is meant by "*āsavakkhaya*" at the *Arahanthood*. This is a technical detail that may be clear to some; but don't worry about it if it does not.

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- To put it in another way, an *Arahant* sees, hears, …things as they really are without any bias added.

4. We can now see the difference between "*phassa*" and "*samphassa*."

- In the case of an *Arahant*, there is only "*phassa*" or mere contact with the external sense input. An *Arahant* will thus "see" or "hear" or "smell" or "taste" or "feel" the same things as any other person. But an *Arahant* will not be attached or repulsed by that sense experience.
- For example, the Buddha identified different people. But he did not form a special liking for Ven. Ānanda (his personal assistant) or had any hateful thoughts about Devadatta who tried to kill him. He treated the poorest person the same way as he treated a king.
- The Buddha ate most delicious food offered by the kings and also ate the meager meals offered by poor people without any preference.
- In all those sense contacts, it was just "*phassa*," and not "*samphassa*."

5. On the other hand, an ordinary person will form a like or a dislike for some of the sense inputs (but not for all).

- If a like or dislike is formed, then that sense contact is "*san phassa*"("*san*" + "*phassa*," where "*san*" is what we accumulate to extend the *sansāric* journey; see, "What is "San"?"). It is normally pronounced "*samphassa*."
- Thus, when one see, hear, smell, taste, touch something, whether there is going be any likes or dislikes towards that sense experience depends on that person, or more specifically the "*gati*" of that person.

6. "*Samphassa*" is intimately connected to one's "*gati*" or habits most of which come from our past lives, even though some may be strengthened or weakened by what we do in this life. We may even start forming new "*gati*" in this life.

- There are many posts at this site that discuss "*gati*," and at the very basic level both "*ānāpāna*" and "*satipaṭṭhāna*" meditations are all about removing bad "*gati*" and cultivating good "*gati*"; see "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."
- "*Samphassa*" is also intimately connected to the relationships we have with other people and material things. Any kind of sense input on such people/things will automatically generate "*samphassa*." On the other hand, an *Arahant* has removed all bonds with people/things, and thus will generate only "*phassa*."

7. Let us discuss some examples to illustrate how "*samphassa*" arises. First let us look at the connection with those people/things in the world that we have special relationships with or what we "*upādāna*," i.e., like to either keep close to like to stay away from.

- Think about the worst "enemy" you have. When you even think about that person X, you generate distasteful feelings. But that person's family will have loving thoughts about that person. Here, you and X's child (for example), would have generated very different "*samphassa*" when thinking, seeing, hearing, about X.
- When you travel by car or bus and looking out of the window, you may see zillion things, but those are just "seeing"; you don't pay much attention to them. They are "*phassa*." But now if you happen to see a beautiful house, it piques your interest and you may even turn back and take another good look at it, and may be even think about how nice it would be to live in a house like that. That is "*samphassa*."

8. Our *sansāric* habits ("*gati*") play a key role in generating "*samphassa*."

- Some people enjoy harassing animals; they pay to go see cockfighting. Others are repulsed by that. Those are *sansāric* habits. So, the scene of two animals fighting for life leads to the enjoyment of some and to the disgust of others; both are "*samphassa*," but one is obviously immoral. The other is moral but still keeps one bound to *saṃsāra*; this latter statement may take time to digest.

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- Ladies, in general, like nice clothes, jewellery, etc. and men are more into sports. When a husband is watching sports on TV the whole day, the wife may not have any interest and may even get angry at him for not paying attention to other things that need to be done around the house.
- These and zillion other things come from our *sansāric* habits.

9. Now let us see how one's perception of what is "valuable" can lead to "*samphassa*." Suppose someone inherits a valuable gem from his father. Every time he sees it or even thinks about it, he becomes happy. But his mind is also burdened by it, since he is worried that he may lose it; he is keeping it in a safe and has put burglar alarms in the house just to protect that gem.

- Now, suppose one day he gets to a professional to evaluate the gem and finds out that it is really worthless. He may not even believe that initially, but once it sinks in that it is indeed worthless, he will become "detached" from it. He will no longer keep it in the safe and may even throw it away in disgust.
- Now he may be generating either neutral or hateful thoughts about the SAME OBJECT that he once loved so much. Nothing changed about the "gem"; it is still the same object as before. What has changed is his PERCEPTION of the value of that object. Whereas he generated "*samphassa*" on thinking or seeing that object before, now he may generating just "*phassa*" (neutral feelings) or "*samphassa*" with quite opposite feelings of disgust.

10. Let us take another example that was given by one of my teacher *Theros*. This one clearly shows how transition from "*phassa*" to "*samphassa*" or the other way around can happen very quickly.

The following happened many years ago in Sri Lanka. A mother had to go overseas when her son was less than a year old. She had been overseas for many years and came back to meet her son. Apparently, she had not even seen any pictures of the boy, who was now a teenager. When she gets home, she is told that the boy is visiting a neighbor and she starts walking there. On the way she bumps into a teenager; the teenager apologizes and she resumes walking. But then another person on the street says, "Don't you recognize your son? Well. How can you? You have been away all this time." Hearing that, she says, "Oh, is that my son?" and immediately runs back and hugs him.

- She clearly saw the boy when he bumped into her and apologized. But at that time, he was just a teenager to her. That "seeing" event involved "*phassa*."
- But when someone pointed out that it was her son, the whole perception of the boy took a big leap in an instant. Now she looks at the same boy with the whole new set of "mental baggage." Now it is not just a teenager, but her son; there is attachment involved. Now when she looks at him it is "*samphassa*" that is involved.

11. Now we can also see how "*samphassa*" lead to an **intensified** *vedanā* or feelings. This is called "*samphassa jā vedanā"* or "*vedanā* arising due to *samphassa*."

- She had neutral thoughts (may be even some annoyance) when the boy bumped into her apologized. But when she learned that it was her son, her feelings turned instantly to joy.
- To take a bit more further, if that teenager then got hit by car after several minutes, that joy would turn instantly to sorrow.
- All these different types of "*vedanā*" arise based on the type and level of "attachment" to a given object, in this case the boy.

12. Therefore, now we can see that the step, "*phassa paccayā vedanā*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* really is "*samphassa paccayā vedanā*."

- More details on how "*samphassa*" leads to *vedanā* (feelings) can be found at: "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

Next, "Phassa paccayā Vedana….to Bhava", …….

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8.7.9 Phassa Paccayā Vedanā….to Bhava

1. In the previous post, we discussed the difference between "*phassa*" and "*samphassa*." To summarize:

- An *Arahant* will always have "*phassa*," whether it is due to a *kamma vipāka* (i.e., a sense impression comes in due to a *kamma* done in the past) or whether he/she is using the sense faculties for a given purpose. Here "*phassa*" is pure mental contact; it is just seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, or just an arbitrary thought that comes to the mind without one's own likes/dislikes.
- An ordinary person will also have "*phassa*" when sense inputs come in as *kamma vipāka*. For example, one may be walking down the street and happen to see an expensive ring on the road. That initial "seeing" is due to a *kamma vipāka*. But now he gets interested in it and picks it up and examines it; those follow-up acts may be done with "*samphassa*," which in turn lead to more *kamma* generating future *kamma vipāka.*
- Thus the *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* involves "*saḷāyatana paccayā samphassa*," even though it is normally written as "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*."

2. "*Phassa*" is the pure mental contact. "*Samphassa*" is the mental contact that has incorporated one's own likes/dislikes about the sense contact.

- In an earlier post, we also talked about the difference between "*indriya*" and "*āyatana*," i.e., how our sense faculties can be used in either way. Note: These six *indriya* are different from the *indriya* in *pañca indriya*, which are *sati, samādhi, saddhā, viriya,* and *paññā*.
- Our basic sense faculties are the "*indriya*"; when they are used with likes/dislikes they become "*āyatana*." Since there are six of them there are six "*āyatana*" or "*saḷāyatana*."

3. In the *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* series that describe how our actions that start with ignorance (*avijjā*) eventually lead to suffering, what comes to play is "*saḷāyatana*," i.e., "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*." Thus, we are talking about instances where we use our sense faculties as "*āyatana*."

- Therefore, it is clear that the next step should be "*saḷāyatana paccayā samphassa*" instead of the normally used, "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*."
- But conventionally "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*" is used because it rhymes better that way. **One is supposed to know that it is really "*samphassa*" that comes into play here.**

4. Let us take an example to go over the steps of the *paṭicca samuppāda* up to now as a review. Suppose there is a teenager who come to associate friends that belong to a street gang. They tell him that one needs to enjoy life and has to do "whatever it takes" to make money to enjoy life. If the parents do not have close contacts with the teenager, there is no one to explain to him the perils of such a way of life, and he embraces this wrong vision or "*micchā diṭṭhi*."

- Thus due to ignorance (*avijjā*), the teenager starts doing, speaking, and thinking like those gang members: "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."
- Then what occupies his mind most of the time is thoughts related to gang activities and seeking pleasures by using drugs and alcohol: "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*." During gang activities his thoughts are focused on them, and what is in his subconscious during other times is also related to such activities.
- This leads to "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*." He thinks about and visualizes various gang activities: How to sell drugs to make money and how he will enjoy rest of the time hanging out with the gang.
- Thus all his six sense faculties become "*āyatana*": they all are used to find ways to optimize the gang activities and to think about ways to "have to fun": "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*."
- Thus inevitably, the sense contacts he makes are attuned for such activities: "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*" or more explicitly, "*saḷāyatana paccayā samphassa*." Most of his sense contacts are defiled with greed, hate, and ignorance.

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- Accordingly, most his feelings are associated with such defiled sense contacts: He gets angry dealing with rival gangs, takes pleasure in beating them up, gets pleasure from drinking and using drugs, etc. Thus "*(sam)phassa paccayā vedanā*" ensues.

5. Now we can see how he gets more and more absorbed in gang activities; he gets pleasure from them. Gang activities become regular habits. He gets "stuck", or "gets attached to gang activities" via both greed and hate. This is "*vedanā paccayā taṇhā*"; see, "Taṇhā – How we attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

- The more he continues such activities, it will become harder to dissociate from them. He thinks about those activities even when not actively doing them. Those start working in his "subconscious"; he dreams about them, etc.
- We need to remember that consciously thinking (or talking to oneself) is also *vacī saṅkhāra* and are *kamma* that will bring *vipāka*.

6. Such strong attachments to gang activities this lead to "*upādāna*": *Upādāna* ("*upa*" +"*ādāna*," where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull" or "attract"; thus gang activities becomes very close him. Those are what he thinks, speaks, lives, all day long: "*taṇhā paccayā upādāna*."

- Among those gang activities, he may especially get attached to certain specific acts: *could* be alcohol, drugs, or even beating up other people or killing them. And such a specific thing would be his favorite, and that is what he will follow enthusiastically and others will also encourage.
- Within the gang there may be a sub-unit that mostly he hangs with. They will enjoy doing their favorite things together, and the gang may assign specific tasks to them which they are known to do well.

7. This leads to preparation of future "existence" or "*bhava*." For example, suppose his sub-unit becomes notorious for hurting rival gang members. They take pleasure in beating up someone or in some cases even killing someone. He will acquire the mindset of a violent animal. He will become easily agitated and angry.

This is "*upādāna paccayā bhava*."

- His "*bhava*" has drastically changed from that of an innocent teenager to that of a violent animal at times.

8. This progression from "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" to "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" does not happen in a linear sequence.

Some steps go back and forth. For example, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" is inevitably also followed by the reverse "*saṅkhāra paccayā avijjā*," i.e., the more wrong things he does, that also solidifies his ignorance. When he starts enjoying those immoral acts, he will tend to think that is what will provide him happiness in the future. His mind will be more and more covered with *kamachanda* (strong greed) and *vyāpāda* (strong hate), the two main components of the five hindrances.

- His ability to think clearly will be suppressed by the five hindrances, and *avijjā* (ignorance) will grow; thus "*saṅkhāra paccayā avijjā*" will also take place.
- There can be many such "inter-loops" that tend to strengthen the downward progression of that teenager.

9. Let us discuss the concept of a "*bhava*" in more detail. Since many people get confused with the terms "*bhava*" and "*jāti*," it is important to be able to distinguish between the two.

- **Every time we do a *saṅkhāra* (which can be a bodily act, speech, or a thought) a corresponding *kamma* (basically an action) is done. In Buddha Dhamma too, every action has a reaction just like in physics, but when dealing with mental phenomena the reaction (*kamma vipāka*) can come later, sometimes many lives later.**
- This is why science has not yet realized the way to handle mental phenomena. Since most "reactions" come later in this life, or even in future lives, it is not easy to see these "action/ reaction" or "*kamma/kamma vipāka*" relationships.

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10. Not all *kamma* are the same. Some *kamma* (and corresponding *saṅkhāra*) are harmless, i.e., they are not potent. Anyone who lives in this world (even an *Arahant* until death) has to do *saṅkhāra* to live: An *Arahant* has to walk, speak, think about things and all these can be considered to be *kamma* (*saṅkhāra*). In some cases, they are put in the category of *kriya* to specifically separate them.

- But what we are concerned with *kamma* that involve greed, hate, and ignorance. Anytime that happens those *kamma* (*saṅkhāra*) are potent. They can bring about **significant** results or *kamma vipāka*.
- The clearly strong *kamma* (*saṅkhāra*) are called *kamma patha* (or *abhisaṅkhāra*). Killing one's parents is a *kamma patha* or a *abhisaṅkhāra;* since it is immoral, it is called an *apuññābhisaṅkhāra (apuñña + abhisaṅkhāra).* It will lead to very bad consequences (*kamma vipāka*).
- Saving the life of a human is also a *abhisaṅkhāra*; since it is a moral one, it is called a *puññābhisaṅkhāra (puñña + abhisaṅkhāra)*. It will lead to very good consequences.
- As we discussed above, those good or bad consequences may not be apparent even in this life; but they are likely to bear fruit in future lives.

11. How the consequences or "reactions" or *kamma vipāka* due to good or bad *kamma* are brought about involves the concept of a "*bhava*" which can also called a "*kamma bīja*" or a "*kamma* seed."

- Every time one does a good or bad *kamma*, the potential to bring about its results remains with him/her. And the more one does the same, that potential (or energy) grows. It is said that such acts prepare a "*bhava*" or existence appropriate for that *kamma*.
- For example, as the above discussed teenager keeps doing his violent acts, he is making a "*bhava*" or a "*kamma* seed" appropriate for bringing about their consequences.
- During a lifetime, these "*bhava*" mostly bring about environments suitable for conducting similar acts. **It becomes his "state of existence" or "*bhava*."** He keeps acting violently, and may even act like an animal at times. His "animal-like *gathi*" or "animal-like habits" will grow.
- This "*bhava*" is called a "*kamma bhava*" and he may "born" in that existence many times during the lifetime. That is described by the *idapaccayā paṭicca samuppāda* that we are discussing now.
- Of course, when this *bhava* gets stronger with maintaining that life style, it may grow to be strong enough to bring in a birth in an actual "animal *bhava*." That is described in the *uppatti paṭicca samuppāda* which we will discuss later.

12. Going back to our example, it becomes easier for that teenager to get that state of existence (*bhava*); he can be provoked easily and he can hurt someone without much remorse. Thus whole "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda" cycle can run many times during a day as we will discuss in the next post.

- This is why stopping such actions early is important. If one has learned correct "*ānāpāna*" or "*satipaṭṭhāna*," then one would know not to keep doing such acts.
- This is also why the environment (parents, family, friends, teachers, etc) plays such a huge role in one's life at young age. We all have both good and bad tendencies ("*gathi*") coming from previous lives. Which ones get to grow further depends on how one's life is directed by the environment especially at young age. When one is old enough one could of course make even drastic changes with effort.

13. As a given "*kamma bhava*" gets stronger with repeated actions, it can become a "*uppatti bhava*," i.e., the *kamma* seed has now become strong enough to provide a *paṭisandhi* (rebirth) to a new *bhava* or existence at the end of the current existence (*bhava*) as a human; this is the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition that happens in the last *citta vīthi* of the human existence.

- Details of this have been discussed in other posts and will be discussed in the next post as well, but the important things here is the concept of a strong *kamma* seed that can give rise to a new existence (rebirth) or a "*uppatti bhava*."
- Such strong *kamma* seeds suitable for *uppatti bhava* can grow over many lifetimes as well.

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- It is likely that we all have many such good and bad strong *kamma* seeds that we have acquired in our previous lives. From all those good and bad *kamma* seeds that are potent enough to provide *paṭisandhi*, the most strong one comes to the forefront of the mind at death (if the *kammic* energy for the present *bhava* as a human is exhausted). We will discuss this in detail in the next post, but the difference between "*bhava*" and "*jāti*" has been discussed in, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

We will discuss more details in the next post that will wrap-up this series: "Bhava paccayā Jati….Jara, Marana,…."

8.7.10 Bhava Paccayā Jāti….Jarā, Marana,…

Revised June 16, 2019

1. In the previous post we discussed how repeated immoral actions of a teenager can bring about a specific type of existence (*bhava*) even during the current life and that this is called a *kamma bhava*.

- We also discussed how such *kamma bhava* can get stronger with time and become strong enough to lead to a whole new existence at death; this is called a *uppatti bhava*.
- Thus there are two types of "*bhava*": those that can bring about "experiences" during the current life (*kamma bhava*) and those that become strong enough to power a whole new existence (*uppatti bhava*).
- This is explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭiccasamuppāda vibhaṅga": "*Tattha katamo upādānapaccayā bhavo? Bhavo duvidhena—atthi kammabhavo, atthi upapattibhavo*," i.e., "What is *upādānapaccayā bhavo?* Two types of *bhava – kamma bhava* and *uppatti bhava*."

2. Another way to look at the concept of a "*bhava*" is to treat it as a seed. As we discussed in the previous post, when we do any act with ignorance (and greed or hate), that leads to the generation of a *kamma* seed with some energy to bring about results in the future; this is the same as saying that a "*bhava*" was created by that action. The concept of a *kamma* seed is easier to comprehend.

- Just like a normal seed **has the potential** to give rise to a plant, **a *kamma* seed (or a "*bhava*") has the potential to bring about a "*jāti*" or a "birth",** either during this life or in preparing a new life.
- In most posts, I write it as *jāti* (which is the conventional English term used), but it really is pronounced "*jāti*."

3. Let us take the example of the tennager that we discussed in the previous post, "Phassa paccayā Vedanā….to Bhava." Because of the influence of his friends, the teenager starts dealing and using drugs and gradually gets drawn into the gang to become a gang member, and eventually starts doing violent acts of beating and killing people.

- When he did the first beating his friends probably had to encourage or even force him to do it. Now let us suppose that he did not have a *sansāric* habit of doing that kind of violent acts. So, when he did the first act, a small *kamma* seed (or a "*bhava*") was energized.

4. The next time he did something similar, this initial *kamma* seed made it easier for him to do the second act. Once he did that, the seed got bigger, and the next time he may not need much encouraging, and so on. The more he does it, the more easily he can get into that "*bhava*," i.e., the stronger that *kamma* seed becomes.

This is none other than many *idapaccayātā* PS cycles running that start with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" (doing immoral deeds due to *avijjā*), and leading to "*upādāna paccayā bhava*", making that *bhava* (or *kamma* seed) strong.

- This is another way of expressing "habit (*gati*; pronounced "gathi") formation" that I have discussed in many other posts. The more one does acts suitable for a certain "*bhava*," the *viññāṇa* for similar behavior grows, and it is easier for one to be "born" in a corresponding state; this is "*pati+ichcha*"

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leading to "*sama+uppada*" as pointed out in the introductory post, "Paticca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

- Thus, the more the teenager does violent acts, it become easier for him to be "born in that state", i.e., the more easier for him to do similar acts.
- In other words, repeated *saṅkhāra* leads to strengthening the corresponding mindset or *viññāṇa*, and it propagates down the *paṭicca samuppāda* series to make "*kamma bhava*."

5. Now let us consider when that *kamma* seed or "*kamma bhava*" gives rise to a "*jāti*" in *pavutti paṭicca samuppāda.* One day, his drug deal is sabotaged by a rival gang member, and he gets angry. Now he is easily "born" in that "animal-like violent state." He starts beating up that guy. This is "*jāti*" in this case.

- When the beating is almost done, that "*jāti*" is almost over with; it is at the "*jara*" (decay) stage and when it is done that is the end or death ("*marana*") of that "*jāti*."
- Thus when that episode is over, that temporary "*jāti*" of "a violent existence" is over.
- The rest of it, "*soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa*" or many forms of suffering comes later in that life or even in future births. The *kamma* seed that helped him do that act, itself got even stronger.

6. The *kammic* energy of that *kamma* seed was not spent giving rise to that *jāti* that happened during that particular instance. That is because that was not a case of *kamma vipāka*. Rather, that *kamma* seed got stronger, because the teenager did more *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* (i.e., immoral deeds).

- Now, if during that confrontation with the other rival gang member he himself gets beaten up, then that is due to a *kamma vipāka*.
- In either case, that "birth" or '*jāti*" (the confrontation with the rival gang member) would give him only misery at the end: "*soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa*."
- Many such *idappaccayatā samuppāda cycles* can operate during even a day and he may be "born" repeatedly in that confrontational state. Some may be minor, like getting mad at his friends but some could be violent. He has prepared the "*bhava*" and he can get into "*jāti*" or be "born in that *bhava*" easily. I am mixing up English and Pāli words in order to make the meanings clear and to get used to those terms.
- Just like when a seed is made it is easy to get that seed to germinate, once we prepare a "*bhava*" it is easy to be born in that type of existence.

7. Now we can see that a "*bhava*" or a "*kamma* seed" is the potentiality for a particular kind of existence or a "state of mind" during the current life itself.

- He will be easily transitioned to that "state of mind" (or *bhava*). For example, he may be having a good time with his family and be with a "normal state of mind." Then he gets a phone call from a fellow gang member asking for his help with a gang-related activity.
- He will instantly be transitioned to the "gang mentality" and be born a gang member. Then he will engage in whatever gang activity.
- But any birth (or *jāti*) will come to an end. When that activity is over, he may come home and be part of the family life.
- However, that "bad *jāti*" will ALWAYS lead to "*jarā, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha domanassa*." Even if that particular was successful and he leaves there happily, that ACTIVITY will lead to suffering in the future. He had accumulated more *kammic* energy for that "bad *bhava*."

8. But the important thing to remember is that "*bhava paccayā jāti*" **does not mean he is guaranteed to be born in that state.** It is likely that he will be born in that state under suitable conditions, for example with provocation.

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- But if he comes to his senses and realizes the perils of such actions, he can make an effort and slowly degrade the potency of that *kamma* seed. The first thing is to stop doing those more violent acts. If the teenager has enough determination and if he has moral support from his family, he may be able to get into the moral path.
- If he makes a determination to change, it will be hard in the beginning. It is like trying to stop a moving car. If the car has a lot of speed, it takes a bigger effort to stop. It is easier to stop a slowly moving car, before it gains speed. In the same way, it is easier to revert back if one realizes that one is on the wrong path early.

9. If the teenager does not change his ways, but only gets involved more and more with the violent activities, then that *kamma* seed (or *kamma bhava*) will grow bigger and can become strong enough to energize a whole new existence (rebirth) or "*uppatti bhava*." Or he can even make a single huge *kamma* seed by killing someone.

- We all are likely to have acquired several or even many such large bad *kamma* seeds (i.e., many bad "*uppatti bhava*") suitable to yield rebirths in the lowest four realms; we have no way of finding out.
- Of course, we are also likely to have many good *kamma* seeds (i.e., many good "*uppatti bhava*") suitable to yield rebirths in the higher realms.

10. And we do not have any control over which "*uppatti bhava*" is selected at death. The strongest with the most "*upādāna*" associated with it gets to the front automatically. The Buddha gave a simile to explain how this selection of a "*uppatti bhava*" or a strong *kamma* seed happens at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition at death.

- Imagine a barn that keeps the cows in for the night. In the morning, all the cows are anxious to get out and roam around. But when the gate opens, it is the strongest cow that has come to front and is out of the gate when it is opened. The weaker ones don't even make an effort to be at the front.
- Just like that, it is the strongest "*kamma* seed" or a "*paṭisandhi bhava*" that wins at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition.
- In the case of the teenager that we discussed above, if the *kamma* seed that he nourished during this life as a violent person with "animal-like" behavior is the strongest one of all his accumulated *kamma* seeds, then it will bring about an animal existence at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition.

11. A Buddha could analyze such a *paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda* cycle in finer details to pin-point even what type of animal would it be. This is because a Buddha can see not only a person's whole history in the present life, but going back to many eons; thus he could see which *kamma* seed will bring the next existence and exactly which kind of "*gathi*" are embedded in that *kamma* seed. We can only discuss the general trends, and here we have discussed only the main ideas of how these *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles operate.

- Going back to the teenager, In this case it is the *paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda* cycle that operates, and "*bhava paccayā jāti*" here leads to the birth in a new existence as an animal using that *uppatti bhava*.

12. Once born in such an animal existence, that animal will grow and then start the old age ("*jarā*"), and eventually die ("*marana*").

- At that death, it is likely that the *kammic* energy of that *kamma* seed has not been depleted. Since most violent animals have shorter lifetimes, only a fraction of that *kammic* energy is likely to have been spent and "he" will keep going through many of similar births ("*jāti*") until the energy of that *kamma* seed is spent. It is said that many animals keep coming back to the same life many hundreds of times.

13. This is the difference between "*bhava*" and "*jāti*." Once one gets a new existence or "*bhava*," one could have many births ("*jāti*") in that existence until the energy of the *kamma* seed is totally spent.

- Thus we can see that the last step of "*jāti paccayā jara, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa*" will be with "him" for a long time to come. It is not just one birth but many that will correspond to that existence as that animal.

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- For us also, in general, when one is in the human "*bhava*" one could be reborn many times before the energy of that "good *kamma* seed" is depleted. This is why those rebirth memories can be recalled from adjacent lives. However, it is very difficult to get another "human *bhava*"; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

14. Before closing this section let us discuss another important point. We mentioned earlier that everyone has accumulated numerous good and bad *kamma* seeds strong enough to give rise to good and bad rebirths. Then the question arises: Does a person attain the *Sotāpanna* stage (i.e., make bad rebirths in the lowest four realms void) by eliminating all those corresponding bad *kamma* seeds?

- While it is possible to reduce the potency of *kamma* seeds and maybe even eliminate some, it may not be possible to remove all. Many kamma seeds may be removed by the *Ariya metta bhāvanā* discussed in the "*Bhāvanā* (Meditation)" section, but there could be left overs. It is said that the Buddha had 11 instances of bad *kamma vipāka* including a back problem. We will discuss this point in a separate post.
- Therefore, it is very likely that we all have many good and bad *kamma* seeds strong enough to energize many good and bad rebirths.
- What happens at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment involves the "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step in the *paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda* cycle. As we recall, this is the step that is responsible for energizing "*uppatti bhava*" as well as "*kamma bhava*."
- But this same step is involved in grasping the strongest "*uppatti bhava*" at the end of the current "*bhava*." If a person dies and if that was the last possible human birth for him/her, then at the dying moment, that comes closest and he/she will willingly grasp it because that will match the dominant "*gathi*" of him/her.

15. Let us consider the case of the violent teenager again. Suppose he continued with his violent acts and built up an "*uppatti bhava*" suitable for a violent animal. Then at the dying moment, he could see in his mind (like in a dream), a rival gang member trying to "steal a drug deal"; he will also see a gun closeby. By his natural instincts he will get angry, grab the gun, and shoot that person. This is an example of a "*gathi nimitta*."

- That is the "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step for the new existence. He has willingly grasped the mindset of an animal, and he will be born as an animal. His next thought moment is in that animal which comes out of that dead body of the teenager as a "*gandhabba*" with a fine body that cannot be seen.
- This is described in detail in other posts; it needs more background material in "*manomaya kāya*" for understanding the technical details, but that is not critical here. However, now we can get an idea of how a new existence is grasped at the end of a "*bhava*" in the *paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda* cycle.

16. Let us now go back to the question of how a *Sotāpanna* avoids such bad rebirths even if he/she has many bad *kamma* seeds. Suppose that *Sotāpanna* has the same kind of *kamma* seed as that teenager (could be from a previous life), and that it is the strong enough to come to forefront of his/her mind at the dying moment.

- What happens is that a *Sotāpanna* will not grab the gun and shoot that person even if it is his/her worst enemy doing something that could make him/her mad. His/her mindset or "*gathi*" have been permanently changed. Thus "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step will not be executed for that *kamma* seed.
- In that case now the next potent *uppatti bhava* will come to the forefront. If that is also a bad one suitable for rebirth in the lowest four realms, that will be rejected too. Eventually, he/she will grasp a rebirth that is compatible with his/her "*gathi*" at that dying moment, which for a *Sotāpanna* will never be the "gathi" of a being in one of the four lowest realms. This happens automatically and very quickly. We do not have conscious control over it.
- Thus one's rebirth will determined by the way one lives (and had lived previous lives). If one lived like an animal, one will be born an animal no matter how much one wishes to have a "good birth." The real danger, as we discussed above, is that we do not know how we had lived our previous lives.

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- This is why *paṭicca samuppāda* means "*pati + ichcha*" leading to "*sama" + "uppada"* or what one grasps willingly and habitually is what one that will operate automatically at the dying moment; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

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8.8 Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti – What Does It Really Mean?

August 5, 2018; revised January 26, 2019; May 2, 2019

1. "*Imasmim sati idam hoti, imassa uppādā idam uppajjati; imasmim asati idam na hoti, imassa nirodhā idam nirujjhatī ti.*" This is a famous phrase that appears in most *suttā* that describe *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (Dependent Origination).

- It is usually translated as, "When there is this that is, with arising of this that arises; when there is not this that is not, with cessation of this that ceases." That sounds like a Zen riddle!
- But the Buddha never made his *Dhamma* into riddles. He always presented it in the simplest possible way. Some verses have become riddles, only because people have incorrectly translated them; they simply did not understand the true meanings or the significance of key Pāli words.
- Another example is, "Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

2. **The key word in the verse that we are interested is "*sati*."** All English translations that I have seen have left out this key word!

- There are two meanings to the word "*sati*." One is the mundane meaning "attention."
- It is actually that mundane meaning that should be used in this verse.

3. **The deeper meaning of "*sati*" should be used in the context of *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā*, for example.**

- That *"sati"* is a *sobhana cetasika*, i.e., a good mental factor. The *sati cetasika* is cultivated by learning *dhamma* and eventually comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- **However, that *cetasika sati* does not have a counterpart in *asobhana cetasika*, i.e., there is no "*asati*" *cetasika*.**
- In the verse, both "*sati*" and "*asati*" are mentioned. **Therefore, "*sati*" in the context of the verse does not refer to the *sati cetasika*.**

4. The word "*sati*" in "*Imasmim sati idam hoti,..*" is, however, still closely related to the mind. It just refers to keeping the mind focused on the task at hand, whether it is a "good" or "bad" task.

- Suppose a suicide bomber is assembling a bomb that he intends to use to kill many people. He must be paying careful **attention** to what he is doing and that is the **mundane meaning *sati*** there.
- In a way, even the term "mindful" can be used to describe the mindset of the suicide bomber while assembling the bomb. He must be mindful of his task. If he makes even a slight mistake, he may trigger the bomb right there.
- Obviously, he is not engaged in *Satipaṭṭhāna*.

5. That mundane meaning of "attention" is the meaning that should be used in analyzing the verse in question here: "*Imasmim sati idam hōti,..*"

- **What it means in this context is, "to focus the mind on something (X)."** Then that "something" leads to the **creation of "another thing (Y)**." Even though X is ALWAYS mental, Y could be mental (*nāma*) or material (*rūpa*) or a combination of the two (*nāmarūpa*).
- When the mind is set on getting something done, one makes *vacī* and *kaya saṅkhāra* accordingly, i.e., one thinks about how to get it done and acts accrodingly; that is the "*sati*" that is referred to in the verse.
- When the mind does not focus on something (and does not make plans in the mind via *vacī saṅkhāra,* and carries out such plans), that is called "*asati*." In that case, there is no reason that Y would arise.

6. As we will see below, making *saṅkhāra* is just the first step in a series of steps.

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- The mind can be set on getting done good or bad things. Keeping the attention on "good things" will lead to good outcomes (via good *dhamma*). Keeping the attention on "bad things" will lead to bad outcomes (via bad *dhamma*).
- Therefore, in both cases (good or bad attention) will lead to a corresponding (good or bad) outcome. That is what is meant by "*Imasmim sati idam hōti"* or "keeping the attention on this will lead to that."
- What the eventual outcome ("that" is a "*jāti*," the outcome or the end result) is described by *Paticca Samuppāda*: "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*,"….ending up in "*bhava paccayā jāti*."

7. Of course, if one does not keep the attention on something, one will not be generating (good or bad) *saṅkhāra* about it. Thus, one will not initiate *Paticca Samuppāda* cycles: "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*,"….ending up in "*bhava paccayā jāti*."

- Therefore, if there is "***asati***" or "no attention on some task", then there will be **no reason** for there to be an **outcome**: *"Imasmim **asati** idam **na hōti**."*
- In other words, the mind will have no reason to generate new *saṅkhāra* to initiate *Paṭicca Samuppāda* processes.
- The mind can be set on getting done good or bad things. One should do "*sati*" on good things and "*asati*" on bad things. That will lead to ending up with good things and not ending up with bad things.

8. Now we can understand half of the verse: "*Imasmim sati idam hoti, "Imasmim **asati** idam **na hoti**."* That means "when the mind is focused on X that will give rise to Y, when the mind is **not focused** on X that **will not give rise** to Y."

- Next, we need to figure out what is meant by "*imassa uppādā idam uppajjati"* and "*imassa nirodhā idam nirujjhatī."*
- This part states that what has **ultimately come to being (*uppajjati*)** is due to **what first arose in the mind (*uppādā*)**, AND for something **not to come to being (*nirujjhatī*)**, the corresponding cause **should not arise in the mind (*nirodhā*).**
- So, now we can translate the whole verse: "when the mind is focused on this it will give rise to that, when the mind is **not focused** on this it **will not give rise** to that; **this arising in the mind (*uppādā*)** will give rise to that (*uppajjati*), **this not arising in the mind (*nirodhā*)** will stop that from coming to being (*nirujjhatī*)."
- In very simple terms, this describes the key message of the Buddha: if one does not generate any defilements in the mind, then one will not be reborn into this suffering-filled world.

9. So, now we can translate the whole verse: "when the mind is focused on this it will give rise to that, when the mind is **not focused** on this it **will not give rise** to that; **this arising in the mind (*uppādā*)** will give rise to that (*uppajjati*), **this not arising in the mind (*nirōdhā*)** will stop that from coming to being (*nirujjhatī*)."

- In very simple terms, this describes the key message of the Buddha: if one does not generate any defilements in the mind, then one will not be reborn into this suffering-filled world.

10. How anything and everything in this world arises with **the mind as the "creator"** is explained in the doctrine of cause of effect or *paṭicca samuppāda*.

- Even though the process starts off with generating *saṅkhāra* ("*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*"), it involves many other steps ("*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa", etc*) before the final thing manifests.
- That is why this verse comes in many *suttā* just before introducing the *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle starting with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*."

11. What we discussed above becomes clear in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Ariyasāvaka Sutta (SN 12.49)." It starts with the statement: "*Na, bhikkhave, sutavato ariyasāvakassa evaṃ hoti: 'kiṃ nu kho—kismiṃ*

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sati kiṃ hoti, kissuppādā kiṃ uppajjati? Kismiṃ sati saṅkhārā honti, kismiṃ sati viññāṇaṃ hoti, kismiṃ sati nāmarūpaṃ hoti, kismiṃ sati saḷāyatanaṃ hoti, kismiṃ sati phasso hoti, kismiṃ sati vedanā hoti, kismiṃ sati taṇhā hoti, kismiṃ sati upādānaṃ hoti, kismiṃ sati bhavo hoti, kismiṃ sati jāti hoti, kismiṃ sati jarāmaraṇaṃ hotī'ti?."

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, a noble disciple is not confused by the question: '[What gives you indeed— (*kiṃ nu kho*—)] What in the mind becomes a cause? With the existence of what in the mind does what come to being? What in the mind becomes a cause for *saṅkhāra*? What in the mind becomes a cause for viññāṇa? What in the mind becomes a cause for *nāmarūpa*?… What in the mind becomes a cause for *jarāmaraṇa*?' ."

12. The next verse: "*Atha kho, bhikkhave, sutavato ariyasāvakassa aparappaccayā ñāṇamevettha hoti: 'imasmiṃ sati idaṃ hoti, imassuppādā idaṃ uppajjati. Avijjāya sati saṅkhārā honti; saṅkhāresu sati viññāṇaṃ hoti; viññāṇe sati nāmarūpaṃ hoti; nāmarūpe sati saḷāyatanaṃ hoti; saḷāyatane sati phasso hoti; phasse sati vedanā hoti; vedanāya sati taṇhā hoti; taṇhāya sati upādānaṃ hoti; upādāne sati bhavo hoti; bhave sati jāti hoti; jātiyā sati jarāmaraṇaṃ hotī'ti. So evaṃ pajānāti: 'evamayaṃ loko samudayatī'ti.*"

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, the noble disciple knows that what arises is dependent on what is cultivated in the mind: 'When this exists in the mind, that comes to be; with the arising of this in the mind, that arises. When there is ignorance in the mind (a*vijjāya sati*), s*aṅkhāra* come to be (*saṅkhārā honti*). When there are *saṅkhāra* in the mind (*saṅkhāresu sati*), *viññāṇa* comes to be (*viññāṇaṃ hoti*). When there is *viññāṇa* in the mind (*viññāṇe sati*), *nāmarūpa* come to be (*nāmarūpaṃ honti*), ….When there is *bhava* in the mind (*bhave sati*), *jāti* comes to be (*jāti hoti*). When there is *jāti* in the mind (*jātiyā sati*), *jarāmaraṇa* comes to be (*jarāmaraṇaṃ hotī*). **He understands thus: 'In such a way the world arises (*samudaya*).'** "

13. Next verse is: "*Na, bhikkhave, sutavato ariyasāvakassa evaṃ hoti: 'kiṃ nu kho—kismiṃ asati kiṃ na hoti, kissa nirodhā kiṃ nirujjhati? Kismiṃ asati saṅkhārā na honti, kismiṃ asati viññāṇaṃ na hoti, kismiṃ asati nāmarūpaṃ na hoti, kismiṃ asati saḷāyatanaṃ na hoti, kismiṃ asati phasso na hoti, kismiṃ asati vedanā na hoti, kismiṃ asati taṇhā na hoti, kismiṃ asati upādānaṃ na hoti, kismiṃ asati bhavo na hoti, kismiṃ asati jāti na hoti, kismiṃ asati jarāmaraṇaṃ na hotī'ti*?."

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, a noble disciple is not confused by the question: '[What gives you indeed— (*kiṃ nu kho*—)]Absence of what in the mind would not be a cause? With the cessation of what in the mind what would be stopped from arising? Absence of what in the mind *(kismiṃ asati) saṅkhāra* would not result (*na honti*)? Absence of what in the mind *viññāṇa* would not result? ..Absence of what in the mind *nāmarūpa* would not result?… Absence of what in the mind *jarāmaraṇa* would not result?' ."

14. And then: "*Atha kho, bhikkhave, sutavato ariyasāvakassa aparappaccayā ñāṇamevettha hoti: 'imasmiṃ asati idaṃ na hoti, imassa nirodhā idaṃ nirujjhati. Avijjāya asati saṅkhārā na honti; saṅkhāresu asati viññāṇaṃ na hoti; viññāṇe asati nāmarūpaṃ na hoti; nāmarūpe asati saḷāyatanaṃ na hoti ... pe ... bhavo na hoti ... jāti na hoti ... jātiyā asati jarāmaraṇaṃ na hotī'ti. So evaṃ pajānāti: 'evamayaṃ loko nirujjhatī'ti.*

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, the noble disciple knows that what arises is dependent on what is cultivated in the mind: 'When this does not exist in the mind, that would not come to be; with the cessation of this in the mind, that is stopped from arising. When there is no ignorance in the mind (a*vijjāya asati*), s*aṅkhāra* do not come to be (*saṅkhārā na honti*). When *saṅkhāra* cease to exist in the mind (*saṅkhāresu asati*), *viññāṇa* do not come to be (*viññāṇaṃ na hoti*). With the cessation of *viññāṇa* in the mind (*viññāṇe asati*), *nāmarūpa* do not come to be (*nāmarūpaṃ na honti*), ….When there is *bhava* absent in the mind (*bhave asati*), *jāti* would not come to be (*jāti na hoti*). When there is no *jāti* in the mind (*jātiyā asati*), *jarāmaraṇa* do not come to be (*jarāmaraṇaṃ na hotī*). **He understands thus: 'In such a way the world ceases to exist (*nirujjhatī*),** and thus the *samsāric* suffering ends.' "

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15. Finally, "*Yato kho, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako evaṃ lokassa samudayañca atthaṅgamañca yathābhūtaṃ pajānāti, ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako diṭṭhisampanno itipi ... pe ... amatadvāraṃ āhacca tiṭṭhati itipī*"*ti.*

Translated: "*Bhikkhus*, a noble disciple thus understands the origin and the ending of the world. He is knowledgeable about the true nature of this world, has the correct vision, and comes to attain *Nibbāna*."

16. That is the complete *sutta*. It provides the basic reasoning behind *paṭicca samuppāda*.

- It is important to realize that all the steps in *paṭicca samuppāda* involves the mind, up to the *jāti* stage. When the *jāti* stage is arrives, the process is complete. That *jāti* which came into being, has to evolve naturally to its end.

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8.9 Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)

July 6, 2019

Rebirths Arise Due to Our Own Actions

1. *Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes how we create our own rebirths. *Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes how we create our own *kamma vipāka* that arise during a life. The differences between ***kamma bhava*** and ***uppatti bhava*** are discussed in the post, "Bhava paccayā Jāti….Jarā , Marana,…."

- Both types of *bhava* or existences arise due to the generation of *(abhi)saṅkhāra* due to *avijjā*. We remember that we do all types of *kamma* (*kāya kamma, vacī kamma, mano kamma*) with *saṅkhāra* (*kāya, vacī,* and *mano saṅkhāra*) or "how we think and then act on such thinking."
- **ALL *saṅkhāra* arise in the MIND. As we see, they lead to future rebirths with physical bodies. This is why the Buddha said: "*Mano pubbangamā dhammā*.." or "ALL *dhammā* arise with the mind as precursor..**"**
- When we generate *(abhi)saṅkhāra* that creates a "future expectation" or a *viññāṇa;* see, "Viññāṇa Aggregate." That ALWAYS leads to a *kamma bhava*, which is a "seed" to bring about a future existence in this life or in future life.
- A *kamma bhava* can become an *uppatti bhava* if it becomes strong enough to give rise to rebirth. For example, killing a parent WILL generate an *uppatti bhava* that WILL bring in birth in an *apāya* in the very next rebirth.

2. That is basically the key difference between *Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda* and *Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles."

- *Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda* generates *kamma* seeds or *kamma bhava* moment-to-moment.
- Those *bhava* (or *kamma* seeds or *kamma bija*) that bring *kamma vipāka* during a lifetime (whether in this life or WITHIN a future life) is called a "***kamma bhava***."
- Some of those are strong enough to bring in a new future existence (whether in a bad realm or in a good realm) are called "***uppatti bhava***."
- Regardless of whether it is a *kamma bhava* or an *uppatti bhava*, **we ourselves generate them** every time we act with *avijjā* and generate *viññāṇa* via the steps, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*."
- Then subsequent *Paṭicca Samuppāda* steps invariably lead to "*bhava paccayā jāti*" and "*jāti paccayā jāra, maraṇa, soka, perideva, dukkha, domanassa, upasaya*" or "the whole mass of suffering."

Grasping a *Bhava* Happens Automatically

3. We do not have any control over which "*uppatti bhava*" is selected at death. The strongest with the most "*upādāna*" associated with it gets to the front automatically. The Buddha gave a simile to explain how this selection of a "*uppatti bhava*" or a strong *kamma* seed happens at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition at death.

- Imagine a barn that keeps the cows in for the night. In the morning, all the cows are anxious to get out and roam around. But when the gate opens, it is the strongest cow that has come to the front and is out of the gate when it is opened. The weaker ones don't even make an effort to be at the front.
- Just like that, it is the strongest "*kamma* seed" or a "*paṭisandhi bhava*" that wins at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition.
- In the case of the teenager that we discussed in the previous post, "Bhava paccayā Jāti….Jarā , Maraṇa,…," if the *kamma* seed that he nourished during this life as a violent person with "animal-like"

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behavior is the strongest one of all his accumulated *kamma* seeds, then it will bring about an animal existence at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition.

4. A Buddha could analyze such a *paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda* cycle in finer details to pin-point even what type of animal would it be. This is because a Buddha can see not only a person's whole history in the present life but going back to many eons; thus he could see which *kamma* seed will bring the next existence and exactly which kind of "*gati*" are embedded in that *kamma* seed. We can only discuss the general trends, and here we have discussed only the main ideas of how these *paṭicca samuppāda* cycles operate.

- Going back to the teenager, In this case, it is the *paṭisandhi paṭicca samuppāda* cycle that operates, and "*bhava paccayā jāti*" here leads to the birth in a new existence as an animal using that *uppatti bhava*.

Difference Between *Bhava* and *Jāti*

5. Here it is important to realize that *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition DOES NOT necessarily happen when a human dies. He/she can be reborn many times as a human within a given "human *bhava*"; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- Once born (*jāti*) in such an animal existence (*bhava*), that animal will grow and then start the old age ("*jarā*"), and eventually, die ("*maraṇa*").
- At that death, it is likely that the *kammic* energy of that *kamma* seed has not been depleted.
- Since most violent animals have shorter lifetimes, only a fraction of that *kammic* energy is likely to have been spent and "he" will keep going through many of similar births ("*jāti*") until the energy of that *kamma* seed is spent. Many animals keep coming back to the same life many hundreds of times.

6. That is the difference between "*bhava*" and "*jāti*." Once one gets a new existence or "*bhava*," one could have many births ("*jāti*") in that existence until the energy of the *kamma* seed is totally spent. I keep repeating this because it is very important to understand the difference between "*bhava*" and "*jāti*."

- Thus, we can see that the last step of "*jāti paccayā jara, marana, soka, parideva, dukkha, domanassa*" will be with that "teenager" for a long time to come. It is not just one birth but many that will correspond to that existence as that animal.
- For us also, in general, when one is in the human "*bhava*" one could be reborn many times before the energy of that "good *kamma* seed" is depleted. This is why those rebirth memories can be recalled from adjacent lives. A human *bhava* can last many thousands of years, but each human birth (*jāti*) lasts only about 100 years.
- **However, it is very difficult to get another "human *bhava*";** see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

How Are Certain Rebirths Stopped?

7. We mentioned earlier than everyone has accumulated numerous good and bad *kamma* seeds strong enough to give rise to good and bad rebirths. Then the following question arises. Does a person attain the *Sotāpanna* stage by eliminating all those corresponding bad *kamma* seeds?

- While it is possible to reduce the potency of *kamma* seeds and maybe even eliminate some, it may not be possible to remove all. Many *kamma* seeds may be removed by the *Ariya metta bhavana* discussed in the "Bhavana (Meditation)" section, but there could be leftovers. Even the Buddha had 11 instances of bad *kamma vipāka* including a back problem.
- Therefore, it is very likely that we all have many good and bad *kamma* seeds strong enough to energize many good and bad rebirths.

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8. What happens at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment involves the "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step in the *uppatti paṭicca samuppāda* cycle.

- Suppose a person dies and that was the last possible human birth for him/her. Then at the dying moment, that strong *kamma* seed will generate a corresponding *nimitta* (or sign of that *kamma*).
- Whether he/she will willingly grasp that *nimitta* will depend on whether he/she still has such "*gati*."

9. Let us again consider the case of the violent teenager discussed in #3 in the previous post, "Bhava paccayā Jāti….Jarā , Marana,...." Suppose he continued with his violent acts and built up an "*uppatti bhava*" suitable for a violent animal. Then, at the dying moment, he could see in his mind (like in a dream), a rival gang member trying to "steal a drug deal"; he will also see a gun close-by. **This is the *nimitta.***

- If that person still has the same *gati*, then by his natural instincts he will get angry, grab the gun, and shoot that person.
- That is the "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step for the new existence. He has willingly grasped the mindset of an animal, and he will be born as an animal. His next thought-moment is associated with that animal, which comes out of that dead body as a "*gandhabba*" (with a fine body that cannot be seen).
- This process is explained from the beginning to end in detail in the series of posts, "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English."

How Does a Sotāpanna Avoid Bad Rebirths?

10. Let us now go back to the question of how a *Sotāpanna* avoids such bad rebirths even if he/she has many bad *kamma* seeds. Suppose that *Sotāpanna* has the same kind of strong (and bad) *kamma* seed as that teenager (could be from a previous life).

- What happens is that a *Sotāpanna* will not grab the gun and shoot that person even if it is his/her worst enemy. **His/her mindset or "*gati*" has been permanently changed.** Thus "*upādāna paccayā bhava*" step will not be executed for that *kamma* seed.
- In that case, now the next potent *uppatti bhava* will come to the forefront. If that is also a bad one suitable for rebirth in the lowest four realms, that will be rejected too. Eventually, he/she will grasp a rebirth that is compatible with his/her "*gati*" at that dying moment. A *Sotāpanna* has removed "*gati*" of a being in one of the four lowest realms.
- **This happens automatically and very quickly. We do not have any conscious control over it.**

11. The way one lives this life AND how one had lived previous lives can contribute to future rebirth. One would generate "*kamma* seeds" or "*uppatti bhava*" for possible future existences according to the way one lives a life.

- **However, if one has changed one's gati PERMANENTLY (via attaining at least the *Sotāpanna* stage), then bad *bhava* will not result.** EVEN IF one had committed bad *kamma* suitable to bring in a "bad *bhava*", that "bad *bhava*" will not be grasped at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.
- This is why *Paṭicca Samuppāda* means "*pati* + *ichcha*" leading to "*sama*" + "*uppāda*." What one grasps willingly and habitually is what one that will operate automatically at the dying moment; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."
- This is why it is better to use *Paṭicca Samuppāda* rather than using the English translation of "dependent origination." Most Pāli word have "built-in" explanations (*pada nirutti*). One just needs to understand what is meant by those words and just use the Pāli words. [***pada*** :[nt.] foot; foot-step; a word; position; place; reason; cause; a line of stanza; the final rest. ***nirutti*** : (f.) [Sk. nirukti, nis+vac] one of the Vedāṅgas (see chaḷaṅga), expln of words, grammatical analysis, etymological interpretation; pronunciation, dialect, way of speaking, expression.]

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- I have explained this with *saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* as well; see, "Mental Aggregates." Those DO NOT have corresponding SINGLE English words. In particular, it is WRONG to translate *viññāṇa* as just "consciousness"; see, "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

Relevance to "Origin of Life" Issue

12. I hope that it is clear now how we create our own future births by doing strong *kamma.* Good *kamma* lead to good *vipāka* and good births. Bad *kamma* leads to bad *vipāka* and bad births.

- Not only that, but we can avoid bad births (in the lower four realms) by removing our "bad *gati* that could lead to such births." Attainment of *Sotāpanna* stage ensures this.
- In the same way, we can stop births in the human and *deva* realms (remaining realms in *kāma loka*). Removal of "*kāma gati*" or cravings for sense pleasures get one there. The need to take this step may not become clear until one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Even the higher *brahma* realms have some of suffering (especially at the moment of death). **Future suffering is completely removed** by removing "all *gati*" including those based on craving for *jhānic* pleasures in *brahma* realms. This happens of course at the *Arahant* stage.

13. **It should be also clear that "new lives" do not randomly come into existence.** A new *jāti* based on a new *bhava* arises ONLY as a continuation of an existing lifestream; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream."

- When one *bhava* ends, a living being automatically grasps a new *bhava*, if the *Arahant* stage has not been attained.
- That is how the endless rebirth process continues. And that is also why there is no "traceable beginning to life."
- A detailed discussion in a new series of posts on "Origin of Life."

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8.10 Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Nibbāna

March 15, 2019; revised January 10, 2021

January 10, 2021: Renamed from **"Anuloma Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Sotāpanna Stage"** to **"Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Nibbāna"**

Paṭilōma Paṭicca Samuppāda is the "reverse of the standard *Akusala-Mula Paṭicca Samuppāda* process. That means it is the way to *Nibbāna*.

Introduction

1. Just before his Enlightenment, the Buddha figured how beings are born endlessly due to their own way of thinking. That knowledge is embedded in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, translated as, "Dependent Origination."

- It describes the origins of different types of living beings, according to their own thought processes (*saṅkhāra*) based on the level of *avijjā* (ignorance of the real nature).
- *Anuloma Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes the forward progression of events leading to eventual suffering. *Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda* describes the backward progression to see that indeed *avijjā* must be removed (by cultivating wisdom or *paññā*) in order to stop future suffering from arising.

Anuloma Paṭicca Samuppāda and *Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda*

2. "WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhama Bodhi Sutta (Udāna 1.1)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Dutiya Bodhi Sutta (Udāna 1.2)" state how the Buddha comprehended *anuloma* and *paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda* during the night of the Enlightenment.

- Most people are quite familiar with how suffering originates with *saṅkhāra* generation due to the ignorance of the Four Noble Truths (*avijjā*), and then goes through the familiar steps: "*avijjāpaccayā saṅkhārā, saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ*, ..and ends with ".. *Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa samudayo hotī"ti* OR "the whole mass of suffering."

Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda

3. It is also important to trace the steps backwards and see how future suffering can be stopped by cultivating *paññā*: "***avijjānirodhā*** *saṅkhāranirodho,* ***saṅkhāranirodhā*** *viññāṇanirodho,* ***viññāṇanirodhā*** *nāmarūpanirodho,* ***nāmarūpanirodhā*** *saḷāyatananirodho,* ***saḷāyatananirodhā*** *phassanirodho,* ***phassanirodhā*** *vedanānirodho,* ***vedanānirodhā*** *taṇhānirodho,* ***taṇhānirodhā*** *upādānanirodho,* ***upādānanirodhā*** *bhavanirodho,* ***bhavanirodhā*** *jātinirodho,* ***jātinirodhā*** ***jarāmaraṇaṃ sokaparidevadukkhadomanassupāyāsā nirujjhanti. Evametassa kevalassa dukkhakkhandhassa nirodho hotī'ti***."

- By stopping ***jāti,*** it is possible to **stop suffering from arising** (at the end). Now we just go backwards: ***Jati*** (births) stopped by stopping ***bhava***, which is stopped by stopping ***upādāna, taṇhā, vedanā, phassa, saḷāyatana, nāmarūpa, viññāṇa,*** and ***saṅkhāra***. When one gets to the first step: ***saṅkhāra*** cannot be stopped from arising without eliminating ***avijjā*** (and thus getting rid of ALL ***gati***).
- In fact, if one really contemplates on this process, one can get some deep insights.

Nirodha Means "Stop From Arising" – Not Destruction of an Existing Entity

4. It is quite clear that in order to stop "the whole mass of suffering", one MUST stop each of those 10 factors (***jāti, bhava, upādāna, taṇhā, vedanā, phassa, saḷāyatana, nāmarūpa, viññāṇa,*** and ***saṅkhāra***) from arising.

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- Thus one can clearly see that *nirodha* means "stop from arising."
- One can also see that can be done ONLY by removing *avijjā*, which is the same as cultivating *paññā*.
- The removal of *avijjā* (and cultivation of *paññā*) is done by following the Eightfold path, which has two components; see, for example, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?." There are no shortcuts!

5. We concluded in #4 above that in order to stop future suffering from arising we must stop those 10 terms from arising. This appears not to make sense with some of those terms when we try to reconcile that with the fact that an *Arahant* has stopped those from arising.

- In particular, one could object in particular that *vedanā*, *phassa*, *viññāṇa*, and *saṅkhāra* still arise in a LIVING *Arahant*.
- As I have explained in many posts scattered throughout the website (especially in the "Paṭicca Samuppāda" section), those terms are in the "*uddesa*" version. This is explained in detail in the post, "Sutta – Introduction."
- Let us discuss briefly a few of those terms.

Need for Detailed Explanations

6. Basically all current English translations just provide word-by-word translations of that "*uddesa* version" without any explanation. For example, the English translation of the first sutta in #1 above states, "..because of **consciousness**: mind and body, because of mind and body: the six sense spheres, because of the **six sense spheres**: contact, because of **contact**: feeling, because of **feeling**… because of **continuation**: birth, because of **birth**: old age, death, grief, lamentation, pain, sorrow, and despair all arise, and so there is an origination of this whole mass of suffering.."; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: The First Discourse about the Awakening Tree (UD 1.1)."

- According to the second *sutta*, all those terms (consciousness, six senses, contact, feeling) should not arise in an *Arahant*!
- Furthermore, it is not clear what is meant by "continuation" (for *bhava*), which leads to *jāti* (births), and thus "this whole mass of suffering."

Detailed Explanations of Terms in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*

7. For example, the step, "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" really should be "*avijjā paccayā abhisaṅkhāra*."

- As is explained in the post, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means," an *Arahant* generates *saṅkhāra*, but NOT *abhisaṅkhāra*.
- It is those abhisaṅkhāra that lead to future births and thus future suffering!

8. The next step is written in *suttā* as "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" and that is the *uddesa* version.

- It needs to be explained as "*abhisaṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*," where *viññāṇa* means "defiled consciousness."
- An *Arahant* would have "purified *viññāṇa*" and NOT "defiled *viññāṇa*." This is explained at, "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

9. Another confusing step could be "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*," where "*saḷāyatana*" or "six *āyatana*" are normally translated as "six sense faculties." **Of course, a living *Arahant* has perfectly good sense faculties (*indriya*).**

- Those six *indriya* (or sense faculties) become *saḷāyatana* when one acts with *avijjā* and use them to accumulate "*san*"; see, "Nāmarūpa paccayā Saḷāyatana."

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10. In the next step of "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*," it is really "*saḷāyatana paccayā samphassa*." When those *indriya* are used as *āyatana*, one "makes contact with a defiled mind" and that defiled contact is "*samphassa*" ("*san*" + "*phassa*").

- This is discussed in, "Difference between Phassa and Samphassa."
- Therefore, an *Arahant* would have only "*phassa*" and NOT "*samphassa*."

11. Now when those sense inputs are evaluated with a defiled mind, one generates "mind-made *vedanā*" or "*samphassa ja vedanā*." These are greedy, angry, jealous, types of *vedanā* generated due to the defilements in the mind.

- Such "defiled and mind-made *vedanā*" are absent in an *Arahant*. An *Arahant* will, however, generate *vedanā* due to the contacts with the six *indriya*.
- For example, if someone hits an *Arahant*, he/she will feel the pain. Spoiled milk would taste bitter and a piece of cake would taste sweet, etc. But an *Arahant* would not generate angry thoughts about someone offering spoiled milk and would not generate cravings for the cake.
- This explained in detail in the post, "Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways."

12. The next confusion is at the step, "*bhava paccayā jāti*," which is translated in #5 as, "because of continuation: birth." I am not sure what is meant by "continuation" there.

- The correct interpretation is given at, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

Stopping *Abhisaṅkhāra* Is the Key to *Nibbāna*

13. If one can spend some time reading those posts and the links given in them, one should be able to get a good idea of how different types *jāti* originate via *abhisaṅkhāra* (one's own thoughts).

- The Sotāpanna stage of *Nibbāna* is attained by getting rid of the wrong way of looking at one's body (and actions) are due to an unchanging "soul."
- However, one's *bhava* and *jāti* arise due to one's own *abhisaṅkhāra*. We are humans in this life because of good *abhisaṅkhāra* cultivated in a previous life.
- If we do bad (or *apuñña*) *abhisaṅkhāra* in this life, we may be born as animal or worse. If we do good (or *puñña*) *abhisaṅkhāra* in this life, we may be born as *devas*, *Brahmā*, or humans again.

No Birth Among the 31 Realms Will Stop Suffering

14. However, there in no birth in the 31 realms that can bring a permanent state of happiness. Any *Deva* or *Brahma* existence will come to an end, and then one could be born in the *apāyā*.

- A permanent state of happiness (which means the absence of ANY suffering) is attained by stopping this never-ending rebirth process. **That is the key message of the Buddha.**
- When one truly understands that, one has the "vision" of a *Sotāpanna*, i.e., one would have gotten rid of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* (and *vicikiccā* and *silabbata parāmāsa* all at the same time).

Further Information

15. More details can be found in the "Paṭicca Samuppāda" section. In the "Living Dhamma" section there is an attempt to provide a systematic approach to learn and practice Buddha Dhamma (of course, with more details in other sections).

- A systematic approach to Buddha Dhamma at "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach," which continues at "Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda."

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8.11 Paṭṭhāna Dhammā

October 22, 2016

Paṭṭhāna Dhamma – Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)

What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda? Moved out of **Paṭṭhāna Dhammā** to one level up after **How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycle Initiated?**

Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya

Asevana and Annamanna Paccaya

8.11.1 Paṭṭhāna Dhammā – Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)

October 22, 2016; revised October 25, 2016; June 15, 2018

1. *Paṭṭhāna Dhammā* is also cited as *pattāna Dhammā* in English. However, the correct word should be *pattana*, since it is pronounced "pattāna"; there is no "th" sound.

- The word "pattāna" comes from "patta" + "āna." I have previously mentioned that "āna" means "bringing in" as in "ānāpāna" in *Ānāpāna bhāvanā*. "Patta" in Pāli or Sinhala means the layer of a tree trunk underneath the outermost layer or bark — *consisting of phloem cells* — which carry food between roots and leaves. (The outer layer or bark is called "*potta*" in Sinhala).
- So, the word "*paṭṭhāna*" here conveys the idea that while the roots (*mūlika hethu*) are critical for the tree's survival, the "*patta*" also plays an important role for the tree's growth. In the case of *Paṭṭhāna Dhammā*, they play an important role of describing the conditions under which *hetu* or causes can bring in effects, as we will see below.
- By the way, the "*patta*" are essential for the tree's survival, just as the roots of the tree are. One could kill a tree simply by a process called "girdling" where those phloem cells are removed; see the Wikipedia article: "WebLink: WIKI: Girdling."
- The Buddha frequently used analogies with the workings of a tree. We also need to remember that "*mūla*" is a root in Pāli or Sinhala, so that "*mülika hethu*" means "root causes." So, the tree's survival depends on not only its roots, but also its "*patta*" containing those critical phloem cells.
- This is the same as saying *Paṭṭhāna Dhammā* describing CONDITIONS are as important as ROOT CAUSES, which are *lobha, dosa,* and, *moha* (for *akusala kamma*), and *alobha, adosa,* and *amoha* (for *kusala kamma*).

2. It is also to be noted that "*paṭṭhāna*" in "*satipaṭṭhāna*" can be interpreted to mean "providing food" or "*patta*" +"*āna*" to cultivate *sati* or mindfulness. Furthermore, "*satipaṭṭhāna*" is pronounced like that too, without "th" sound at the end.

- However, "*satipaṭṭhāna*" with a "h" is the common way it is spelled in English. So, I decided to go with that when I wrote the posts on the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* in the "Sutta Interpretations" section. The meaning given there is also compatible, regardless of how it is spelled.
- The word "*paṭṭhāna dhammā*" has not been discussed that much in English. Therefore, it is good to get started the right way. Buddhaghosa did not discuss it because he did not comprehend *paṭicca samuppāda,* and as a result even many people who follow even Theravāda Buddhism are not familiar with *paṭṭhāna dhammā.* Ven. Ledi Sayadaw in Burma and Ven. Rerukane Chandawimala in Sri Lanka are clear exceptions. They have discussed *paṭṭhāna dhammā*; see the references below.
- However, their interpretations of *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) are not correct.

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3. In the workings of living things (including plants) — and in mental processes in particular — the mechanism of how causes lead to effects is much more complex compared to material phenomena involving inert objects.

- In these cases, many conditions need to be satisfied, in addition to having sufficient causes.
- In many cases, such critical conditions are not satisfied long after the causes were generated, so there is normally a TIME DELAY between causes and effects, i.e., between *kamma* and *kamma vipāka*.
- This is why it is hard for people to see the validity of cause and effect (*hethu phala*) involving living things and especially the mind.
- This is what is explained in *paṭicca samuppāda*, with the help of *paṭṭhāna dhammā*.
- Let us discuss some examples to understand the role of conditions or *paccayā*.

4. All necessary causes to bring about a tree are embedded in a seed. A seed is the CAUSE for subsequent appearance of a tree. **Yet, a seed cannot germinate unless suitable conditions are present.** If one keeps a seed in a cool dry place, it will just sit there for even thousands of years without giving rise to a tree.

- However, if one plants the seed in the ground where sunlight is available and provides water and nutrients, it will germinate and grow to be a tree.
- The root condition to bring into existence a tree is embedded in a seed; this is called *anantara paccaya*. But suitable conditions for that seed to germinate are in fertile soil with adequate sunlight and water; this is called *samanantara paccaya*. Therefore, both *anantara* AND *samanantara paccaya* MUST be satisfied to bring a tree to existence; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya" for details.
- So, AT WHAT TIME the seed will germinate, will depend on at what time the *samanantara* condition (fertile soil) will be satisfied. *Anantara* condition (presence a seed) is not enough.

5. Another important condition of *paccayā* comes into play for the germinated seed to grow into a tree: The *āhāra paccayā* (food condition) must be satisfied. If water, sunlight, and nutrients are not available after the seed is germinated, it cannot grow to be a tree.

- A very important type of *āhāra* is the "food for *viññāṇa*." When one is having bad thoughts about another person, that *viññāṇa* grows as long as one keeps thinking about that person and how bad he/she is. *Viññāṇa āhāra* are *mano sañcetanā.*

6. Another example of such a condition or *paccayā* is "*āsevana paccaya*." *Āsevana* means to "associate with."

- An important example is the association with bad friends. Whether it is a child or an adult, one's behavior will be influenced by who one associates with; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- I have discussed several such important conditions or *paccayā* in the post, "Micchā Diṭṭhi – Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect)." Here is that discourse:

  WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 6 - Micchā Diṭṭhi Connection to Hethu Phala Cause and Effect

  There are 24 such conditions in *Paṭṭhāna Dhammā*. I will discuss them in detail in this subsection on "Paṭṭhāna Dhammā" in a series of posts.
- This is why mental phenomena are so complex. In many cases, a number of such conditions need to be satisfied for a cause (*hethu*) to lead to a corresponding effect (*phala*).

7. In the same way, the *kammic* energies created by our actions do not disappear. A given action creates a *kamma* seed with energy to bring in its fruits. It is just like a seed waiting for right conditions to germinate and to bring in a tree to existence.

- Those *kamma* seeds or *kamma bīja* are out there waiting for suitable conditions to bring in their effect.

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- Whether they will bring *vipāka,* AND at what strength, AND when, will depend on the conditions or *paccaya*. This is what is described by *paṭicca samuppāda* with the help of *paṭṭhāna dhammā*.
- See, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?", "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka" and "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Thalaya (Mind Plane)" for more details.

8. But there are some strong *kamma* that WILL bring in *vipāka* without exceptions. Those include *anantariya pāpa kamma*. They are so strong that they do not require conditions to be just right. They bring *vipāka* mostly at the dying moment, i.e., death of the physical body, and will not be delayed until the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment; so the delay is only until death.

- Some people inherit wealth unexpectedly and some people die of accidents. These are also strong *kamma vipāka*, though as not strong as *anantariya pāpa kamma*.
- But in most cases, conditions or *paccaya* play major roles, sometimes many conditions need to be satisfied for *vipāka* to bear fruit.

9. This knowledge — or rather this understanding of — how *kamma* and *kamma vipāka* work — is called *kammassakatā sammā diṭṭhi* (is also the right view of *kamma* as one's property), and is a REQUIREMENT to attain **mundane *sammā samādhi***. When one fully understands this, it will be easier to see that rebirth process has a logical foundation.

- This is because one can now clearly see that most of *kamma* or one's actions are going to have corresponding *vipāka* or results when suitable CONDITIONS appear.
- So, if one does actions suitable to be born in the *apāyā*, one COULD BE born in the *apāyā*, until one REMOVES the ability to for such CONDITIONS to appear.
- When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, the conditions suitable for a birth in the *apāyā* will never be realized. This requires another step BEYOND *kammassakatā sammā diṭṭhi,* which is the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Therefore, getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage is a two-step process: first to get to *kammassakatā sammā diṭṭhi* and then the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- This is discussed in detail in the *desanā* in #6 above.

10. We see people doing immoral things without them being subjected to corresponding punishments, but that does not mean they are getting away with it. Those actions can bring their fruits in future lives if they are not realized in this life.

- There are two ways to overcome *kamma vipāka*. The first is: those *kamma* seeds will lose their energy with time; they can last at most 91 eons. They are like regular seeds, which lose their power over time.
- The other way is to attain all four stages of *Nibbāna* and remove the possibility of making conditions for ANY *kamma* seed to germinate.

11. These conditions or *paccayā*, play a critical role in *paṭicca samuppāda*. When we say "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," it means, "we do *saṅkhāra* with ignorance when necessary CONDITIONS are present."

- For example, we do not do immoral acts or *apuññabhi saṅkhāra* all the time. When we are attracted to, or repulsed by something that we see (this is an example of *arammana paccaya*), we may generate craving or dislike, and then it can lead to an immoral actions or *apuññabhi saṅkhāra*; see, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?."
- This is the reason why *kamma* itself is not deterministic. Just because one has *avijjā* does not mean one will necessarily do an immoral thing, generating (*apuññabhi*) *saṅkhāra*. If we cultivate *Satipaṭṭhāna*, even if we get the urge to do something immoral, we can contemplate on the bad consequences and stop that action, speech, or thoughts.

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- When one keeps doing *Satipaṭṭhāna* — and keep avoiding immoral acts — one's *gathi* will change for the better, and then even the automatic urge to do something immoral will gradually fade. In other words, one's *avijjā* will reduce. This is why *Satipaṭṭhāna* is so important.

References

1. *The Manuals of Dhamma* by Ven. Ledi Syadaw (1999), pp. 31-57.

2. *Abhidharma Margaya* (in Sinhala) by Ven. Rerukane Chandawimala (2010), pp. 247-278.

Next in the series, "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?", ..

8.11.2 Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā

Revised February 12, 2020

Critical Roles of Causes (*Hetu*) and Conditions (*Paccayā*)

1. An action or a deed is a *kamma*. Its result is the *kamma vipāka*. That *kamma* was done with an intention, and that intention is the cause (*hetu*) for the corresponding effect (*vipāka*.)

- Thus, any *vipāka* **must have** a reason or a cause (*hetu*). But there can be possible causes without leading to any results. Conditions (*paccayā*) must be there for such *vipāka* to materialize.

2. The easiest way is to consider the following example: A seed contains necessary causes (ingredients) for bringing up a new tree. But just because a seed is there, a tree is not going to come to existence. If the seed is in a cool, dry place, one could keep it that way for a long time. Or one could burn or crush it, and it will not bring up a tree.

- SUITABLE CONDITIONS must be present for causes to bring about corresponding effects. That is what *paccayā* means.
- When such suitable conditions are present, causes WILL bring about corresponding effects. Thus when some result comes about, it is called "*paccuppanna*", i.e., born ("*uppanna*") via suitable conditions ("*paccayā*".) Of course, if the root causes must be there, to begin with).
- In the above example, the seed could germinate and grow to a tree if one plants that seed (cause) in the ground and provides water, nutrients, and sunlight (suitable conditions).

All *Kamma* Do Not Lead to *Vipāka*

3. That is the reason why *kamma* is not deterministic. In the post, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?" I mentioned this fact, and here we will see the reason for it.

- When we commit a good or a evil deed, the *kammic* potential or energy associated with that deed is deposits in a *kamma bīja* or a kamma seed. We will eventually get to the question of "where it is stored", but we just need to keep in mind that a *kamma* seed is not a physical seed, but is an energy or a potential. This concept is described in the post, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- The germination of a *kamma* seed, though, has some similarities to the germination of a physical seed, for example, an apple seed. The apple seed has the potential to bring about an apple tree. Still, the seed will not germinate until suitable conditions for germination are present. The seed needs to be in soil, and water and sunlight neede to be provided for germination to take place.
- In the same way, *kamma vipāka* (the result of a past *kamma*) can come to fruition only with the right conditions for the corresponding *kamma* seed to germinate.

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Anantara and *Samanantara* Relations

4. Let us look at the *anantara* and *samanantara* relations as discussed in the *Paṭṭhāna* Dhamma (book on "Conditional Relations" in Abhidhamma): [***anantara*** : [adj.] next; adjoining; immediately following. ***samanantara*** : [adj.] immediate; nearest.]

- "*An*" means food or in this case the *kamma* seed; "*antara*" means in storage, waiting to bear fruit.
- Thus, *anantara* means basically a *kamma* seed waiting to be germinated.
- "*Sama*" means equal or similar. Thus *samanantara* ("*sama*" + "*anantara*") means "matching conditions" with the *antara*.
- Therefore, *anantara* and *samanantara* go together. There must be an *anantara* (basically a cause or stored energy in a seed) for a *samanantara* to be effective. On the other hand, if *samanantara* (right conditions for that cause to take effect or for the seed to germinate) is not there, a *kamma* seed at *anantara* cannot bear fruit.
- By the way, *ānantara* (as in *ānantariya kamma*) means something entirely different; see, "Ānantariya Kamma – Connection to Gandhabba."

Some Analogies/Examples

5. Here is one example the Buddha gave: If one prepares a plot by preparing the soil, providing water, and if sunlight is also available, the *samanantara* for a seed to germinate is there. However, unless one starts with an apple seed (*anantara* condition not met), an apple tree will not grow.

- On the other hand, if one keeps the apple seed in a cool, dry place, it will not germinate, i.e., the *samanantara* condition not met.
- Results appear when both *anantara* and *samanantara* conditions are met. Thus, when one plants an apple seed in a suitable plot, it will germinate and become an apple tree.
- However, a mango tree will not result from an apple seed. Thus *samanantara* will give rise to a result matching the "seed" that was in *anantara*.

6. More examples can be given these days that are related to modern technology. If a radio station is broadcasting a radio program, that is the *anantara*. The seed energy is available anywhere within a certain range. But one cannot listen to the program without a radio. Even if someone has a radio, one cannot listen to the program unless the receiver is "tuned' to the correct frequency. When those conditions are met, one could hear the program even many miles away.

- *Kamma vipāka* can bring results via "instant communication" when the conditions become right. All kammic potentials are in "instant contact" with us via a concept similar to that described in quantum entanglement: see, "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected." **Thus all potential kamma seeds are waiting in *anantara* and can bring about instant results when the right conditions (*samanantara*) appear.**

Many Bad *Vipāka* Can be Avoided by Being Mindful

7. By being mindful, we can avoid many past bad *kamma* seeds from coming to fruition. We make sure that *samanantara* conditions are not present. If one goes out at night in a bad neighborhood that is providing fertile ground for a past bad *kamma* seed to germinate and the *kamma vipāka* to take place.

- In the same way, we can force "good" *kamma* seeds to germinate by providing the right conditions. For example, even if we have enough merits (i.e., a good *kamma* seed) that could make us pass a test or get a job unless we make the right conditions (i.e., prepare in advance), we may not get the results.

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- But sometimes one gets an unexpected promotion or gets better results than anticipated in a test if the *kamma* seeds are potent.

8. From our past innumerable lives, we have accumulated countless *kamma* seeds, both good and bad. Some of the stronger ones bear fruit no matter what we do, especially the *ānantariya kamma vipāka*.

- But in general, by being mindful (i.e., by NOT providing appropriate conditions), we can avoid many bad *kamma vipāka*. By making the right preparations (i.e., by optimizing *samanantara* conditions), we can exploit those good *kamma* seeds.
- A particularly important case is the bringing up a child. The parents and teachers have considerable responsibility for providing the right conditions for that young mind to develop. In particular, association with bad friends can direct a young life in the wrong direction; in the same way, association with good friends, a nurturing environment, can bring about a productive, responsible adult.

Importance of Cultivating Good *Gati* (Habits/Character)

9. One important cross-connection is matching "*gati*" with similar "*gati*" that we have discussed before; see, "Habits and Goals", and "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas."

- For example, when a *gandhabba* is waiting for a suitable womb, the *anantara-samanantara paccayā* comes into play. A *gandhabba*, who in the previous lives had developed a particular habit, say heavy drinking, is attracted to a womb of a woman with similar habits, possibly an alcoholic or a drug user. The concept of a *gandhabba* is in, "Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body," and "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."
- Similarly, a *gandhabba*, who in previous lives led moral lives, is bound to be attracted to a womb of the mother in a "good" family. Just like in the above case, here also the *samanantara* for the *gandhabba* (where it can establish itself) is an environment that matches its own "*gati*."
- However, no matter how one is born, one can still change one's own destiny by making conditions for other good *kamma vipāka* to come to fruition and also by making sure not to make conditions for bad *kamma vipāka* to come to fruition.

In other posts, we will discuss further applications of *anantara-samanantara* relations. One important discussed in, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana)- How does it Happen?."

Next, "Āsevana and Aññamañña Paccayā", …….

8.11.3 Āsevana and Aññamañña Paccayā

November 20, 2016; revised July 1, 2019 (comment added at the end)

1. As mentioned in the "Paṭṭhāna Dhammā – Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)," there are 24 *paccayā* or conditions that contribute to various steps in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* (PS) cycles.

- As we have discussed in the post "What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?" and in the above mentioned post, a given step in a PS cycle **cannot proceed** until one or more conditions are satisfied. **And we have control over most of these conditions.** Therein lies the value of *Paṭṭhāna Dhammā;* we can see how to stop *akusala-mūla* PS cycles from proceeding, and to maintain *kusala-mūla* PS cycles.
- In this post we will discuss two of those 24 *paccayā* or conditions. They are somewhat related to each other and thus are suitable to be discussed together.

2. *Āsevana paccayā* — which can be loosely translated as the "condition of association" — is an important condition that fuels various steps in PS at different times.

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- I see that in most cases, *āsevana paccayā* has been translated as "condition of repetition." Even though repetition is relevant, repetition comes via close associations, so association is primary.
- The word "*āsevana*" comes from "*ā*" and "*sevana*" or "came to the shade"; when one is staying close to a tree in the hot sun, one is "hanging around" the tree and is benefited from its cool shade.
- Of course, when one is associating bad friends, one can be influenced in the wrong direction too, as we will see below. Therefore, *āsevana paccayā* comes into play in both *kusala-mūla* and *akusala-mūla* PS.
- When one likes the experience, one tends to keep that association. Sometimes that eventually leads to bad consequences, but because of the ignorance of such bad outcomes, one still tends to keep bad associations.

3. An important role of *āsevana paccayā* is played in the "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" step in PS, whether it is *kusala-mūla* PS or *akusala-mūla* PS.

- For example, a teenager who is (unknowingly) cultivating a *viññāṇa* for drinking is heavily influenced by the association with bad friends. He likes to "hang out" with such bad friends and tends to generate a lot of *sankalapanā* or *vacī saṅkhāra* (conscious thinking about how he/she will be having a good time with those friends in parties with lot of alcohol). The *nāmarūpa* generated in his mind are such "party scenes", visualizing those friends as well as various favorite drinks.
- On the other hand, when one is on the right path, one is constantly thinking about Dhamma Concepts, having Dhamma discussions with good friends, and visualizing such gatherings. Or one could be visualizing some meritorious deeds, like giving or helping out at an orphanage; these are good *nāmarūpa* generated with such a good *viññāṇa*.
- These *nāmarūpa* are different from the *nāmarūpa* that descends to a womb at the *okkanti* moment, i.e., when a *gandhabba* enters a womb. We will discuss that later. So, *nāmarūpa* come in two main categories.

4. *Āsevana paccayā* can play a role under different types of situations. Let us consider two such examples.

- One such situation is the teenager mentioned above, who cultivates bad *nāmarūpa* by associating with bad friends. The more he/she associates with such bad friends, the more he/she will be generating bad *nāmarūpa* of party scenes with lot of alcohol and/or drugs. Not only that, there will be other associated *nāmarūpa*: He/she will be constantly visualizing favorite friends, gathering places, appropriate music, etc. too.
- In such an environment, it is also easy to cultivate other types of "bad *nāmarūpa*" such as gambling, illicit sex, stealing (to sustain those activities), violence and even killings.
- Such *nāmarūpa* and more could be cultivated by the teenager over time.

5. On the other hand, when one is on either mundane or *lokuttara* Eightfold Path, one will be cultivating "good *viññāṇa*" and one tends to visualize exactly opposite types *nāmarūpa*.

- One could be planning a Dhamma discussion and could be thinking and visualizing who will be there and what kind of topics will be discussed. One could be organizing a charity event and making arrangements.
- One could be planning to attend a meditation retreat and visualizing what kind of activities one could be engaging in. One could be even thinking about and trying to visualize the suffering endured by poor children in a situation one is familiar with and generating compassion-filled thoughts and *nāmarūpa*.

6. In either case, "*nāmarūpa paccayā saḷāyatana*" step will then point one's all six *āyatana* or *saḷāyatana* (five physical senses and the mind) towards such thoughts, visuals, and actions.

- Then those associations will become even stronger. When one gets totally absorbed in relevant activities, when one's mind is occupied with such thoughts, and when one is constantly visualizing related

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activities, people, and objects, those *nāmarūpa* will "grow" in one's mind. Those *nāmarūpa* will be closely associated with one's *gathi*.

- This is also discussed in the post: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."

7. Another important application of the *asevana paccayā* occurs in a *citta vīthi* itself. When we are generating *sankalapana* (or *saṅkappa*), we are generating an enormous number of *citta vīthi* in a short time. Each *citta vīthi* will make the next *citta vīthi* stronger (actually make the *javana citta* in the subsequent *citta vīthi* stronger) by association.

- The best example is one we have talked about several times in the "Living Dhamma" section. When we start thinking about an enemy, we start visualizing more and more bad situations that we encountered with that person; we tend to pull out all "past associations" from memory, as well as conjure up "many possible future scenarios" in our minds.
- All these "bad *sankalpana*" or "conscious bad thoughts" will strengthen the PS steps.
- Our minds can run wild if not controlled with *Satipaṭṭhāna* or *Ānāpāna;* see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life."

8. Even in a given *citta vīthi*, each *javana citta* is strengthened by the previous *javana citta*, via *asevana paccayā*. this happens in the time scale of billionth of a second and is driven by our *gathi*.

- The first *javana citta* is weak. But the second *javana citta* gets fuel from the first one, and is inevitably generating strength via association. One meaning of the name *javana* is "to run with." The series of 7 *javanas* "run with the object in mind", initially getting stronger until the fifth *javana*. Then the fuel runs out and the sixth and seventh *javana* become weaker and weaker.
- *Kamma* generated by the first *javana citta* can only bring *vipāka* in this life. But *kamma* done by the second through the sixth *javana citta* (which get stronger by association), are potent enough to bring *kamma vipāka* in many future lives. When the *javana* get weaker, the seventh *javana* can bring *vipāka* only in the next life, and will become null if it did not bring *vipāka* in the next life.
- It is not necessary to learn the complexities of *citta vīthi*, but it is good to have some idea.

9. The association then moves to the next *citta vīthi*. Thus the subsequent *citta vīthi* (and thus the *javana citta* in that *citta vīthi*) will be stronger. And thus it propagates and this is why one can get "really worked up" even thinking about a hated person.

- This is why *Satipaṭṭhāna* (and being mindful of bad thoughts) is so important. The start of such a hateful mindset is AUTOMATIC (and is due to our *gathi*) as discussed in the "Living Dhamma" section. But we have the ability to stop those initial thoughts BEFORE they get strong and become out of control.
- This can be compared to a seed giving rise to a mighty tree, unless one destroys it when it is just a little bud. When a seed germinates and becomes visible as a little plant, it can be easily broken. But if one waits and allows it to grow, it COULD grow to be a strong tree that is hard to take down.

10. As we can see, *paṭṭhāna dhammā* can go to very fine details. This is why *paṭicca samuppāda* has been compared to an ocean. It is vast, and can explain the arising of ANY *SANKATA* (whether live or inert) in this world.

- However, if we start digging deeper, that could become a waste of time since there is no ending as to how much finer detail one wants to examine.
- Still, it is good to see the depth of Buddha Dhamma. It gives one confidence in following the Path. Unshakable faith comes by realizing that Buddha Dhamma describes our world as it is.

11. Now let us briefly discuss the *aññamañña paccayā,* usually translated as "mutuality condition." This is not a bad translation, but it could be also translated as "forward and backward condition."

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- Many of the steps in the PS cycle, go backward as well as forward. For example, the step we have discussed, "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" runs backwards (in the same PS cycle) too.
- Therefore, while *nāmarūpa* are generated AND get stronger by a given *viññāṇa*, the *viññāṇa* itself gets stronger by the cultivation of *nāmarūpa*, i.e., "*nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇa*" step runs simultaneously too. This is the "mutual strengthening."
- In the example of the teenager, cultivation of those bad *nāmarūpa* (visuals of party scenes, bad friends etc) leads to the strengthening of that bad *viññāṇa* (desire to drink or take drugs), even though the bad *viññāṇa* first led to corresponding *nāmarūpa*.

12. The *aññamañña paccayā* — just like the *āsevana paccayā* — is highly effective in the first several steps in PS. While "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*" step initiates bad actions (or *saṅkhāra*), the continued actions in the same direction then lead to strengthening *avijjā* (or ignorance of the consequences of such actions), i.e., "*saṅkhāra paccayā avijjā*."

- This is why it is very important to stop such conscious *saṅkhāra* (especially *sankalapana* or the first part of *vacī saṅkhāra*), when one realizes that one is getting into the wrong track. Otherwise, one's *avijjā* will grow and one's bad *gathi* will only grow.
- Such immoral *saṅkhāra* — in the form of *vacī saṅkhāra* — appear to provide us with a sense of satisfaction at that time. For example, when one gets "really worked up" thinking about a bad deed done by an enemy, it gives one pleasure to say bad things about that person to others, or even retaliate directly to that person.

13. However, such actions actually lead to a "heat" or "*tāpa*" in us in the longer term. Long after that "initial satisfaction" of putting down that person, one will be "burning inside" for long times, even of one does not realize that. One will be prone to frequent outbursts even with other people.

- Removal of this *tāpa* or "fire" in us is what is meant by the phrase "*ātāpi sampajano*" in the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. That will help reduce our tendency to get "worked up" at the slightest provocation, i.e., to change our *gati* in the right direction.
- This is the first type of suffering that many of us don't even realize; see, "Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities" and other posts in "Living Dhamma."

14. Finally, the *aññamañña paccayā* is not operative starting at the "*saḷāyatana paccayā phassa*" step in the *paṭicca samuppāda*.

- We can clearly see that "*phassa* cannot lead to *saḷāyatana*," "*vedanā* cannot lead to *phassa*," etc.

July 1, 2019: Regarding #2 above, it is important to note that *āsevana* is different from *asevana*.

- *Sevana* is association. *Āsevana* (Ā + sevana) is "came to associate with"(as discussed in #5 above).
- *Asevana* (A + sevana) is "not to associate with", the negation; see #5 of "Associations (Sevana) – A Root Cause of Wrong Views.."

It is very important to see the difference, which illustrates how Pāli words combine (*sandhi*) to produce other words with very different meanings. Thanks to Tobias Große for bringing this distinction to our attention at the discussion forum today.

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IX Comments/Reviews

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9.1 Discussion of Comments

These are based on questions sent to me via email by readers prior to 2018. In late 2017, a discussion forum was launched: "Forums."

What is Intention in Kamma?

Would Nibbāna be Possible if Impermanence is the Cause of Suffering?

Logical Proof that Impermanence is Incorrect Translation of Anicca

"Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis

Craving for Pornography – How to Reduce the Tendency

9.1.1 What is Intention in Kamma?

This is an old post; revised February 21, 2018

1. Here is an email that I received in early September, 2015 (I am just showing the relevant part of the email):

"You mention several times that one should be very careful not to offend anyone as one could insult a *Sotāpanna* and gather a big amount of bad *Kamma*. *Kamma* it is created based on ones mind. Act and speak with a pure mind and no bad *Kamma* will arise. Act and speak with an evil mind and bad *Kamma* will arise.

Offending a *Sotāpanna* is no more an evil act than offending an ant if your mind state is the same, thus if one does not know that a human being is enlightened it will not result in a different *Kamma*.

What makes offending an enlightened being so much worse is the fact that it requires a very perverted mind state to act evil towards some like that. I like to compare it with being angry at kittens : –)

I had the feeling that you might have a misunderstanding regarding this topic. **It sounded as if you can 'accidentally' gather bad *Kamma***, which is not correct in my opinion."

- In the above comment, emphasize in bold is mine to indicate each key point. I think what is meant by that first statement is that having adverse thoughts is the bad thing and it does not matter to whom it was directed.
- The second point is that if one doesn't know the status of the person (or being) it was directed to, then one must not be responsible for the *kamma*.

2. I am sure many others had similar thoughts on this or somewhat related issues, so I wanted to share the reply with everyone. By the way, we have a new discussion forum (since December 2017) to discuss such questions; see, "WebLink: Forum."

- **Figuring out how *kamma* works (with certainty) can be done by only a Buddha**. This is one of those things that are discernible only to a Buddha. But as I have pointed out before, we can figure out some general trends that are compatible with the laws that the Buddha has clearly stated; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?." Here we analyze in a bit more depth.

3. **There are two key factors to be remembered in evaluating how to assess a *kamma vipāka*:**

1. **Which of the *dasa akusala* is the intention?** For example, it could be taking a life, stealing, or harsh speech. Who is affected is not involved in this step. That is the "*cetana*" in "*cetana ham bhikkhave kamman vadami*", is just which *dasa akusala* is in one's mind; that is all.

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2. Then the **strength of the *kamma vipāka* is based on the "level of consciousness" or "qualities" of the living beings affected** by that *kamma*. For example, killing a human will bring stronger *kamma vipāka* than killing an animal.

- That is the clearest way to analyze any given situation.

4. For example, in the recent second *desanās* on *Tilakkhaṇa*, I discussed the case of a person killing a bunch of people with a bomb; see Discourse 2 in "Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses."

- His intention (*cetana*) was to kill. Thus the *dasa akusala* involved is "*panatipata*", that of taking a life.
- Now to the second step. He may not even know who was killed. By some coincidence if a parent of the killer was killed by the bomb, then he would have done an *anantariya papa kamma*. If an *Arahant* was killed, the same. If a *Sotāpanna* was killed, then it would not be a *anantariya kamma*, but still equivalent to killing thousands of normal humans.
- So, it is important to understand that "*cetana*" is which of *dasa sakusala* are in one's mind when a *kamma* is committed. It could be more than one. In the case of the bomber, there is *micchā diṭṭhi*, and likely greed also, in addition to "*panatipata*."
- One can analyze various situations with the above two steps.

5. We know that there are five *anantariya kamma*, which are so grave that one will be subjected to their *vipāka* in the very next life in the *niraya* (lowest realm): Killing one's mother, Killing one's father, Killing an *Arahant*, and injuring a Buddha (it is not possible for anyone to take the life of a Buddha), and causing schism in the *Saṅgha* (which really means trying to propagate a wrong version of the Buddha Dhamma).

- Since killing a normal human is not an *anantariya kamma*, it is clear that the "strength of the *kamma*" depends on who is being killed.
- *Kamma vipāka* for committing any other offense, is similar. Hurting an *Arahant* would be million -fold grave compared to hurting a normal human. Thus, logically, hurting an *Anāgāmī*, a *Sakadāgāmī*, a *Sotāpanna* would have corresponding levels of consequences.
- The "value of a life" depends on the "mental status" of that lifeform. Any life is not the same. This is why it is not possible to compare the life of an animal with that of a human; even among animals there are huge variations, and we can easily see that a gorilla or a dog is "more sentient" than a worm.
- However, we must keep in mind that we all had been born a lowly worm; so even though we need to keep in mind that there is a variation, we should never take the life of ANY sentient being intentionally (unnecessarily).

6. Regarding the issue of "how would one know" the status of the living being who is affected by one's actions, the "nature" would know.

- This point of "we are all inter-connected" is now proven by quantum mechanics: "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected."
- This is a key factor in understanding *kamma/vipāka*, and is my next project. I believe that quantum mechanics can show this at an even deeper level.

7. L us consider some prominent examples from the *Tipiṭaka*.

- It is clearly stated that the reason ascetic Siddhartha had to strive for 6 years and undergo such hardships to attain the Buddhahood is that he had said some insulting things regarding the Buddha Kassapa in a previous life. At that time, Siddhartha was a wealthy person by the name Jotipala, and had a friend called Gatikara who listened to *desanās* from Buddha Kassapa and became an *Anāgāmī*. Gatikara tried to persuade Jotipala to go and listen to Buddha Kassapa, but Jotipala kept refusing, saying "I do not want to go and listen to the bald-headed monk."

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- That was the *kamma* that forced ascetic Siddhartha to undergo such hardships before attaining the Buddhahood. This is a very clear example that one DOES NOT NEED TO KNOW that one is insulting a Buddha to accumulate the corresponding *kamma vipāka*.
- In fact, there are 11 more such *kamma vipāka* that brought about adverse effects to the Buddha Gotama even after attaining the Buddhahood. Three of those were for bad *kamma* committed against **Pacceka Buddhas**. It is especially not possible to recognize a **Pacceka Buddha** as such, because they appear during times when a **Sammā Sambuddha** (like Buddha Gotama) is not present, and they cannot teach Dhamma to others.
- Therefore, NOT KNOWING the status of the person (or the being) against whom the wrong act was done DOES NOT come into play. These are not rules made up by the Buddha; Buddha himself was not immune from those laws. *Kammic* laws are natural laws, just like laws of gravity; a Buddha just discovers them.

8. So, I hope the questions of the reader were addressed in the above. Another important thing to realize is that any *akusala kamma* involves **just one or more of the ten defilements (*dasa akusala*). That is all.** And the severity of the *kamma vipāka* depends on the "status of the victim" and not knowing that status is not an excuse. We will discuss this in a bit more detail below.

9. To do that, let us look at the "intention" part a bit more carefully. First let us see the key factors involved in committing an *akusala kamma*.

- Any *akusala kamma* results from INTENDING TO DO one or more of the *dasa akusala*.
- A given *akusala kamma* has several stages (each has a different number of steps). For example, in the case of taking a life, the following are the four steps: there must be a living being, one must know that it is alive and one must have the intention to kill that being, one plans and carries out the necessary actions to kill, and finally the living being ends up dead. If all necessary steps are completed, then it is called a ***kamma patha***.
- As the number of completed steps keep increasing, the severity of the *vipāka* will increase; when all are complete and a *kamma patha* is done, the *kamma vipāka* will be strongest possible.

10. Let us take as example the case of killing a human being. Now we have to combine the two effects in #3 and #4 above in order to assess the strength of the *kamma vipāka*.

- The human being in question could be a normal human or a Noble person, say an *Arahant*. **There is no way for the killer to know whether the victim is an *Arahant*.** Thus the resulting *kamma vipāka* could be quite different depending on the "status of the victim" and the killer may even not know the severity of the crime committed.
- Now, suppose the killer went through the first four steps, but the victim survived. Now the killer will not face an *anantariya kamma* because he/she merely injured an *Arahant* even though the intention was to kill. Still, the strength of the *kamma vipāka* will be much higher compared to injuring a normal human.
- *Kamma vipāka* are based on natural laws. Their enforcement is automatic. Just like gravity operates regardless of the person involved, so do *kamma vipāka*.

11. **Therefore, the above analysis can be used in any given case to get an idea of the strength of the *kamma vipāka* for a given offense.** To summarize:

- The "intention" is one (or more) of the *dasa akusala.*
- The weight of *kamma* depends on the "mental status" of the victim, REGARDLESS of whether the person committing the *kamma* knew about that "mental status."
- The weight of the *kamma* also depends on how many of the necessary steps were actually completed. **Just having an intention is not enough to yield the full impact.**

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12. To further clarify the mechanisms, let us consider another example. Suppose person X detects a person moving around in X's house at night. Thinking it is an intruder, and INTENDING TO KILL the intruder, X shoots and kills " the intruder." And then X finds out that it is X's own father.

- The intention was to kill (one of the *dasa akusala*), and the victim turned out to be X's own father. Thus even though X did not intend to kill his father, X has now acquired an *anantariya kamma*.

13. In another twist, let us say that X was on the roof of his house repairing it, and he threw something heavy from the roof without realizing that his father was right below the roof on the ground. And the father got hit and was killed.

- **Here, there was no intention of killing a living being.** Thus even though the action resulted in the father's death, not even an *akusala kamma* was committed let alone an *anantariya kamma*.

14. This is why we have to be careful in analyzing some cases.

- When we encounter someone anywhere, just by looking at him/her, we cannot say whether he/she is a Noble person or not.
- But we can definitely see the difference between an animal and a human being. A human life has much more worth than any animal life; it is extremely difficult get a "human *bhava*."
- Even among the animals, we can see that some animals are "more sentient" than others, even though there are no clear guidelines.
- However, one definitely does not need to worry about "accidental killings" of insects, for example, who may get crushed under one's feet as one walks around.

15. Going back to another statement in the comment of the reader: "..What makes offending an enlightened being so much worse is the fact that it requires a very perverted mind state to act evil towards someone like that."

- The problem is that most times we do not know whether a given person is a *Sotāpanna* or not. **And most people may not have even heard "who a *Sotāpanna* is".**
- Yet, the consequences will be the same whether one knew or not.

16. Please let me know if anyone has further questions related to this issue, or any other relevant specific case that is still not resolved. I can revise the post to add more details or try to address any other "tricky cases" if needed. **In the following I am going to discuss the "intention" issue in a bit more depth for the benefit of those who like to dig deeper.**

- The Buddha said, "*cetana ham Bhikkave kamman vadami*." Thus, what determines the type of *kamma* is the *cetana*. So, we need to look at the *cetana cetasika* carefully.
- *Cetana* is translated sometimes as "intention" and other times as "volition". It is hard to distinguish the difference between the two; volition seems to incorporate "more personal attributes" and thus may be better. **But neither is really a correct translation for *cetana*.**
- As I point out below, *cetana* is not "intention" in the sense that it is not the *cetana cetasika* that determines the nature of a *citta*. ***Cetana* combines the cumulative effect of many *cetasika* that come into play.** This is why sometimes it is best to keep the Pāli terms and understand their meanings.

17. I have introduced *cetasika* in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)," and have discussed some aspects of them in the "Citta and Cetasika" section.

- Thus *cetana*, which is one of the seven universal *cetasika*, is in each and every *citta,* even though we do not "intend to do something" with all *citta*. As briefly pointed in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)," *cetana* is the *cetasika* that "puts together the relevant *cetasika* into a given *citta*." This is also discussed in "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises."

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- **The "intention" is one of the *dasa akusala* in the case of an *akusala kamma*. That intention arises BECAUSE OF one's *gathi* with certain set of *cetasika* being dominant.**
- For *akusala kamma*, *moha* (ignorance) and three other *cetasika*, *Ahirika* (shamelessness), *Anottapa* (fearlessness in wrong), and *uddhacca* (restlessness or agitation) are always there, because they are the "four universals" for any *akusala citta*.
- But the presence of other "*akusala cetasika*" like *lobha, diṭṭhi*, *vicikicchā,* etc depends on the situation and the person committing the act; see, "Cetasika – Connection to Gathi." **For example, one may lie about something because of greed (*lobha*); another person may tell the same lie because of hate (*dosa*); the consequences are worse for the latter.**
- Intention is to commit one (or more) of the *dasa akusala*. Thus *cetana* is not "intention" per se; it is deeper. It also depends on how that determination came about. When the Buddha said, "*cetana ham Bhikkave kamman vadami*," that is what he meant: **How that particular intention came about depends on the *set of* relevant bad *cetasika*.**
- For *kusala kamma* is works the same way. Here the "intention" is to commit one or more *kusala kamma*, and here a set of moral (or *sobhana*) *cetasika* come into play.

18. Thus we can keep digging deeper to get a more deeper understanding. But please do not get discouraged if you do not understand all the details. It takes time, as I know by experience.

- The more one thinks about a concept, one realizes that there could be multiple ways to look at it. That does not lead to confusion, but to more clarity. This is the power of pure Dhamma.
- There are many things to contemplate on this issue, even without getting into *Abhidhamma*. This is what real "*bhāvanā*" is, especially leading to the *Sotāpanna* stage.

This issue is being discussed at the discussion forum at, "WebLink: Adding Kamma vs. Receiving Vipāka" and "WebLink: Clarification of definition – "Anantariya"."

9.1.2 Would Nibbana be Possible if Impermanence is the Cause of Suffering?

1. I recently received a very insightful email from Mr. Lance Potter. Before getting to his email, let me provide some background (Of course I would give the name of the commenter only with his/her consent).

- He was commenting about the post, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations". In that post, I discussed briefly a phrase from the *Ajjhattanicca Sutta:*

"yadaniccam tan dukkham, tan dukkham tadanatta"

- This phrase is translated in most current Theravāda literature (including the Sinhala translation of the *Tipiṭaka;* see, *Saṃyutta Nikāya* – 3, p. 3 of the Pāli/Sinhala *Tipiṭaka*) as:

"if something is impermanent, suffering arises, therefore *'no-self'*"

- In that post, I discussed some inconsistencies arising due to such a translation. I also pointed out that the phrase is consistent if one takes the correct interpretations of *anicca* and *anatta*, i.e., "that one cannot maintain anything to one's satisfaction in the long run" and "(therefore) one is truly helpless in this rebirth process".

2. Let me quote the relevant text from his email:

"The line of reasoning that says that *anicca* means simply impermanence and that impermanence leads to *dukha* seems weak to me. The weakness lies is an apparent missing link. Logically, there must be an intervening link, a necessary link, between impermanence and *dukha*. That link would be the actual cause of *dukha*. **If the cause of *dukha* were simply impermanence, then no one who awakened, not even Buddha himself, would experience a reduction of *dukha*.** This is because the condition of impermanence

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in *saṃsāra* remains unchanged whether one is awakened or not. In awakening, what changes is attachment to impermanent conditions of *saṃsāra*, not impermanent conditions themselves.

Put another way, one could say that if *anicca* means simply impermanence while ignoring the link between them, then Buddha's awakening and his subsequent reduction of *dukha* would mean that impermanence as a condition of saṃsāra was reduced. Everyone would have experienced simultaneously a sudden change in the condition of impermanence affecting them.

It was only Buddha's relationship to impermanence that changed, not impermanence itself. Or, as you say, **his perception of the consequences of seeking happiness in impermanent things.**"

(Highlighting is mine).

3. That is a very insightful comment and I wanted to share that reasoning with others. This is what happens when one does the correct "*vipassana*" or "insight meditation". As one thinks deeply about the Buddha Dhamma, one can start seeing any problems in the interpretations.

- What Lance was pointing out was that since modern science has clearly illustrated that "impermanence" is an INHERENT CHARACTERISTIC of the universe that we live in, there is no possible way to "get rid of impermanence" in order to remove suffering and thus attain *Nibbāna* (that is, if one takes "impermanence" as the translation of *anicca*).

4. To emphasize that point, we need to remember that whole worlds like our Solar system are completely destroyed and re-formed every few billion years. Furthermore, "impermanence" and incessant change are inherent in anything in our universe as stated by the Second Law of Thermodynamics; see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."

- Therefore, if *dukha* arises because of the "impermanence", AND since we need to remove that root cause of "impermanence" in order to avoid future suffering (*dukha)* from arising, that would be an impossible task. Impermanence associated with anything material CANNOT be avoided, let alone removed, according to modern science.

5. I would like to again emphasize that impermanence is a word associated with PHYSICAL OBJECTS. Such physical objects CANNOT give us suffering. What gives us suffering is OUR CRAVING (or "icca") for such objects; this is called *nicca saññā*. In a world that is "*anicca*," we have the wrong PERCEPTION of *nicca saññā*; see, "Anicca – True Meaning."

- Note that *icca* is pronounced "ichchā", *nicca* is pronounced "nichchā" and *anicca* is pronounced "anichchā".
- If a house is destroyed by fire, who suffers? Only the owner of the house, who has an attachment to it; it does not cause suffering to others. If it was a run down house, even the owner may not suffer much because his/her attachment to that house would be less. The more attachment we have for something, our suffering would be greater if it is lost or damaged. **This is a simple observation, but has profound implications.**

6. *Dukkha Sacca* means that *dukha* can be removed. ***Dukkha*** in "*Dukkha Sacca*" means "there is ***dukha*** (suffering) in this world, AND it can be eliminated" ; see, "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?."

- As explained in that *sutta* with that phrase, the "three characteristics" of this world are interrelated. **Not only that, the key characteristic is "*anicca*," i.e., nothing in this world can be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run.** The *sutta* says that *Dukha* (suffering) arises BECAUSE of the *nicca saññā* we have for things that have *anicca* nature, and thus the third characteristic (*anatta*) becomes self-evident, i.e., one is truly helpless since one cannot get rid of *dukha* (unless one gets rid of the *nicca saññā*).

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7. Thus *nicca* is a PERCEPTION in one's mind. Through endless rebirths we thought that we can achieve happiness by acquiring sense objects that provide us with sense pleasures. Thus we keep "craving for such objects", and believe that they will provide us with happiness; this is the wrong perception of *nicca*. **It is called the *nicca saññā*.**

- Thus the four stages of *Nibbāna* are attained when one develops the opposite *saññā*, i.e., ***anicca saññā*** in stages, and is complete only at the *Arahanthood.*
- If one did not crave for anything in this world, there is NOTHING in this world that one willingly binds to (*paṭicca* = "pati + "icca"). If we can stop this *paṭicca* process (or willingly bind to things in this world), then there will be no "*samuppāda* ("sama" + "uppada") or births corresponding such cravings. Thus according to *paṭicca samuppāda*, there will be no more rebirths; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda." And that is *rāgakkhaya* or *Nibbāna*.

8. Therefore, now we have a possible way to prevent *dukha* from arising: we need to remove all types of cravings for impermanent material objects from our MINDS.

- Of course that is easy to be said than done. We attach to things in this world because they provide tangible sense pleasures. No one can deny that, and it is very hard to resist many sense pleasures for which we have had attachments from beginningless time.
- Thus we have to do it in stages. No one (except a few who have developed required mindset over many past births) can do it quickly.
- The critical first step to *Nibbāna* is the *Sotāpanna* stage. And that is gained just by gaining the first understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- It is hard to believe, but an enormous fraction of our craving for worldly things will be removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage when the realization hits that certain immoral things are NOT WORTH doing for the sake of long-term benefit. That is something that will be ingrained in the mind and one does not need to think about it.

9. It is stated in the *Nakhasikha Sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya* – 2, p. 212 of the Pāli/Sinhala *Tipiṭaka*) that the amount of defilements that a *Sotāpanna* has left to remove can be compared to the soil one can pick up on one's fingernail, if the amount of defilements a normal human has is comparable to the soil in the whole Earth; see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."

- A short but correct translation of the essence of the *sutta* is also available online:

WebLink: ACCESSTOINSIGHT: Nakhasikha Sutta: The Tip of the Fingernail

- Since such a large amount of defilements are removed just by getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi*, it is CRITICAL to get rid of *micchā diṭṭhi* by comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. And the key to all three characteristics is to comprehend the "*anicca* nature" of this world. This is why I keep emphasizing this point at every opportunity.
- However, it is not possible to grasp the "*anicca* nature" until one has purified one's mind to some extent; see, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" and other posts in the "Living Dhamma" section.

Also, see, "Logical Proof that Impermanence is Incorrect Translation of Anicca."

9.1.3 Logical Proof that Impermanence is Incorrect Translation of Anicca

This post was written in response to a comment made by Mr. Alexander Ausweger, on the basis of which I slightly revised the post "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations" to make it more precise. I would like to get feedback from anyone interested, especially those who are experts on mathematical logic.

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1. Using mathematical logic, it is possible to point out the flaw in translating *anicca, dukkha, anatta* as impermanence, suffering, and no-self. It does not require advanced mathematical concepts, but basic logical structure that is explained in the following Wikipedia article:

WebLink: WIKI: Tautology (logic)

2. As explained in the post, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations," in the *Ajjhattanicca Sutta* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*, the Buddha stated that the three characteristics of "this world" are RELATED to each other:

"yadaniccam tan dukkham, tan dukkham tadanatta"

OR, (*anicca* → *dukkha*) and (*dukkha* → *anatta*)

Here, there are two logical statements, which can be written as (with incorrect translations with *anicca, dukkha, anatta* translated as impermanence, suffering, and no-self respectively):

(impermanence → suffering) and (suffering → no-self)

- There are an infinite physical things in this vast universe and ALL are impermanent. **But not all of them cause anyone's suffering. One's suffering is caused only by those things that one willingly attaches to with the *nicca saññā***, as we will see below.

3. First let us consider just the part: (impermanence → suffering)

When we use the **law of contraposition,**

$(A \rightarrow B) \Leftrightarrow (\neg B \rightarrow \neg A)$ ("if *A* implies *B*, then not-*B* implies not-*A*"),

we get:

no suffering → permanence, i.e., if one is not suffering that implies something (the object in question) is permanent.

- But we can take many examples where "not suffering" does not imply a permanency. For example, when we hear a death of a rival there is no suffering associated with that.
- In another example if we get rid of a non-curable disease, that is associated with no-suffering. Thus, in both examples, the "no-suffering" condition did not imply a "permanence".

Therefore, the original statement, (impermanence → suffering) DOES NOT HOLD.

4. **Now let us look at another way to analyze.** Normally, the statement A → B **does not lead** to ¬ A → ¬B (i.e., not A → not B does not automatically follow).

However, if B is dependent only on A and no other factor, then the statement ¬ A → ¬ B would be valid.

- For an example, (rain → wet street), does not automatically lead to (no rain → dry street), because the street could get wet due to a garden hose being left open.
- However, **if the only cause for wetness of the street is rain**, then (no rain → dry street) is CORRECT.

5. In the case of the three characteristics, the nature of this world is either *nicca* or *anicca*. There is no "in between", i.e., it is either "*nicca*" or "*anicca*."

The *nicca* or *anicca* nature can lead *dukha, sukha*, AND also neutral feeling. Thus here we will consider just *dukha* or "no-*dukha*" for this analysis. Then, there is nothing in between those two.

The third characteristic is either "*atta*" or "*anatta*."

Thus, for this proof, we CAN rewrite the original statement,

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(*anicca* → *dukkha*) and (*dukkha* → *anatta*) as,

(*nicca* → no-*dukkha*) and (no-*dukkha* → *natta*),

and those two statements are identical.

6. Therefore, if we translate *nicca* and *anicca* as permanent and impermanent, then the statement, (impermanence → suffering) also implies, (permanence → no-suffering), because in our premise that suffering depends only on whether something is permanent or impermanent.

- Thus, we have, for our particular case: (permanence → no-suffering)
- Therefore, in our special case for the three characteristics of nature, we have: (permanence → no-suffering) AND (no suffering → permanence).

In the mathematical language of logic, this is written as:

(no suffering iff permanence), i.e., (no suffering if and only if permanence)

This is a strong statement than the one in #3.

However, we have many instances of no-suffering without having permanency associated with, as we discussed in #3.

- Furthermore, This implies that one can never attain *Nibbāna* (no suffering), since there is nothing in this world that is permanent LONG TERM. **This is yet another contradiction.**

7. However, if we take the correct interpretation of *anicca* as "nothing can be maintained to one's satisfaction in the long run", then the above statement reads:

(no suffering) if and only if (everything can be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run).

- Since we know that "**everything can be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run"** is not correct, it is impossible to attain a state of "no suffering" as long as one is in this world, i.e., in the cycle of rebirths.
- We can analyze any situation and see that "nothing in this world can be maintained to one's satisfaction in the long run". Thus everything experienced in this world eventually lead to suffering. The only way to get rid of suffering is to realize this critical point; that realization itself leads to the end of suffering.
- Thus "*avijjā*" is nothing but not realizing this fundamental characteristic of nature.
- The realization of the truth of "*anicca* nature of this world" is beyond "just understanding". The mind has to accept that without any doubt. One needs to analyze as many cases as one encounters in real life and convince oneself that this is the case. If you can think about an exception, please let me know.

8. Now we can also derive a similar strong relationship between *anicca* and *anatta* as between *anicca* and *dukkha* that we derived in #6 above. Here we use the principle of syllogism:

$$((A \to B) \wedge (B \to C)) \to (A \to C)$$

Thus the original relationship, (*anicca* → *dukkha*) and (*dukkha* → *anatta*) lead to:

anicca → *anatta*

- Now using the same derivation of #4 and #5, we get, *anatta* → *anicca*.

Thus we again have the strong statement,

- *anatta* if and only if *anicca*

That means *anatta* is inevitable if the nature (this world) is of *anicca* nature.

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9. Now, again **if we take the wrong translations** of impermanence and no-self for *anicca* and *anatta* respectively, **what we derived above means: whatever is impermanent does not have a "self". This is a meaningless statement for inert objects in this world.**

On the other hand, with the **correct interpretations**, it means:

Nothing in this world can be maintained to one's satisfaction and therefore one is helpless in this world (i.e., will be subjected to suffering).

- However, that holds only as long as one TRYING TO maintain things to one's satisfaction with the wrong perception that it is achievable. When one realizes the true nature, one will stop from attaching to things in this world, and eventually will not be born in this material world. The mind will be released from the "material base" that is the cause of our long-term suffering.
- Thus, the only way to get out of the "helplessness in this cycle of rebirths" is to get rid of the *nicca saññā* (the perception that one CAN maintain things to one's satisfaction), and cultivate the *anicca saññā,* the correct perception about anything in this world. That is the way to *Nibbāna,* which it is attained via steps.

10. Thus, it is important to realize that the "loophole" that the Buddha discovered in order to gain release from the inevitable suffering in this world, is to comprehend its "*anicca nature*" and stop craving for worldly things that "seem to provide sense pleasures".

- In other words, the solution is "to realize that seeking happiness in this world is not only unachievable, but it also leads to suffering". One is subjected to suffering ONLY BECAUSE one is WILLINGLY ATTACHING to worldly things that are intrinsically not setup to provide happiness in the long run.
- This act of "willingly attaching to things in this world" is called "*paṭicca*" ("*paṭi*" means bonding and "*ichcha*" means with liking). And this of course leads to "*sama uppāda*" ("*sama*" means same or similar and "*uppāda*" means another existence in this world). This is the fundamental reason why we can never remove the suffering in this cycle of rebirths as long as we have "*avijjā*," the principle of "*paṭicca samuppāda*"; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."
- Thus now we can see why the *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycle starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*": that is because we have the "*nicca saññā*," the perception that we can maintain things to our satisfaction.

11. If the "*anicca* nature of this world" is a FACT, then the other two logically follow: **nothing in this world** can be logically expected to provide "no-suffering" (i.e., either happiness or neutral state of mind), and thus one is truly helpless (*anatta*) and is struggling to achieve something that logically impossible to achieve.

- The key point is that we normally ACT with "*nicca saññā*" or with the perception that we can maintain things to our satisfaction. **Thus we go against the nature** and will be subjected to suffering in the long run. This is a subtle point to contemplate and comprehend. The "*anicca* nature" will lead us to suffering ONLY IF we take the opposite view of "*nicca saññā*."
- There are two things to sort out: *anicca nature* (of the world) and "*nicca saññā*" (in our MINDS). The way to be released from this world of *anicca* nature is to comprehend that (i.e., cultivate the *anicca saññā*) and thereby not attach (*paṭicca*) to things in this world.
- Of course it is not an easy task. The realization is achieved in stages. Even at the *Sotāpanna* stage one realizes this at a basic level.
- This is the basis of Buddha Dhamma, and that is explained via many different ways, *paṭicca samuppāda* being the key. The *akusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* cycle starts with "*avijjā paccayā (abhi) saṅkhāra*," which arises due to the "*nicca saññā*," and ends up with "*jara, marana, soka, perideva, dukkha, domanassa*....." We generate our own future suffering by doing *abhisaṅkhāra* (actions, speech, thoughts generated by greed, hate, and ignorance) due to our *nicca saññā*.

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- This is also why we cannot get rid of greedy, hateful, and foolish thoughts until we comprehend the true *anicca* nature of this world and cultivate the *anicca saññā*. Such thoughts arise AUTOMATICALLY in a mind that has the *nicca saññā*.

9.1.4 "Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis – Do We Always Act with Avijjā?

October 23, 2015; revised August 14, 2019

I like to address two comments that I recently received. Questions such as these bring out significant issues that help clarify fundamental concepts.

***

First comment (by Mr. Alexander Ausweger):

Premises:

(1) The number of rebirths of a single sentient being before now is infinite.

(2) The probability of becoming an *Arahant* in one life-phase (from birth to death) is minuscule but not zero. (The possible probability-values range from 0 to 1 as usual in probability theory).

Conclusion: In an infinite number of rebirths the probability to reach *Arahantship* would be one, which means that everyone would already has left *saṃsāra*.

Conclusion: Since we are still here, one of the premises must be wrong.

***

Second comment (by Mr. Chamila Wickramasinghe):

"….in *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda*, since "*avijjā anusaya*" is remaining for a person below the *Arahant* stage, is there not a single "citta-kshana" (or *citta*) that arises without *avijjā*? .."

***

There is a perception of well-defined "self" embedded in both the above comments. That there is "a well-defined sentient being" that goes through a cycle of rebirths. Since we use names to label a person, that automatically gives the impression of a non-changing "self." Thus it is a bit hard to remove this "sense of a self" from our minds.

- The other side of this issue is the common misconception that "*anatta*" means "no-self". That is correct in a strict sense. However , there is a sense of a "self" until one attains the *Arahanthood*. The other meaning of "*anatta*" is "being helpless" and "subject to suffering," as long as one has the perception of a "self."
- That is why the Buddha said it is wrong to believe that there is a "self," and it is also incorrect to think that "there is no-self." That is a bit difficult to comprehend first; **that is why the Buddha said, "My Dhamma has never been known to the world…".** So we will discuss some examples to clarify why both these views are not correct.

Let us first discuss the **First comment.** The answer to the second comment will become apparent during that discussion.

1. The critical issue brought out by the first comment is the first premise itself: By assuming that "there is a single sentient being…" we are distorting the actual reality. This is saying that there is a "soul" or "self." To assign an **absolute identity**, there must be something unchanging in it.

- Now, let us discuss HOW the Buddha explained that the above premise is not correct.

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- At the time of the Buddha, many believed in a "*ātma*" or a "soul" or a "self". When asked what is a "person" is unique to give that absolute identity, some said it was one's body (*rūpa*). Others said either one's feelings (*vedanā*), one's perceptions (*saññā*), one's actions (*saṅkhāra*), one's thoughts (*viññāṇa*), or some combinations of the above five. **However, we are not talking about *pañcakkhandha* here, i.e., not *rūpakkhandha* etc. I will write a series of posts later to clarify the difference.**
- There is nothing else that can be called as "one's own."

2. So, the Buddha explained in detail why none of the above remains the same in a "given person." Let us take a simple example to understand the basic idea. Let us consider person A when entering the high school and when leaving the high school.

- Did any of the five categories (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) remain the same at those two instances of time, several years apart? Person A would have grown and will not have the same body. At the time of his leaving high school, most of his primary thoughts (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) are on getting a job or entering a university. Those would be very different from the time he entered high school.

3. Now we can reduce the time interval to the end of his first year at the high school. All of the above arguments still hold. "He" would have changed in all five of the above characteristics that define "him".

- We can keep reducing the time interval for that person. When we think about this carefully, we can see that even his physical body would have changed a little by the time he got to the school from home. Of course, all his "metal properties" keep changing moment-to-moment.
- To see a "significant change" over a long period of time, we need to look at time intervals several months apart. But when we keep narrowing down the time interval, we can see that all five characteristics about that person keep changing even moment-to-moment.
- Even when a person enters a room, walks to the other side, and leaves the room through a back door, is it the "same person" who left? Which of the above five characteristics would have remained the same?
- Once we start contemplating on it, it is easy to see that all four of our mental characteristics keep changing moment-to-moment. It is a bit harder to "see" that our bodies change moment-to-moment, but the above argument logically extends to smaller and smaller time intervals. This is why it is called "seeing with wisdom".
- Furthermore, modern science indeed show how fast our bodies change. Every few months, most of the cells in our bodies get completely REPLACED. We have a "new body" every year.
- Still, this is NOT the same as saying EVERY SINGLE *suddhaṭṭhaka* (smallest material unit) in a body is re-made moment-to-moment; see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?." However, at least SOME OF THE CELLS in a body of trillions of cells will change even moment-to-moment. Please re-read and understand the enormous difference. Also, see "Human Life – A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)."
- This way of "seeing" with wisdom (instead of "seeing" with the eyes) is what the Buddha called "*cakkhuṃ udapādi..*" or "seeing with dhamma eye..." Unless we do this, when we look at a person, we automatically get the perception (*saññā*) of a "non-changing self," say John Smith.

4. We assign a name to a person and talks about a "John Smith". But we can see that there was nothing at all common about John Smith at various points in his life. A newborn baby looks different when grown to a young person; with more time, the older adult will appear very different.

- However, we also should not go to the other extreme and say that "there is no such person called John Smith." How can we say that either? We can talk to John Smith; we can see him actively engaging in various activities, etc. That is the other extreme of "no-soul" or "no-self."
- That is why the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self" as reality.

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- We need to use the terminology of a person named John Smith to be able to communicate. Even the Buddha talked about "his previous lives." But we must keep in mind that there is nothing to be called an "unchanging person."
- A "person" can acquire a "new identity" within moments. We have talked about several people who attained *Arahanthood* within a few minutes. Even these days, we have heard about people who have made drastic changes in their character within a few months. Of course, we can gain or lose significant weight in a month and change our appearance.

5. The absolute truth (*paramattha*) is that all our mental phenomena CAN change moment-to-moment. Some of this mental activity arise due to *avijjā* and can lead to significant changes even in real-time; see, "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda."

- While using conventional terminology (*vohāra*), we need to keep in mind that the absolute reality (*paramattha*) is that the "state of existence" changes moment-to-moment.
- Our physical bodies (and any material form or a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala)) change with time. Some change fast (a fruit fly lives a few days; thus, it goes from birth to ripe age to being dead in a few days), but others change slower (a tortoise lives about 200 years).

6. Thus "a person," in absolute reality, CAN change for better or worse even moment-to-moment, according to *Paṭicca Samuppāda.*

- A *kusala Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle starts with "*kusala-mūla paccayā saṅkhāra*"; see, "Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- An *akusala-mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*"; see, "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda" and "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda."
- But most of the time, we do things that are neither *kusala* or *akusala*.
- Thus *avijjā* is not there ALL THE TIME, even for a normal human being. *Avijjā* is triggered when a desirable/undesirable sense input tempts one.

7. Now we can address the **second comment**. Yes. the *avijjā anusaya* is there with anyone who has not attained the *Arahant* stage of *Nibbāna*. But not all thoughts (*citta*) arise due to *avijjā,* and there are many levels of *avijjā* when it appears.

- *Anusaya* means our cravings and habits (that we have acquired through *avijjā*) that lie underneath the surface, waiting for a trigger to surface.
- Thus *avijjā* itself is not something that is there all the time. A average human being acts without *avijjā* most of the time. Only when one does something with a greed, dislike, or without a full understanding of the situation, one takes action with *avijjā*.
- *Avijjā* is **triggered by a sensory input** that is either pleasing or displeasing to our mind. Whether a given "trigger" will set off *avijjā* will depend on one's *gati* (*gathi*) and *anusaya*; see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)," "Sansāric Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsava)," and "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control."
- Thus it is not correct to say that a average human is an entity with *avijjā*. There is no such "fixed living being," i.e., one with "self." **The only things that can be associated with "a person" are his/her *gati* and *anusaya*; these keep changing too.**

8. Even when *avijjā* arises, it can occur at many different levels ranging from *moha* (totally covered mind) to just not knowing the Four Noble Truths. In that latter case, one may do moral acts (*puññābhi saṅkhāra*) but expecting meritorious results. Here also the *akusala-mūla* PS cycle operates but will lead to good births within the 31 realms.

- Only when one does meritorious acts without any future expectations, that one does not act with *avijjā*, and the *kusala-mūla* PS cycle operates. That happens when one becomes an *Ariya* or a Noble Person.

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An *Ariya* knows that it is unfruitful to strive for anything in this world. An *Ariya* below the *Arahant* stage may act with *avijjā* at lower levels (i.e., would not act with *moha*).

- But in most cases, we disregard what was see, hear, etc. Unless one becomes interested in something, *avijjā* does not arise.
- Thus *avijjā* is something that is not there all the time for any person. The *avijjā anusaya* gets triggered by a sensory input.

9. Getting back to the **first comment**, instead of saying either "a person exists" or "a person does not exist", the Buddha said a living being exists moment-to-moment. We cannot deny that people exist; but there is nothing absolute about "a person". Instead, "a person" continually changes; we conventionally call a person "John Smith," etc.

- Another way to say the same thing is to say that "a living being" exists in a given state until the cause (and conditions) that give rise to that existence exist. Once root causes are changed, that existence will change to a new one. For example, if a human starts doing things that animals usually do, then that person will likely get an animal birth after death.

10. We can get more insight on **both comments** by considering what happens when one attains the *Arahanthood*.

- One attains the *Arahanthood* when one loses *avijjā anusaya*; see the links in #7. When that happens, *avijjā* will not get triggered by ANY sense input. There is no "*upādāna*" for any likes/dislikes. Thus at death, there in no "*sama uppada*" (birth of similar characteristics) corresponding to "*paṭicca*" (whatever one willingly attaches to).
- But the *kammic* energy that fueled the present life is still there. So, just a rock thrown by someone will stay up until the energy given to it is exhausted, the *Arahant* will live until the *kammic* energy for his/her life is exhausted. Still, he/she will not be tempted by any sensory input, since there is no *āsava/anusaya* left.
- An *Arahant* will experience all sense inputs just like any other human being, but will not generate any likes/dislikes. And since he/she is likely to have many *kamma vipāka* left, he/she could also experience pains and aches or even worse. The Buddha himself suffered from some ailments, and Ven. Moggalana was beaten to death.
- It is the FUTURE SUFFERING that is removed at the *Arahant* stage. Since there is no rebirth, there is no future suffering. The mind is forever released from the material body that CAN AND WILL impart suffering to those who remain in the *saṃsāra,* the cycle of rebirths.

9.1.5 Craving for Pornography – How to Reduce the Tendency

March 4, 2016; revised January 22, 2020

This post is not based on questions put to me directly. But I get a list of key search words, and it seems that many people would like to know how to suppress sexual urges and to reduce the tendency to visit pornographic sites.

Introduction

1. Of course, engaging in sexual activities with one's spouse is not a problem for even a *Sotāpanna*. It is only when one gets to the *Anāgāmī* stage that one AUTOMATICALLY loses the sexual urge; see, "The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How Root Causes are Removed" and "Is it necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

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- Cravings for ordinary **sensory pleasures** (sexual or otherwise) CANNOT be removed by sheer will power, just like darkness cannot be removed by willing for light. Darkness can be gotten rid of only by bringing in light.
- Sense desires can be cleansed only by "cleansing the mind," i.e, by contemplating on the real (*anicca*) nature of the world. In a simple words, that means seeing the bad consequences of strong cravings for sensory pleasures. As we discuss below, that understanding comes through learning Dhamma and getting rid of the extreme activities first.
- Even a *Sotāpanna* has only "seen" the futility of sense pleasures; he/she has not "experienced" the benefits of NOT DESIRING sense pleasures; see the posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."

The Bigger Picture

2. We have had an uncountable number of rebirths so far simply because we cannot comprehend the consequences of attaching to sense pleasures and also because we become angry when we don't get what we desire.

- Those objects that we desire so much will lose their appeal over time. Sense pleasures, sexual or otherwise, are short-lived. Even if one can have access to sense pleasures, the ABILITY to enjoy them WILL decrease with time. That is something that people typically do not realize.
- The attitude of most people is "I need to enjoy them to the fullest while I can." But one needs to at least stay away from extreme behaviors at least. Learning Dhamma will help to avoid **future suffering; one must start as soon as possible**. When we get really old, we lose not only the ability to enjoy such pleasures, but also the ability to comprehend Dhamma (because our brains degrade with time).

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Changes: Young to Old

Many of Our Habits Are *Saṃsāric* Habits (*Gati*)

3. Fundamentally, craving sex-related activities are not any different from craving other sense pleasures. Each person has *saṃsāric* habits (*gathi*) for some specific set of sense pleasure(s).

- Some have an excess craving to eat tasty foods, some like gossiping about others, some want to go hunting, etc., and some may have the cravings for sexual pleasures, and it is usually a combination of several. Each person has a unique set, and that changes with time too.
- The danger with such habits is that under extreme conditions, they could lead to worse actions. Sexual tendencies could especially become problematic. We all have heard about cases where "good citizens" committing rape, when prevailing conditions led them to "lose control".
- More on the subject at, "The law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Gravings (Āsava)" and posts therein.

Contemplate on Adverse Consequences

4. The critical and first thing to do is to get rid of those habits that bring harm to others. **A *Sotāpanna* in inherently incapable** of doing such extreme acts because his/her mind has clearly grasped the consequences of such actions. Focusing on the sexual urges, one MUST NOT DO certain things: rape and having relationships with children or others' spouses are prominent examples.

- Learning Dhamma helps through all stages of "rehabilitation." Learning the adverse consequences of extreme habits such as those mentioned above is one way to convince the mind (i.e., subconscious *viññāṇa*) to voluntarily give up those habits.
- The Buddha said, "don't do things to others that one would not like to be done to oneself." Always try to pause a moment and contemplate the consequences of any harsh act. This is the basis of *Kāyānupassanā* in *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation; see, "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."

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Learning and Following Buddha Dhamma Will Help

5. It is also important to realize that one cannot remove the basic tendencies for ordinary sense pleasures by sheer willpower alone. Trying to do that could bring more harm (stress) than benefits.

- The key is to train the mind to grasp the harmful future consequences of **extreme** habits and desires (*gati*), whether it is due to excess craving for sex or the tendency to get mad at the slightest provocation. These are all habits that most likely originated in many lives back.
- We either develop new habits via repeated use or more likely re-energize and further cultivate old habits from previous lives.
- The following links discuss how to change one's *gati*: "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)" and "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View," among others. One could just type *gati* or habits in the Search button on the top right and get a list of relevant posts.

The validity of the Rebirth Process – Actions Have Consequences

6. The other important thing to realize is that one does not NEED TO get rid of less-severe cravings for sense pleasures (sexual or otherwise) at once. The key is to do it gradually. It is better to say, "realization will sink in gradually as one learns Dhamma or the true nature of this world."

- The Buddha gave the following simile: When one is cultivating a field, all one needs to do is to follow the procedures that will optimize bringing a good harvest. One needs to prepare the soil, plant healthy seeds, and then keep weeds out. One must also provide water and nutrients regularly. There is no point in watching the plants throughout the day to see whether they are growing or to worry about them. They will grow and yield a good harvest if one does one's part.
- In the same way, one needs first to understand the basic broader world view, i.e., that we are spending a relatively short time in this life and move from life-to-life based on causes that we create (based on how we live). The post on *dasa akusala* (ten defilements) is a guide: "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

7. Here is a list of critical things that is comparable to getting the soil ready to plant seeds:

- One needs to first understand, at least to some some extent, the long-term nature of our lives far beyond our deaths. Many people believe that it all ends with this life. What if that is not correct? One needs to be make sure, because the answer to that question may have consequences for billions and trillions of years to come.
- Also, do things happen, or do they arise due to CAUSES? Cause and effect is the basis of science. Things ALWAYS occur due to (multiple) causes. People just get born out of nothing. Previous causes led to the birth of a human being (or any other living being). The Buddha said these causes are the *kamma*, what we have done in the past.
- There are certain principles or laws that Nature follows. Scientists can explain most of the things that happen to inert objects: If one throws up a stone, we can even calculate its path on the way back to ground. The reason that it falls to the ground is that the Earth is pulling it down; that is the cause for it to fall. Like that, EACH AND EVERY EVENT has a reason. Events based on mental causes typically are complex and not easy to sort out).

Consequences in the Rebirth Process

8. After making some progress, one needs to contemplate the implications of over-indulgences: (1) They are short-lived. When one's ability to enjoy them goes away, one gets depressed, (2) Such over-indulgences build corresponding character or "*gati*," and one's future births are according to one's *gathi*.

- Another *saṃsāric gati* is the tendency to get angry at the slightest provocation. Here also, one needs to think about the adverse consequences of that behavior.

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- In both cases, the harmful consequences are two-fold: The short-term result is that one gets stressed out shortly after responding to the "urge" and getting temporary relief.
- The more adverse long-term consequences are worse. Each time one does it, the habit strengthened. Furthermore, **depending on the action**, one may cultivate animal *gati* (when blinded by extreme sense pleasures) or *niraya gati* (when blinded by rage).

9. There is a reason that one is born human and another is born an animal. A human-born had done a wholesome *kamma* that deserved being born human. Furthermore, that *kamma* was possible because that person tended to do that type of deeds. This tendency to do certain things depends on one's "*gati*."

- If a human displays "animal *gati*" or does things that animals do (do whatever one feels like doing without any consideration for others, have sex indiscriminately, etc.), then it is likely that he/she will be born an animal in the future.
- On the other hand, if a human displays kindness, can even tolerate others' bad behavior, etc., then he/she has *deva* or *brahma* "*gati*," then he/she is likely to born a *deva*, Brahma, or a human, in future lives.
- In the language of *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, "*jāti*" is according "*bhava*," "*bhava*" according "*upādāna*," "*upādāna*" according to "*taṇhā*," i.e., "what one likes to do or has craving for." Thus if one likes to do what dogs usually do, then a future "*jāti*" or birth as a dog is hard to avoid. This is true for any other kind of birth.

Buddha's Middle Way

10. Thus whether it is a sexual craving or any other craving for sense pleasure, we need to be careful first to avoid any extreme behavior. One cannot jump from the bottom of the ladder to the top; one has to climb step-by-step. Get rid of the worst habits first and move up on the ladder.

- The one who was born an animal was likely to have engaged in activities suitable for an animal; some of the sexual activities shown in pornographic movies are suitable only for animals. One does such extreme deeds due to a reason: i.e., one has tendencies or *gati* to do such acts. They do not change much unless one willfully tries to change them. Getting rid of such extreme behavior is the first step. The sooner done is better.
- Then one can tackle less severe problems. Always thinking about tasty foods and overeating is as bad as the tendency to watch adult movies habitually. They are both bad habits that need to be broken gradually, with an understanding of the consequences. Of course, pornography has different categories; one tends to watch "extreme" pornography when one has extreme habits.
- **A living being can significantly change its "*gati*" only as a human.** An animal is not capable of any significant change of character, even though some of its habits can be changed if trained by a human. Even for *devas* and *Brahmā*, it is hard to improve their *gati* unless they had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* as a human.

Summary

11. In summary, one MUST stop the most harmful acts (which could lead to rebirth in the lowest four realms or the *apāyā*) by any means possible using sheer will power. However, less harmful acts will reduce over time. One needs to follow a systematic procedure as outlined in the links given in # 4 and #5 above.

- Learning Dhamma can reduce the tendency to engage in any immoral or unwise activities in the long run. In this regard it is important to understand the different levels of greed and hate; see, "Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Taṇhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc.)" and, in particular the post, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."
- The section on "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa" provides more advanced analyses, especially for those who are at least on the way to become a *Sotāpanna*, i.e., a *Sotāpanna magga anugami*.

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9.2 Book Reviews

"Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt"

"Waking Up" by Sam Harris"

"The Language of God" by Francis Collins"

"Spark" by John Ratey"

"The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli"

9.2.1 "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt

1. I started writing this post while I was reading the popular book, "Why Does the World Exist? – An Existential Detective Story" by Jim Holt (2012). It is a good book with many thought-provoking questions. Here I would like to point out that most of those questions have answers in Buddha Dhamma.

- On p. 269, equating the *Nibbānic* bliss to annihilation of a person, he asks, "…But how can you enjoy something if you do not exist?". I initially started the post with the title, "Does Nibbāna Mean Annihilation of a "Person"?", to address this question, but then I started addressing other issues in the book and eventually changed the title to be the same as the book title.
- Even many Buddhists are terrified of the idea of *Nibbāna*, thinking that it means annihilation. This is why even many *Bhikkhus* like to give "blessings" to the effect, "May you attain *Nibbāna* at the end of much pleasures in the heavenly worlds". This illustrates a total lack of understanding of the deep message of the Buddha.

2. The problem is in the question itself. If a person is to be annihilated, a "person" need to exist in the first place. Now this is a very deep issue that needs some knowledge of Buddha Dhamma to understand. As the Buddha said in his first sermon, his Dhamma is, "*pubbe anunussutesu dhammesu*….. " or "a concept that has not been known to the world before..."

- In order to annihilate, there must be something "concrete", what the Brahmins of the day of the Buddha called "*āthma*", or what the major religions of today call the "soul". It is very difficult for all of us to get rid of the perception of "me" or" myself". **In fact, that perception is totally removed only at the Arahant stage of Nibbāna; it keeps decreasing as one advances on the Path.**
- Thus as long as one "belongs to this world of 31 realms", one always thinks in terms of "me" and "the external world". This is why the Buddha rejected the concept of "no-self" even though most people incorrectly translate *anatta* as "no-self"; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."
- On the other hand, the Buddha said that it is also incorrect to say there is "self". This is because any "person" changes even moment-to-moment; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."
- In rejecting both "self" and "no-self" extremes, the Buddha said "this changing being" or "a lifestream" changes moment-to-moment due to changes in the causes that support that lifestream. This is not something that I can explain in one essay, and is explained via many posts at the site, including the important section on *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- In the book there is a separate chapter on, "The Self – Do I Really Exist?". I will discuss that chapter below, and point out a few more related facts.

3. The book's main theme is "why is there something rather than nothing?" or "how did the world got started?". It summarizes most of the arguments that have accumulated over thousands of years, and of course come to the inevitable question on "the nature of the Creator God who would not need a cause for being there".

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- However, regarding the two questions on existence as expressed above, the Buddha's answer is the simplest: The world has existed forever and it is not possible to pinpoint to a specific first cause. The proof is very simple: Suppose there is a first cause; then what caused that? QED.
- Thus in the scientific basis of cause and effect, the absence of a first cause is built in.
- On p. 82 of the book, Jim Holt did point out, "*..Scientific thinkers by and large, have not shared such qualms about eternity. Neither Galileo nor Newton nor Einstein had any problem conceiving of a universe that was infinite in time. Indeed, Einstein added to his field equations a fudge factor – the infamous "cosmological constant" – to ensure that they would yield a universe that was static and eternal.*"
- And a few philosophers have discussed the problem with "first cause" arguments, as Jim Holt noted. Talking about the late philosopher John Mackie on p. 206, "*..Obviously, as Mackie observed, no explanation in terms of a "first cause" could answer the ultimate question of existence, for such an explanation would merely raise the further question of why that first cause -whether it be God, an unstable chunk of false vacuum, or some still more exotic entity- itself existed*".

4. If one accepts that the world has existed forever, then many other questions discussed in the book do not even arise. Thus 100% of the questions discussed are answered if we start off with the premise that the world has existed forever AND the root causes (greed, hate, and ignorance) for the existence of the world given by the Buddha.

- For example, on p. 7, Leibniz's Principle of Sufficient Reason is discussed: For every truth, there must be a reason why it is so and not otherwise; and for every thing, there must be a reason for that thing's existence. This is basically "cause and effect". The Buddha said that the world exists because of the greed, hate, and ignorance; and those causes have no beginning.
- This is related to the issue of the mind taking precedence over matter, and I am slowly building evidence for that in the website. There are some introductory posts in the "Abhidhamma" and "Dhamma and Philosophy" sections.
- On p. 188, Jim Holt discusses the fact that all science says about the "stuff that makes up our world" is that mass is equivalent to energy, "*....but it gives us no idea of what energy really is...*" This is exactly what is explained in Abhidhamma, and I will get to it eventually. He goes on to say, "*...As Bertrand Russell noted in his 1927 book, The Analysis of Matter, when it comes to the intrinsic nature of the entities making up the world, science is silent*".
- He also briefly discuss another big issue in philosophy on p. 192: "*The conclusion of the philosophers ……that there is more to consciousness than the mere processing of information. If this is true, then science, insofar as it describes the world as a play of information states, would seem to leave out a part of reality: the subjective, irreducibly qualitative part*". Actually, as we will see, Buddha's answer solves both this and the issue above in one fell swoop.
- A world without a beginning also gives an answer to the question of "why do I exist" (p. 18). We all have "existed" forever; there is no beginning so the question has no meaning. Another frequently asked question is, "what is the meaning of life?". There is no meaning to life: The bottom line is that we all suffer in this existence ON THE AVERAGE, IN THE LONG TERM while we meander aimlessly among the 31 realms of existence; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."

5. Now the only critical question is how do we know that the Buddha's world view is correct? The answer is that it can explain the complex world around us; it has the "explanatory power". Also see, "Vagaries of Life and the Way to Seek Good Births" and "Good Explanations – Key to Weeding out Bad Versions of Dhamma," among many other posts.

- Furthermore, one can EXPERIENCE the truth of Buddha's teachings and the results for oneself. I have described part of my experience in following the Path in, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga." Do not be discouraged by the title of the post.

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6. Now let me briefly discuss the 2nd last chapter on, "The Self – Do I Really Exist?". Here Jim Holt comes across the answer himself (p. 256): Talking about the Descartes' famous phrase, "I think, therefore I exist", he says, "... ..*Did Descartes here infer more than he was entitled to? As many commentators have pointed out (beginning with Georg Lichtenberg in the eighteenth century), the "I" in his ultimate premise is not quite legitimate. All Descartes could assert with certainty was "there are thoughts".* ***He never proved that thoughts require a thinker***....." (bold face mine).

7. This is exactly what the Buddha said. There are thoughts, but no REAL thinker; there is the PERCEPTION of a thinker in "one's mind" until one's mind is purified to the level of an *Arahant* and it becomes clear that there is no "thinker". However, the irony is that until that wisdom is gained, "one's suffering" is real. The suffering is there simply because one thinks there is a real thinker!

- But one cannot honestly say, "there is no-self" as most people try to do, unless one is an *Arahant*; one is just trying to fool oneself in saying that. When something bad happens to "anything that belongs to oneself" one INEVITABLY feels the pain associated with it; see, "Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings."
- When the mind is purified (i.e., is absent of greed, hate, and ignorance) perception of "self" goes away at the *Arahant* stage, then the suffering associated with "one's stuff" is not there anymore. When one comprehends the concept of *anicca* to some extent, this will become clear to some extent. In other words, *Nibbānic* bliss or *nirāmisa sukha* increases as one advances on the Path, with the mind being purified at each step; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?," and "Nirāmisa Sukha."
- Thus we cannot forcibly get rid of the sense of "I". Only through the true understanding of the Three Characteristics of this world, *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, that one can slowly start getting rid of that sense of "I" or "self". Until then there is neither a "self" nor "no-self", but just a stream of thoughts; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream." Only at the death of an *Arahant* that stream of thoughts is ended and the mind becomes free of any attachment to the material world of the 31 realms; see, "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?," and "What are Rūpa? Relation to Nibbāna."

9.2.2 "Waking Up" by Sam Harris

Sam Harris, "Waking Up: A Guide to Spirituality Without Religion" (2014).

1. I am quite encouraged by the fact that many people are beginning to see through something that is contrary to the basic human instincts: That it is possible to find a different and more permanent form of happiness that is not related to material things.

- Right at the start of the book, when he talks about his first "meditation retreat" at the age of 16 under harsh conditions in wilderness, the author says he was puzzled by the positive reaction of the older people in the group, "*...How could someone's happiness increase when all the material sources of pleasure and distraction had been removed?*" (p.2).
- But now with many years of experience in meditation and studies on human nature as a neuroscientist, he can understand it: "*..Unlike many atheists, I have spent much of my life seeking experiences of the kind that gave ride to world's religions. Despite the painful results of my first few days alone in the mountains of Colorado, I later studied with a wide range of monks, lamas, yogis, and other contemplatives, some of whom had lived for decades in seclusion doing nothing but meditating. In the process, I spent two years on silent retreat myself (in increments of one week to three months), practicing various techniques of meditation for twelve to eighteen hours a day*" (pp. 13-14).

2. Harris, like many others, has found that there is something about human life that cannot be explained away just in terms of the workings of the material world, but cannot quite pinpoint to the source of that "something extra".

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- Modern science has obliterated the concept of a "divine influence" as has been put forth by various religions, as Harris explains. So I was quite interested to see what his conclusion would be as to the "source of this extra something".

3. On p.8, he makes a very valid statement: "*Spirituality must be distinguished from religion – because of people of every faith, and of none, have had the same sorts of spiritual experiences….Nothing that a Christian, a Muslim, and a Hindu can experience – self-transcending love, ecstasy, bliss, inner light – constitutes evidence in support of their traditional beliefs, because their beliefs are logically incompatible with one another. **A deeper principle must be at work***". (my highlighting).

- This is exactly what I have been trying to emphasize at this website.
- In the next very paragraph, he says what he found that deeper principle to be: "*That principle is the subject of this book: The feeling that we call "I" is an illusion*" (p. 9). This is probably the "no-self" theory that is erroneously presented as Buddha's concept of "*anatta*"; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."
- However, on that same page, he also summarizes most of my own conclusions about religions in general, including "Buddhism" the way as it is practiced by most in both Theravāda and Mahayana sects.

4. I am just going to quote the relevant sentences from pp. 9-10: "*I am often asked what will replace religion. The answer, I believe, is nothing and everything. Nothing need replace its ludicrous and divisive doctrines….But what about love, compassion, moral goodness, and self-transcendence? Many people will imagine that religion is the true repository of their virtues. To change this we must talk about the full range of human experience in a way that is as free as the best science already is*".

- And through the rest of the book he does go through that process. I agree with most of it, except of course that while "Buddhism" may be a religion, Buddha Dhamma is certainly not (if religion is defined as one providing salvation via following set rituals or having blind faith in an entity or a supreme being).

5. The key to Mr. Harris not understanding of Buddha Dhamma becomes apparent on p. 28: "*We can also grant that Eastern wisdom has not produced societies or political institutions that are any better than their Western counterparts. In fact, one could argue that India has survived as the world's largest democracy only because of institutions that were built under British rule. Nor has the East led the world in scientific discovery. Nevertheless, there is something to the notion of uniquely Eastern wisdom, and most of it has been concentrated in or derived from the tradition of Buddhism*".

- The problem here is that Mr. Harris has not had exposure to Buddha Dhamma, the "non-religious" original teachings.
- The focus of Buddha Dhamma, as delivered by the Buddha, was not on enhancing the mundane life and on building a better society. It was focused on the fact that it is in fact a "waste of time" to try to build large cities, develop technology, and in general to spend too much time on "making things better for this life", because this life is only a brief stop-over in a much longer journey.

6. If one really understood the key message of the Buddha, one would see that this life is too short to be "wasted" on such things. This is due to three key foundational aspects of Buddha Dhamma:

- Human life, even though wrought with some suffering, is the best in all of 31 realms of this world for attaining Nibbāna; see, the description of the wider world of 31 realms in, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma".
- In the process of rebirth we spend only a tiny amount of time in this life of about 100 years; see, "Evidence for Rebirth."
- And immersing in mundane sense pleasures becomes only a hindrance to attain the "true and permanent happiness" of *Nibbāna*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha", and "Nirāmisa Sukha?".

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- Of course, especially the Mahayana version of "Buddhism", or even the Theravāda version, has veered away from this key message of the Buddha.

7. Yet, I must hasten to point out two additional points:

- The Buddha stated that not everyone is able to comprehend this key message. Thus, for those who did not wish to pursue *Nibbāna*, and asked for advice on how to live a moral and fulfilling family life while enjoying sensual pleasures, he did provide advice. In Chapter IV of Bhikkhu Bodhi's popular book, "*In the Buddha's Words*" (2005), such advice from different *sutta* have been extracted to one place; this book also has other categories separated out like good rebirths, mind etc.
- The Buddha never tried to change or influence the political systems that were in place, even though he praised the democratic system that was in place in the small autonomous region of *Vajji* , which was really a republic similar to the one we have now in the United States. Other than openly criticizing the caste system, he stayed away from politics.

8. I am impressed that Mr. Harris has been able to catch at least a glimmer of the uniqueness in Buddha Dhamma despite the fact that he has not been exposed to the true teachings of the Buddha: "*Buddhism in particular possesses a literature on the nature of the mind that has no peer in Western religion or Western science. Some of these teachings are cluttered with metaphysical assumptions that should provoke our doubts, but many aren't. And when engaged as a set of hypotheses by which to investigate the mind and deepen one's ethical life, Buddhism can be an entirely rational enterprise*" (p. 29).

- The author is highly impressed with the Buddhist "*vipassana*" meditation. However, what he describes in just breath meditation or "*samatha* meditation"; see, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)".

9. And he has the concept of Enlightenment (*Nibbāna*) all wrong (this says a lot about the *Mahayana* "Buddhism" that he has been exposed to): *"...the state of "full enlightenment" – is generally described as "omniscient". Just what this means is open to a fair bit of caviling. But however narrowly defined, the claim is absurd*" (p. 43).

- To understand the concept of *Nibbāna*, one must understand the world view of the Buddha as described in the above mentioned posts, and then one needs to read other posts at this site on describing *Nibbāna* (just do a search with the key word Nibbāna at the top right box on Keyword Search).

10. Interestingly, there is no mention at all about purifying the mind of defilements, which is key to true Buddhist meditation; see, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

- I do not blame the author of course, but it is sad to see how far "Buddhism" has veered off from the original message of the Buddha.
- It is these three root causes greed, hate, and ignorance (and the counterparts of non-greed, non-hate, and wisdom) that clarifies the basis of morality that he has puzzled over in two other books, "*The Moral Landscape*" (2011) and "*Free Will*" (2012).
- As Mr. Harris correctly points out in "*The Moral Landscape*," '*there is no such thing as Christian or Muslim morality*." There is no "Buddhist morality" either. Morality is universal and comes out naturally on the basis of benevolence, compassion, and wisdom having precedence over greed, hate, and ignorance; see, "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism."

11. Chapter 2 is on consciousness. The author has a good introduction and his own thinking about consciousness may be expressed here: "*I am sympathetic with those who, like the philosopher Colin McGinn and the psychologist Steven Pinker, have suggested that perhaps the emergence of consciousness is simply incomprehensible in human terms*" (p. 57).

- Consciousness has also been fully explained by the Buddha. Consciousness is NOT an emergent property, it is a fundamental entity. I have several introductory posts on consciousness at the site; see, "What is Consciousness?" and follow-up posts.

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- I hope those who are interested would read the comprehensive description of the mind provided by the Buddha in the *Abhidhamma* section of this site, which may not be ready for an comprehensive analysis for several more months. But there are a few introductory posts there.

12. The rest of the book is about the author's experience with trying out different types of meditations. It is too bad that he was not exposed to real Buddhist meditation. On the other hand, even in countries where the *Theravāda* Buddhism is practiced, it is the breath meditation that is widely taught.

- Overall, I am impressed by the fact that even with the minimum exposure Mr. Harris had to Buddha Dhamma, he has been able to see there "there is something hidden there". I am glad to say that the Buddha did teach a much more deeper doctrine, and I am sure he and many others in the West will be enthusiastic about finding the true message of the Buddha.
- The author knows that as an atheist, he was treading into unknown territory in talking about spiritual experiences: "*……many of my fellow atheists consider all talk of spirituality to be a sign of mental illness, conscious imposture, or self-deception. This is a problem, because millions of people have had experiences for which spiritual and mystical seem the only terms available*" (p.11).
- However, once one understands the true message of the Buddha, one can clearly see that there is nothing in his doctrine that goes against the beliefs and convictions of most atheists; Buddha Dhamma describes the Nature's laws at a fundamental level.
- The only difference between science and Buddha Dhamma is that science assumes that mind phenomena can be derived from material phenomena, while in Buddha Dhamma mind is at the forefront; see, "Philosophy of the Mind."

13. I encourage those who are interested to read the book because the author has not only contemplated deeply about the subjects of morality, questions on existence, world religions, etc, but also has tried to experience different meditation techniques. I only wish he had been exposed to the true teachings of the Buddha, so that he could perhaps make more stronger statements about the value of the Buddha Dhamma in addition to finding much more benefits for himself.

9.2.3 "The Language of God" by Francis Collins

Revised August 9, 2019

This is a top-rated book (published in 2007), as apparent from a large number of reviews on Amazon. The author is a respected scientist and is the director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). This post is based on a review that I posted at the Amazon site back in 2012.

- I have read numerous books trying to find solid arguments for believing in a Creator. The author has put together the best case he could also using previous ideas of C. S. Lewis and others. The main points in the book can be summarized as follows (not in the order presented in the book):

1. God is responsible for the "Big Bang," i.e., the creation of the universe, and for creating the just right physical parameters (fine tuning) that enabled human life on planet Earth.

2. The "Intelligent Design" theory needs to be abandoned, since it may damage the case for the existence of God.

3. Darwin's theory of evolution does account for leading to the appearance of a "human-like" creature, even though the theory explains the evolution of more complex animals.

- Whether this creature further evolved by itself to be human or whether at some point, God directly instilled conscience to this creature, he leaves it open.
- Either way, God is responsible for the existence of morality in humans. He prefers to call "BioLogos," the theory of "Theistic Evolution."

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4. The existence of "Moral Law" (the ability to differentiate right from wrong) is the fundamental basis for his belief in God.

5. The issue of "pain and suffering" was a problematic issue for C. S. Lewis, and the present author also runs into difficulties in addressing it.

My comments are as follows:

1. Proponents of the Big Bang theory say that Big Bang was not just one event, but such events are supposed to be of frequent occurrence. Thus there is no need to invoke a higher power.

- Stephen Hawking, whose book "A Brief History of Time" that the author quoted to make a case for God's role, has since come out with a new book "The Grand Design" (2010). In that book he clearly states that the need for a Creator God is no longer there based on new evidence.
- Also, in the inflationary theory, Big Bangs are occurring all the time, and there is no need to invoke a fine-tuning of physical parameters; see, "The Beginning of Infinity" by David Deutsch.

2. Actually "Intelligent Design" is a somewhat better theory than the hypothesis of a God, in the sense that the proponents of that theory have put forth some formidable arguments for it.

- Of course, I do not subscribe to that theory (which some say is making a case for a Creator God without admitting it). However, Collins does not make a better case for the Creator God hypothesis.
- The problem with the "Intelligent Design" theory is that of course, the question arises as to how that designer came into being! That is why many people say it is the same as the God hypothesis.
- If anyone is interested in learning about the "Intelligent Design" theory, a good book is "Signature in the Cell" by Stephen Meyer (2009).

3. The big question here is "wherein this sequence did the God instill moral values in the evolving creature?". Is there a clear-cut transition from a robotic animal to a human with moral values?

- The "uniqueness of a human" according to the author, is the ability to know right from wrong. Humans indeed have this quality stronger than in animals. Some animals also have at least a glimpse of this quality. If you have a pet, especially a dog, you know that it has feelings and even its mind to do things, i.e., it is not like a robot.
- While people sometimes sacrifice their own lives to save others, there are also people like Hitler and Pol Pot who have committed unmentionable atrocities. And that was with planning (not just on impulse).
- In Buddha Dhamma, both moral and immoral choices are in the "human psyche"; based on many complex factors (*sansāric* habits or "*gati*", family, friends, and associates, etc) people choose to be moral or immoral at different times depending on the situation. Of course, greed, hate, and ignorance play a big role; see, "Living Dhamma."

4. Now on the existence of "moral law": From #3 it is clear that even though morality is in human psyche, it does not have a "binding effect" on humans. Humans are, in general, more "moral" than animals. But within the wider world described by the Buddha Dhamma, there are other sentient beings (*devas* and *brahmā*) who are more "moral" than humans.

- If the man is to be judged by just one life, why is it that everyone not given the same chance (including "same morality")? People are born poor, rich, healthy, unhealthy, etc., and some die even before getting a chance to prove their worthiness.
- These apparent "vagaries of life" are a strong argument for the case that this life is only one of many. Furthermore, by the diversity that we observe is due to the effects of past actions (*kamma vipāka*); see, "Vagaries of Life and the Way to seek "Good Rebirths."
- The basis of morality (as well as immorality) comes out naturally in Buddha Dhamma; see, "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism."

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5. Of course, the issue of "pain and suffering" — not only in this life but in the cycle of rebirths — is the fundamental problem of existence according to Buddha Dhamma.

- **Again, the issue of "pain and suffering" is unexplainable by any approach that is based on just one life.** Just like modern science, Buddha Dhamma has a foundation in "causes and effects." Suffering — as well as happiness — arises due to past causes, and since most of these effects (e.g., disability at birth, poverty) are even apparent at birth, "past" means past lives.

9.2.4 "Spark" by John Ratey

Early post of 2014; revised August 28, 2019

1. There is a good book, "Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain" by John J. Ratey (2013). It discusses new findings on the effects of regular exercise on the brain as well as the body. (Most of the books I review are likely to be available at public libraries).

2. The book discusses how exercise can keep the brain working at higher efficiency and lower stress and anxiety. Also, regular exercise can rid of addictions, and even Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, ADHD. It also talks about women's hormonal changes and aging too.

3. The key is to engage in a moderate exercise program up to 6 days a week. And to ratchet it up to high-intensity once-in-a-while, even for a minute at a time. For example, if you jog, try to run fast for 30 seconds to 1 min once-in-awhile. That is called "interval running."

- The maximum heart rate for a person is 220-AGE.
- low-intensity exercise: 55%-65% of max rate
- moderate: 65%-75%
- high intensity: 75%-90%

4. There are "wristwatch type" heart rate monitors available. But you basically "know" when you are at low intensity (walking), moderate (jogging/slow running), and high (dashing to catch a bus or running a 100-meter race).

- Should not do high intensity unless you have been active for a while.
- In the anaerobic range (high intensity), the brain releases human growth hormones (HGH). **That is a natural way to "get high."**
- Even low-intensity workouts release many other beneficial chemicals. But in high-intensity workouts, they all get a boost. All these are good for the sustenance/growth of neurons so that your memory can be improved.
- But should not do high-intensity regularly unless one is in great shape.
- He also mentions yoga as an enjoyable activity. Any exercise, i.e., just walking, is better than none.
- He discusses how children in a school district in PA are avoiding obesity and health problems and getting good grades because the schools have good exercise programs.
- I find that the best time to meditate is after a good workout and a shower. The body and the mind are refreshed and alert.

5. We are born with a body and a mind that are results of specific *kamma vipāka* in the past. But we are not bound by either; we can improve both. That does not mean we should try to "beautify" the body; we should make it healthy. The physical body is a "temporary shell" that will be with us for about 100 years, and if we do not take care of it, that will lead to much discomfort.

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- We can make conditions conducive to get "good *kamma* seeds" and to prevent "bad *kamma* seeds" from bearing fruits; see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya." Do not be discouraged by those Pāli words. The post is easy to understand.

6. Exercise and meditate! That is key to a long healthy life as well for "cooling down" in the sense of getting some long-lasting peace-of-mind or attaining one of the four stages of *Nibbāna*.

- As we get old, it is imperative to keep both body and mind in good condition. It is hard to concentrate, let alone meditate, with an aching body or a defiled mind.
- Walking a mile or two a day can keep one reasonably healthy. For the mind, solving word puzzles or reading a book is better than watching television.

9.2.5 "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli

October 13, 2018; revised November 15, 2020

"The Life of the Buddha" Is a Good Resouce

1. "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Ñāṇamoli is good to read and even to keep as a reference (page numbers quoted are for the 2001 First BPS Pariyatti edition). It is a good book for two reasons:

- A chronological record of the Buddha's life (after the Buddhahood),
- Detailed accounts of events that are not in the *suttā* (taken from the *Vinaya Piṭaka*).

Need to Consult All Three *Piṭaka*

2. The Buddha said that if there is any doubt or a concept that is not clear, one should check with *Sutta*, *Vinaya*, and *Abhidhamma*. These basically refer to the *Tipiṭaka* (three baskets) of *Sutta Piṭaka, Vinaya Piṭaka*, and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.

- Most people refer to the *Sutta Piṭaka* and forget about the other two. *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* is a bit hard to understand, and without a firm grasp of basics it is harder.
- Most people think that the *Vinaya Piṭaka* is just for the *bhikkhus* and *bhikkhunis*. But there are sections in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* that have details that are not in the *suttā*. Furthermore, those sections in the *Vinaya Piṭaka* are easy to understand, as we see below.

An Example

3. I will provide the following as an example of what is in this book that is not available in any *sutta*. It describes how the five ascetics attained the *Sotāpanna* stage over several days with the delivery of the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*.

Here is a direct quote from p. 45 of the book (starting from the point where the Buddha had just finished the first delivery of the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*):

"Then *Aññata Koṇḍañña*, who had seen and reached and found and penetrated the *Dhamma*, whose uncertainties were left behind, whose doubts had vanished, who had gained perfect confidence and became independent of others in the Teacher's Dispensation (**My Comment**: i.e., became a *Sotāpanna*), said to the Blessed One: "Blessed One, I wish to go forth under the Blessed One and to receive the full admission?"

"Come, *bhikkhu*," the Blessed One said, "The *Dhamma* is well proclaimed. Live the holy life for the complete ending of suffering." And that was his full admission.

Then the Blessed One taught and instructed the rest of the *bhikkhus* with a talk on the *Dhamma*. As he did so, there arose in the venerable Vappa and the venerable Bhaddiya, the spotless, immaculate vision of the

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Dhamma (**My Comment**: i.e., became *Sotāpannas*). All that is subjected to arising is subjected to cessation. They, too, asked for and received the full admission.

These, having seen *dhamma*, attained *dhamma*, knowing *dhamma* … having attained without another's help to full confidence in the teacher's instruction, spoke thus to the Blessed One: "May we, Blessed One, receive the going forth in the Blessed One's presence, may we receive ordination?"

Then living on the food they brought to him, the Blessed One taught and instructed the rest of the *bhikkhus* with a talk on the *Dhamma*. All six lived on the food brought back by the three of them. Then there arose in the venerable Mahānāma and the venerable Assaji the spotless, immaculate vision of the *Dhamma* (**My Comment**: i.e., became *Sotāpannas*), and they too asked for and received the full admission".

Important Deductions

4. We can learn several important facts from the above account.

- Only Ven. Koṇḍañña attained the *Sotāpanna* stage in the first round in the first night of the delivery of the *sutta*. It actually took several days for all five ascetics to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Buddha actually did not just recite the *sutta* as it appears in the *Tipiṭaka*. That recital would have been finished within 15 minutes!
- So, we can see that what is in the *Tipiṭaka* are HIGHLY CONDENSED summaries of those discourses and possibly many discussions.

Many *Suttā* Provide Only Concise Summaries

5. What we see as the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* today is a highly condensed version of the material that was taught by the Buddha over several days, as is clear from #3 above.

- It appears that the Buddha himself summarized the material in each *sutta* in a short concise way to a limited number of verses that were suitable for oral transmission (easy to remember). **A *sutta* is supposed to be explained in detail;** see, "Sutta – Introduction."
- We must remember that all the *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* were transmitted down several generations over about 500 years before it was written down. It was not even remotely possible to include all that was discussed over those several days!

Word-by-Word Translation is a Terrible Practice

6. What happens these days is that even highly condensed *suttā* are translated word-by-word into English. This is a terrible practice. It is no different from just reciting a *sutta*!

- One can finish reading a *sutta* in 15 minutes, and ONE would not understand any of the deep concepts embedded in the *sutta*.
- **Then how could one understand the *sutta* by just reading a word-by-word translation of a *sutta*?**

7. In fact, this could be why many people to believe that one can attain *Nibbāna* by just reciting a *sutta* or a set of verses. This practice is sometimes called "*mantra* chanting." But there is no basis for that belief.

- *Nibbāna* can be attained ONLY by cleansing one's mind.
- The MENTAL stress arises ONLY due to *lobha, dosa, moha* in one's mind.
- As one cleanses one's mind, the mental stress will decrease. This decrease is gradual in the beginning. It will have significant drops at the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* stage and then more drops at *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi* stages.

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- An *Arahant* does not have any mental stress. He/she may have physical suffering, but that also will end at death. No more physical or mental suffering!

There is Value in Chanting Suttā

8. Of course, there is a value in even chanting a *sutta*. They have been formulated in a format to "calm down the mind," even if one did not understand the meaning; see, "Buddhist Chanting."

- It would be much better if one understood the basic message of the *sutta*.
- One could get to the *Sotāpanna* stage ONLY BY fully understanding the concepts discussed in a major *sutta* like the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.*

But Some verses Need Detailed Explanations

9. A related key point is that upon attaining the *Buddhahood*, the Buddha wondered whether the humans will ever be able to understand the deep *Dhamma* he had just uncovered.

- This is stated on p. 37 of this book. The Buddha was really doubtful whether humans will comprehend his *Dhamma*, and *Brahma Sahampati* made an invitation to the Buddha, saying that many beings in the world can understand Buddha Dhamma. He would know because he had become an *Anāgāmi* by listening to Dhamma by a previous Buddha.
- So, the point is that if one thinks one can make progress on the Path by just chanting *suttā* or even learning the word-by-word translations, one would be very much mistaken.
- **In some cases, it can take a book to really do justice in explaining a single verse in some of the deep suttā!**
- However, some long *suttā*, especially in the *Dīgha Nikāya*, can be translated word-by-word for the most part, since there may not be any deep concepts discussed there.

Other Good Aspects of the Book

10. Another good aspect of the book is that it provides the background for delivering of some major *suttā* or verses.

- For example, there is a detailed account (pp. 55-60) of how the Buddha had to perform even a few miracles to convince Uruvela Kassapa, his two brother, and 1000 of their followers before they agreed to listen to the *Aditta Pariyaya Sutta* or the Fire Sermon.
- So, we can see that it was not easy in those early days for the Buddha to even convince some of the ascetics who had their own beliefs of what *Nibbāna* was about.

11. The subsequent chapters provide a good chronological account of what happened until the *Parinibbāna*. One can get a sense of which major *suttā* were delivered at around what time.

- There are accounts on the two chief disciples, and short accounts of other important personalities such as Anāthpiṇḍika, Aṅgulimāla, Visākha, etc. Chapter 7 describes the formation of the order of *bhikkhunis*.
- Several encounters with the *Māra Devaputta* are scattered throughout the book.
- One paragraph on p. 109 is on how the Buddha visited the *Tāvatimsa deva* realm and delivered *Abhidhamma*. A summary was conveyed to Ven. Sariputta, who expanded it with the help of his students, to the form that we have today.
- There is a chapter on Devadatta, which describes events that are not found in *suttā*, how he attained (*anāriya*) *jhānāa* and *iddhi* (super-normal powers) powers, how he appeared on the lap of Prince Ajatasattu as a baby using his *iddhi* powers.

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- It provides a good account of Devadatta's efforts to take the life of the Buddha, and how he lost all those super-normal powers and *jhānā* at the end.

12. There is a relatively long chapter on "The Doctrine", including the Four Noble Truths and the Noble Eightfold Path.

- Then, there is another relatively long chapter on the final year of the Buddha's life, including *Parinibbāna*.
- The final chapter is on the First Buddhist Council (*Sangāyanā*) that took place 3 months after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha.

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x Dhamma and Philosophy

- Dhamma and Philosophy – Introduction
- Philosophy of the Mind
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- The Infinity Problem in Buddhism
- Free Will in Buddhism – Connection to Saṅkhāra

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10.1 Dhamma and Philosophy – Introduction

1. One may ask the question: "What does Buddhism have to do with philosophy?".

The Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines philosophy as:

- the study of ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life, etc.
- a particular set of ideas about knowledge, truth, the nature and meaning of life, etc.
- a set of ideas about how to do something or how to live

Other dictionaries and books define philosophy in a similar manner.

2. The origin of the word "philosophy" comes from the Greek words "phila" (meaning love) and "sophia" (meaning wisdom). Thus philosophy is "love of wisdom". It is said that Pythagoras (570 BCE) coined the term, and that is the basically the time the Western philosophers started looking for "natural explanations" instead of accepting that a Creator needed to be invoked to explain phenomena that we see around us.

- This method of "acquiring knowledge" was supposed to be based on reason, argument, and observation. **But as we discuss at this website, any knowledge gained by that method is necessarily limited, because we have senses faculties that are very limited, and whatever deductions we make with unpurified minds are faulty and incomplete**; see, "Dhamma and Science" section for an introduction. Science actually branched off from philosophy, first as "natural philosophy".
- Therefore, Buddha Dhamma has a lot to say about philosophy, even though there is no such thing as "Buddhist philosophy"; there is only "Buddha Dhamma" which describes the nature. The Buddha did not speculate on anything like philosophers. He said he experienced everything that he taught. One time a *Brahmin* asked the Buddha whether he believed *devas* and hell beings exist. The Buddha said he KNOWS they exist and could see those beings.
- Buddha Dhamma can sort out the philosophical arguments that have gone back to the Buddha's time (in the Western world); philosophical views have evolved over the intervening time, but Buddha Dhamma has not. Ironically, "the pure form of Dhamma" had been left out of the discussion mainly because "Mahayana forefathers" like Nagarjuna, Asanga, and Vasabandhu made up a "Buddhist philosophy".

3. Since Buddha Dhamma is a complete set of nature laws only for its faithful followers, it is logical to present it as a philosophy to those who are not familiar with it or who have not seen enough evidence to believe that claim. In presenting Buddha Dhamma as a philosophy the second definition is a more valid one, because these are not evolving ideas; rather, they were laid down 2500 years ago, and have been documented in the *Tipiṭaka*, the Pāli Canon.

- It is a set of ideas about knowledge and truth not only about human existence, but ALL that exists in the seen and unseen parts of "this world", which also encompasses not only the Solar system, but an infinite number of such planetary systems.
- This may sound as an arrogant claim, but it is not. One could scan different sections of this site and see that there is a complete theory about the whole existence; it may take another year or more to get even the "basics" of the Dhamma published. As of mid-2015, I have not yet been able to present even a fraction of the Abhidhamma material.

4. My basic incentive for creating this section is to make a request to the philosophy community: It is time to take a close look at Buddha's world view, and see how it compares with existing philosophical arguments on various topics. No one has done a serious study on the worldview of the Buddha.

- It has been difficult to make a true assessment of what the "real Buddha Dhamma"is, because there are so many different versions out there.

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- I hope to make a logical presentation to convince the philosophy community. Please make any comments/requests, and I will try to address any serious request.

5. Perhaps as important, I want anyone reading the site to appreciate the significance of what the Buddha told us 2500 years ago. Compared to the pure Dhamma, all philosophical theories are at very early stages. Any interested reader can learn about the current philosophical arguments (and those going back to the early Greek philosophers) and then compare with Buddha Dhamma presented at this site.

6. Within the framework of the Buddha Dhamma all standard philosophical questions have been answered.

- These include, "the relation between the brain and mind", "the nature of death", "whether we have free will", etc. Thomas Nagel's short book listed below gives an introduction to some of such topics.
- Most existing literature on Buddhist philosophy says some of these questions are in the category of "questions that the Buddha refused to answer", which itself is an incorrect statement; see, "Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer". The Buddha refused to answer questions posed by a person who was not capable of comprehending the answers. But he has given the answers in other places.
- We will discuss how Buddha Dhamma provides answers to these philosophical questions one by one, as sufficient background material is added to site.

REFERENCES

For those who are interested on the subject, here are some references (both for philosophy in general and also on "Buddhist philosophy"; not in any particular order). Among those on "Buddhist philosophy", I have not read a single book that provides a true description of the Buddha's world view.

For those who are not familiar with the subject, I would recommend the first two introductory books on philosophy:

"What does it all mean?" by Thomas Nagel (1987) – Excellent introductory book and only 100 pages.

"The Making of a Philosopher", by Colin McGill (2003) – Another excellent introductory book.

"Buddhist Philosophy – Essential Readings", ed. by William Edelglass and Jay L. Garfield (2009).

"Mahayana Buddhism: The Doctrinal Foundations", by Paul Williams (2009)

"Buddhism as Philosophy", by Mark Siderits (2007).

"Buddhist Philosophy – A Historical Analysis", by David J. Kalupahana (1976).

"Causality: The Central Philosophy of Buddhism", by David J. Kalupahana (1975).

"A History of Buddhist Philosophy", by David J. Kalupahana (1992).

"Nagarjuna – The Philosophy of the Middle way", by David J. Kalupahana (1986).

"Causality and Chance in Modern Physics", by David Bohm (1957).

"Conversations on Consciousness", by Susan Blackmore (2006) – input from a number of philosophers.

"Mind – A Brief Introduction", by John R. Searle (2004).

"The Character of Consciousness", by David J. Chalmers (2010).

"Consciousness Explained", by D. C. Dennett (1991).

"The Quest for Consciousness: A Neuroscientific Approach", by C. Koch (2004).

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"Rocks of Ages: Science and Religion" by Stephen Jay Gould (2002).

"The Self and Its Brain", by Karl R. Popper and John C. Eccles (1977).

Next, "Philosophy of the Mind", …….

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10.2 Philosophy of the Mind

1. One nice thing about Buddha Dhamma is that there are no separate theories for the mind, meaning of existence, the physical world, or ANYTHING in this world. Thus I can refer to the section on "Buddha Dhamma" when I talk about the mind, the same way I refer to that section when I discuss "Dhamma and Science."

2. There seems to be three basic problems that the philosophers are trying to tackle regarding the mind (there are many others, but let us start with these):

- How does the mental experience arise in a physical body? Most scientists and philosophers say that it originates in the brain, but they have not been able to make the connection. This is the "mind-body problem".
- How can non-physical mental states of consciousness cause something in the physical world? For example, how can your intention ever cause a movement of your hand? This is the "problem of mental causation". Yet, the case for "physicalism" — that everything in this world is matter-based — is made with this as a premise.
- Finally, how your thoughts refer to something that is happening (or happened) in a distant city? This is called the "problem of intentionality". If you are thousand miles away from home, you can take "tour" of the home, room by room, in your mind.

3. The philosophers are divided into two camps in addressing the above problems:

- One camp says the "physical" and "mental" are two distinct realms. They do not think "mental" can arise from 'physical"; This camp is mostly religious and attribute the "mental" to the concept of a "soul". They are "dualists".
- The other camp is 'materialistic": they say the 'mental" arises from "physical". In the worst case, some materialists deny even the existence of a mental reality, even though I cannot quite understand what that means. Because they are obviously thinking about these concepts, which is "mental".

4. Let us look at the current status of these two camps:

- Following the extreme dualism of Rene Descartes, there have been many dualists, including Stephen Jay Gould whose "non-overlapping magisteria" in the late 1990's put matter and mind into non-overlapping disciplines: matter can be handled by science and morality and mind can be left to religion. However, these days only dualists left seem to be those who hold a dualist view for religious reasons, i.e., a soul.
- These days most philosophers are materialists. With the amazing progress of science and technology, it is hard for most people to believe anything that is not "confirmed' by science. And they think science, based on a purely materialistic approach, should be able to explain everything about 'this world". They believe that it is only a matter of time before brain activity will be able to explain the workings of the mind; see the reference list in "Dhamma and Philosophy – Introduction."
- The inadequacy of the materialist approach is detailed in a comprehensive manner by Thomas Nagel in his recent book, "Mind and Cosmos" (2012); it is an easy read with no fluff and only 128 pages. I was impressed by how close he came to advocating a "mind first" approach, just like in Buddha Dhamma (apparently he does not know anything about Buddha Dhamma and does not even mention it).

5. **Mind is the ultimate cause of everything in this world. The Buddha said, "*mano pubbangama dhamma, mano setta manomaya*…". "Mind precedes all dhamma, all dhamma are mind made…". But Buddha's is not a dualist world view. Mind and matter are intimately connected.**

- This is in sharp contrast to both the "dualistic" and "materialistic" views.
- Most people translate the above Pāli verse as, "mind precedes all mental phenomena….." So, we need to examine what "dhamma" means here.

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- Dhamma explains how anything and everything in this world comes about "dhamma" means "to bear" or "to explain" or "how anything "comes about". Nothing happens without (multiple) causes.
- In the *Sabba Sutta*, the Buddha clearly defines what "*sabba*" or "all" that in "in this world": It is everything that can be experienced via the five physical senses and the mind. Specifically, eye and visible objects, ear and sound, nose and smells, tongue and tastes, body and touch, and the mind and concepts (these are the six internal and corresponding six external "*ayatanas*"), this is "the all".
- Is there anything that is not included within those 12 *ayatanas*? There is nothing else in the whole world that is not included in those 12 *ayatanas*. Six of those are "internal"; eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and mind, and the other six are external, they exist "out there".
- Therefore, it is NOT correct to say that "dhamma" in the above verse includes only mental phenomena, as many translators of the *suttā* have done. This is why I keep saying that we need to check consistency all the time. If one thing is not defined properly, then that error propagates and lead to contradictions.
- This "all" can also be expressed as the 31 realms of existence; of those 31 realms, normal humans experience only two realms (human and animal); see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma". But it is possible to experience other realms via developing mental power, i.e., *jhānā*: see, "Power of the Human Mind – Introduction" and the follow-up posts. Thus, the Buddha's world view is much more expansive than the ones that are subjected to current scientific and philosophical investigations.

6. According to Buddha Dhamma, the ultimate realities in this world are just 28 types of *rūpa* (matter), *citta*, and 52 types of *cetasika*. Then different combinations of the *cetasika* in *citta* gives rise to 89 (121) types of *citta*.

- Of course *citta* and *cetasika* constitute the mind, and 28 types of *rūpa* constitute matter.
- Another way to state the same thing is in terms of the 6 *dhatus*: *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, akasa* (space), and *viññāṇa*. The 28 types of *rūpa* mentioned above (including *akasa dhātu*) are derived from the *satara mahā bhūta: pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo. Viññāṇa* constitutes of *citta* and *cetasika*.
- All inert things and plants in this world (31 realms) are made of *rūpa*. All sentient beings "are made of" *rūpa* and have *viññāṇa* (*citta* and *cetasika*), i.e, a mind.
- As I will explain in a separate post, *rūpa* are ultimately caused by the mind; see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka." But rūpa are inherently unstable (this is basically the root cause for suffering in the material world), and there is a fundamental law in physics which states the fact that matter is unstable and the universe itself "runs down"; see, "Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!."
- When the mind is released from the material body, one attains *Nibbāna,* i.e., one is never reborn "in this world". It is the material body that is subject to decay and death, and lead to suffering.

7. The reason that I started this website is that it is not possible to provide a reasonable explanation of the Buddha's world view in an essay or even in several essays. At the website, I can make references to related posts. I hope it would be a rewarding experience for anyone who is willing to allocate some time to read AND contemplate.

- Another reason to start the website is that I want to have it all out in the open, so anyone can challenge any inconsistency. I want to find the truth myself, and the only way to do that is to get as many as possible to look at the emerging picture and make corrections to any errors anyone can find.
- Therefore, I would appreciate any comments pointing to any errors or inconsistencies anywhere on the site, in addition to suggestions for relevant topics to discuss.
- There is more to follow. This is an introduction.
- How "physical" arises from "mental" in the most fundamental sense is really complex and we may not get to that for a while. First we will concentrate on how physical bodies of the living beings arise *with causes from* the "mental". I will be building up the Abhidhamma section and then will refer frequently to that section as we proceed.

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8. It is time to make a paradigm change: Consciousness is not only ontologically fundamental, it takes precedence over matter. Mind can create matter. Right now we have evidence that the mind can change the brain; see, "Truine Brain – How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits." **If the brain creates the mind, how can the mind alter the brain?**

9. Here are a couple of papers on the subject related to the "mind body problem" for those who are interested (click on them to open):

WebLink: What is it Like to be a Bat – Nagel (1974)

WebLink: All machine and no ghost- McGinn-2012

Next, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency", ……

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10.3 Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?

October 21, 2015; revised November 8, 2015

It is best to learn (or even investigate) Buddha Dhamma with a mindset pretty much the same as when one is trying to learn about a new concept, say in mathematics or science. There are some key assumptions (axioms) involved, which cannot be proven, but do make sense especially if one takes time to contemplate. This is contrary to conventional religions.

1. Merriam-Webster defines "religion" as:

- the belief in a god or in a group of gods
- an organized system of beliefs, ceremonies, and rules used to worship a god or a group of gods
- an interest, a belief, or an activity that is very important to a person or group

The Oxford dictionary has the following definitions:

- The belief in and worship of a superhuman controlling power, especially a personal God or gods
- A particular system of faith and worship
- A pursuit or interest to which someone ascribes supreme importance

2. The word "religion" invokes the idea of a Creator God in most people's minds. Even though this is correct for most major religions of the world, it is definitely not correct for Buddha Dhamma.

- The foundation of Buddha Dhamma is that the world has been in existence "forever" (no First Cause and thus it was not created). Universes come and go, but there have been living beings at all times.
- It may first appear to be inconsistent with the current "Big Bang theory" that says our universe started some 14 billions years ago in a "Big Bang". In fact, major religions embraced the idea of a Big Bang when it was first proposed, since it had connotations of creation. However, when the inflationary theory that describes the Big Bang (proposed in the 1990's) says there are multiple, parallel universes. Thus, the hope for a unique "event of creation" fizzled out.
- Of course "Big Bang theory" is just that, a theory. There are some scientists who do not believe everything "popped up" all of a sudden in a Big Bang. They believe that universes are cyclic, i.e., they transform and evolve; see, for example, ""Endless Universe – Beyond the Big Bang", by P. J. Steinhardt and N. Turok (2007).

3. So, Buddha Dhamma does not count as a religion if one takes the first two definitions from either Merriam-Webster or Oxford dictionary. Yet, it can be included in the third category.

- **One could say that most major religions are theistic**, i.e., based on the belief of a Creator.
- Buddha Dhamma can be categorized as an **atheistic religion**, in the sense that there is no assumption of a Creator. It must be noted that in Buddha Dhamma there are beings called "*devas*" (sometimes translated as "gods") in other realms; they cannot affect our lives in a significant way, much less than creating universes.

4. However, I prefer to label Buddha Dhamma as the "ultimate science". It encompasses all of nature's laws not only pertaining to matter, but also pertaining to the mind. It is the Grand Unified Theory that the scientists are striving to discover, but they are only focusing on the material side.

- Scientists are beginning to realize the importance of the mind. In fact, many scientists are attempting to make a connection between quantum theory and the mind. This is NOT going to work, because any "matter-based theory" cannot explain the mind. Mind is the forerunner: "Manopubbangamā Dhammā..."

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- As I build the Abhidhamma section, it will become clear why the mind takes precedence over matter. And it will also become clear why the Buddha is the top-most scientist. He was only concerned with sharing what he discovered with the others.
- The "new found knowledge" about innumerable planetary systems existing in our universe was known to the Buddha and is described in the *Tipiṭaka*; see, "Dhamma and Science."
- The Buddha was not interested in "starting a religion" so that he could be worshipped by the masses. Instead of residing in many luxurious residences like the *Jetavanaramaya* in his last days, he chose to travel by foot to Kusinara enduring many hardships on the way. He wanted to show that his body was not exempt from suffering.

5. When I listen to current debates between those who believe in a Creator and those who don't (atheists), I think the following summarizes the key ideas from each group:

- Atheists correctly point out that there is no evidence supporting the idea of a Creator God. Our ancestors could not fathom the workings of our complex world, and envisioned a Creator, who was supposed to have created the humans and a suitable habitat for them. But many "mysteries" of our world have been resolved with the advance of science, and in fact, these findings contradict key ideas in major religions.
- Those on the other side do not have any "winning points" or scientific evidence, but they insist that the idea of a "totally physical world" goes against our experiences and innate feelings that cannot be denied. That there must be something in addition to a physical body, i.e., there is a "conscious experience" that cannot be attributed to atoms and molecules in our bodies.

6. Buddha Dhamma encompasses both these key points. First, on the side of the atheists, there is no need for a Creator. Natural processes can account for not only what happens on Earth, but an uncountable number of habitable planetary systems in a vast universe.

- On the other hand, science can account for only how the material world evolves. There is something other than inert matter in this world as the theologians argue, and that is consciousness. Consciousness cannot be derived from inter matter. There are six elemental entity types in this world: *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo, akasa* (space), and *viññāṇa* (consciousness). Consciousness thus cannot be derived from other five. The first four have deeper meanings than just earth, water, fire, and wind; we will discuss this in a future post.
- However, consciousness was not imparted by a Creator. Furthermore, contrary to what most theologians believe, animals are conscious too (even though their consciousness is at a lower level compared to humans).
- This is why one could say Buddha Dhamma is an "atheistic religion", within a narrow context.

7. Some people tell me that Buddha Dhamma is not that different from other religions because there are certain "assumptions" that need to be believed "on faith", for example, that there is a rebirth process. In fact, it is true that "not believing in the possibility of a rebirth process" is a wrong view that could make one eligible to be born in the lower four realms or the *apāyā* where suffering is much more compared to in the human realm; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- However, the axiom of a rebirth process is not be taken as a tenet, like in the case of the Ten Commandments; it is up to oneself to examine and accept or reject that concept. Even a Buddha cannot make anyone be "forced to believe" in anything.
- Thus, there is a difference in what is meant by "faith" in Buddha Dhamma, compared to that in theistic religions. In any theistic religion, one has to accept the idea of a Creator without question; it is THE basis of any major theistic religion.
- Buddha Dhamma just describes the nature of this world; this The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma has some basic axioms just like geometry or the theory of relativity. These "assumptions" can be verified to be correct if one takes time to examine the evidence.

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- One could start off by not embracing these basic assumptions, but not rejecting them outright either. One could keep an open mind and explore the key ideas in Buddha Dhamma and decide for oneself whether those assumptions start to make sense as one proceeds.
- In fact, accepting such assumptions on blind faith will not do any good for anyone. One has to comprehend WHY those HAVE TO BE correct in order to make sense of this world that we live in. One has to spend time and critically evaluate the key concepts in Buddha Dhamma.

8. Buddha dhamma based on some key axioms like the rebirth process and the existence of other types of beings in 29 more realms (other than the human and animal realms), has the explanatory power to explain anything in this world, ranging from the existence of innumerable planetary systems (which was only accepted within the past few hundred years by science) to how morality comes about without a Creator; see, "Dhamma and Science" and "Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism."

- It may take me another year or two to get the more deeper concepts explained, but I think there is enough material at the site to see that the knowledge of the Buddha (who was a human being just like us) cannot be matched by any other human. It took us the workings of many brilliant scientists from Galileo to Newton to Einstein to realize the vastness of this universe, which the Buddha described 2500 years ago.
- But the even more astounding fact is that the Buddha described in detail how the consciousness arises in a living being, in addition to describing the material world. Science is still under the "wrong view" that consciousness can arise in the brain out of inert matter. I am just beginning to layout the basics of *Abhidhamma* that have been hidden in the past several hundred years, and have been revealed by a very special *Thero* in Sri Lanka.
- Whenever possible, I try make connections to current findings in science, and to show the new confirmations as well the wrong concepts still embraced by science. Time will reveal that Buddha Dhamma, in its pure form, cannot be refuted. I have started to add the date of posting of essays, so that we can keep track of these predictions over the coming years.
- And there are no "mysteries" in Buddha Dhamma, even though some concepts are still not amenable to science.

9. I just read the recently published book, "Life on the Edge" by Johnjoe McFadden and Jim Al-Khalili (2014) which describes how scientists are slowly, but surely, revealing many "mysteries of nature". These are all consistent with Buddha Dhamma, and I can point out a couple of "possible future breakthroughs".

- Scientists will be able to extend the lifespans of humans. There is no set limit to human lifetime in Buddha Dhamma, with lifetimes extending to thousands of years at times.
- It may even be possible to make conditions in a laboratory (chemical concoctions) that allows a lifeform to arise. This does NOT mean that scientists will be able to CREATE LIFE. Buddha Dhamma describes how animals and humans can exist in the "*gandhabba* state" until a suitable conditions for it to start building a physical body become available; see, "Manomaya Kāya." When a human baby is conceived, for example, what happens is that a matching "*gandhabba*" taking possession of the zygote in the womb or even out in the laboratory; see, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."
- If careful experiments are designed, it will be possible to demonstrate even now that small insects "can be born" out of decaying leaves; what happens is that decaying leaves lead to the formation of the "seed" (right chemical concoction) necessary for a "*gandhabba*" of that insect species to start a new physical body.

10. For those who would like to look into arguments on why theistic religions do not make sense, below is a compilation of arguments by Sam Harris, a prominent atheist.

- By the way, Buddha Dhamma does not agree with some of the positions of Mr. Harris (issues on how consciousness arises, as we discussed in #9 above). For example, at the end of the video (last several minutes) he talks about human embryos not being qualified as "human", i.e., there is no life there. There

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Mr. Harris says a zygote is the same as any other trillions of cells in a body. That is not even consistent with modern science.

- Modern science has not pinpointed when life begins in a zygote; see, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?." This is why I am saying that science is incomplete; it does not know about the "*gandhabba* state" of a human discussed in #9 above. By the way, a "*gandhabba"* is not a soul; see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?." I have other posts at the site that provide more details, but it may not be for another year or so until all the details are presented.
- With regard to the mind, science is still at the same stage that it was 500 years ago regarding the material world, i.e., when most people thought stars were embedded in a celestial sphere around the Earth; see, "Dhamma and Science."

Please note : The video seems to start around 43 minutes into the presentation. You may need to manually reset to the start of the video.

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Best Sam Harris Arguments - 2 Hour Compilation! - Debate, Interview, and Lecture Footage

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10.4 The Infinity Problem in Buddhism

July 15, 2017; Revised February 5, 2018 (link at the end of the post)

This question was posed to me by Mr. C. Saket from India, who also sent along his ideas too. Apparently, this question has been discussed in several online forums, without reaching a satisfactory answer.

1. The question is: "The Buddha has said that there is no discernible beginning to the rebirth process (see the *suttā* in WebLink: suttacentral: Anamatagga Saṃyutta, Saṃyutta Nikāya). In other words, we have had infinite number of attempts at attaining *Nibbāna*. So, why have we not attained *Nibbāna* yet?"

- This question seems to have its origin in the WebLink: WIKI: infinite monkey theorem, which states that a monkey hitting keys at random on a typewriter keyboard for an infinite amount of time will almost surely type a given text, such as the complete works of William Shakespeare.
- By the way, this infinite monkey theorem is another evidence of how unimaginably large infinity is: "Infinity – How Big Is It?."

2. First of all, the proof of the monkey theorem is based on a monkey generating random characters using a keyboard. The following example is given in the above link to the monkey theorem:

- Suppose the typewriter has 50 keys, and the word to be typed is *banana*. If the keys are pressed randomly and independently, it means that each key has an equal chance of being pressed. Then, the chance that the first letter typed is 'b' is 1/50, and the chance that the second letter typed is *a* is also 1/50, and so on. Therefore, the chance of the first six letters spelling *banana* is

  $$(1/50) \times (1/50) \times (1/50) \times (1/50) \times (1/50) \times (1/50) = (1/50)^6 = 1/15\ 625\ 000\ 000\ ,$$

  less than one in 15 billion, but not zero, hence a possible outcome.
- Let us first discuss the differences between the infinite monkey theorem and the current problem. However, at the end it will be shown that the conclusion of the infinite monkey theorem does apply to the present case too, and there is no contradiction even though infinite number of beings have not yet attained *Nibbāna*.
- The key point is that an infinite number of beings have attained *Nibbāna*. This is why infinity is such a complex concept.

3. Attaining *Nibbāna* is NOT a random process. First of all, one needs to hear or read about the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) in order to even start on the process.

- No matter how hard one tries, one will never be able to attain *Nibbāna* if one has not heard the TRUE VERSION of the *Tilakkhaṇa*. In some eons (*mahā kappa*, lasting roughly 10 billions years), there is not even a single Buddha, and the probability of attaining *Nibbāna* during that eon is ZERO.
- Even during a given *Buddha Sāsana*, the true meanings of the *Tilakkhaṇa* get distorted from time to time and thus the probability goes to zero. For example, at present time, most people interpret *anicca* as impermanent and *anatta* as "no-self".

4. There have been only 7 Buddhas within the past 91 *mahā kappas.* This timeline is discussed in the "WebLink: WIKI: suttacentral: Mahapadana Sutta (DN 14)."

- There was only a single Buddha (Vipassi) in the *mahā kappa that was* 91 *mahā kappa* earlier. There were no Buddhas in the next 60 *mahā kappas,* and then two Buddhas (Siki and Vessabhu) appeared. Then there were 30 *mahā kappas* without a single Buddha, and so far in the current *mahā kappa* there have been four Buddhas (Kakusanda, Konagama, Kassapa, Gotama), and one more Buddha (Maithree) is expected to appear before this eon ends.

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- Even during a given *Buddha Sāsana*, only a fraction of HUMANS will get to hear/read about the true *Tilakkhaṇa*. Today, the percentage of Buddhists worldwide is roughly 5%-10%, and much less than 1% have heard about the true *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Furthermore, the human population is negligible compared to the population of beings in the *apāyā*, who have zero probability of comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*. So, we can see that there are many zero probabilities for a given LIVING BEING, compared to a relatively few non-zero probabilities.

5. We can refine the progress to *Nibbāna* a bit more. The key to *Nibbāna* is first to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage; once that is reached, *Arahanthood* is guaranteed. It is mostly only in the human realm that one will be able to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- In order to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, one first needs get rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage." Only then one will be able to comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa* and start on the Noble Eightfold Path to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Suppose one is born human during the time of a Buddha, having gotten rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, makes good progress towards the *Sotāpanna* stage. But if, for some reason, he/she is unable to reach the *Sotāpanna* stage (i.e., without grasping *Tilakkhaṇa*) and dies, then even if the next birth is in the human realm, one could be born to a family with *micchā diṭṭhi* and thus may have to start over.
- We do carry our "*gathi*" from life-to-life. "Good *gathi*" can grow in the next life under conducive conditions, but they can also be reversed or changed under adverse conditions.
- We can call such an occurrence an "event with significant probability".

6. Therefore, reaching *Nibbāna* cannot be considered a mechanical process, and thus cannot be compared to a monkey hitting arbitrary keys on a keyboard to generate Shakespeare's *Hamlet*.

- One has to make a concerted effort — via several intermediate stages — to reach *Nibbāna*.
- However, a mathematician could still say that one could consider an infinite number of such "events with significant probability" by a living being per #5 above.
- One such "event with significant probability" can be equated to a monkey hitting a key stroke on the keyboard.
- Even though such "events with significant probability" may be separated by huge time spans, given infinite time, **an infinite number of them can accumulate.** Therefore, the infinite monkey theorem should still hold.

7. It is indeed true that an infinite number of living beings HAVE ATTAINED *Nibbāna* in the past.

- Not only that, infinite number of living beings have attained the *Buddhahood* in the past. Of course, attaining the *Buddhahood* is infinitely more difficult than attaining *Arahanthood*.
- Therefore, the infinite set of living beings who have attained *Nibbāna* is "much larger" than the infinite set of living beings who have attained the *Buddhahood*.

8. Infinity is a very complex concept. There are many levels of infinity. Infinity minus infinity is still infinity. So, even as there have been an infinite number of Buddhas, and and even higher infinity of those who attained the *Arahanthood*, there are still an infinite number of living beings (including us) who have not yet attained *Nibbāna*.

- Therefore, while the infinite monkey theorem does apply here, there is no contradiction.
- Of course, several other questions now arise: Where do all these infinite number of living beings live? Do they all live in our Solar system? Have all these infinite number of Buddhas appeared in our Solar system? It will take many more future posts to fully explain these, but we can summarize as follows.

9. There are 31 realms that are associated with our Earth or the Solar system (*Cakkāvāta* or *Cakrāvāta*), see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma – Introduction." So, there are many more living beings in our

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Cakkāvāta other than the humans and animals that we can actually see; most living beings are in the other three realms of the *apāyā*; animal realm is the fourth.

- Furthermore, there are an infinite number of such *Cakkāvāta* (planetary systems) in existence at all times with living beings. Buddhas can appear in some of them.
- These *Cakkāvāta* are in clusters of small, medium, and large "world systems" (galaxies, galaxy clusters, and superclusters in terms of modern science). But none is permanent. They come into being and eventually perish, only to reborn again. Just like us, these world systems also undergo death and rebirth; it is a cyclic process. We will discuss this at a later time.
- Within the past 100 years or so, scientists have confirmed the existence of billions of planetary systems within each galaxy and billions of such galaxies in our universe. As far as science is concerned, the number of *Cakkāvāta* (planetary systems) is likely to be infinite — as stated by the Buddha 2500 years ago.

10. If there are infinite number of planetary systems with life (just like ours), how come that scientists have not detected life outside our Solar system?

- The distance between adjacent *Cakkāvāta* is enormous. The star closest to us, Proxima Centauri, is 4.2 light years away from us. This means, if we travel at the speed of light (186,000 miles/second), it will take 4.2 years to get there! Of course, we can only travel at a small fraction of the speed of light.
- For comparison, our own Sun is only 8 "light minutes" away from the Earth, i.e., it takes only 8 minutes to get to the Sun if we travel at the speed of light. The moon is about 1.3 light-seconds away from the Earth (240,000 miles). We have been able to only land on the Moon so far!
- So, it is fair to say that we may not be able to communicate with living beings in another planetary system in the near future, if ever. Even if we find that our closest star has a habitable planet like Earth, it will take over 8 years to even send a light signal and get a reply back.

11. This is why the Buddha said not to waste time on thinking about these questions. In the WebLink WIKI: suttacentral: Acinteyya Sutta (AN 4.77), he listed four things that are inconceivable (*acinteyya*) by a human, and if one persists on that path one may become insane (may lose one's mind, because these issues are so complex):

- *Buddha Visaya* (things that are discernible to a Buddha), *Jhāna Visaya* (powers that can be accessed by one in *jhānā*), *Kamma Vipāka* (how the laws of *kamma* work), and *Loka Cintā* (comprehending the real nature of the world).
- The issue that we just discussed belongs to the fourth category. We will never be able to figure out or comprehend everything about the unimaginably large and complex world (the universe). But from the above discussion, hopefully we all can at least get a glimpse of the complexity of the universe with infinite number of *Cakkāvāta* like ours.

February 5, 2018: An update on this subject can be found at the Discussion Forum topic, "The Infinity problem – BIG Doubt."

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10.5 Free Will in Buddhism – Connection to Saṅkhāra

November 3, 2018; revised July 6, 2019

Introduction

1. Free will is at the core of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma). If one does not have free will, one would not be able to attain *Nibbāna*.

- In a mundane sense also, the applicability of free will should be obvious. Free will is what determines (within certain limits) whether one will become a successful businessman or a master thief.
- When I said "within limits", we can only compare situations for two people who are born with comparable capabilities. For example, one born with an "*ahetuka* birth" (born with brain defects) will never be able to achieve much success.
- However, a person born with a "normal level of intelligence" (*tihetuka* or *dvihetuka* births) can make decisions that can lead to a wide variety of possible outcomes in the future. For example, one could become a great scientist or a ruthless dictator. Both require a "sharp mind".

2. In the following video by Sam Harris, we can clearly see where modern philosophers get stuck on the issue of free will.

WebLink: youtube: Sam Harris on the Illusion of Free Will

- He agrees that things happen due to causes, but he cannot figure out the causes of many things. He says, "you don't pick your parents, you don't pick your body…". **But we do. That is explained with *paṭicca samuppāda* in Buddha Dhamma.** We even choose our rebirths too; see, "Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)."
- As long as he does not believe in rebirth, Sam Harris will never be able to understand those "missing causes". The rebirth picture provides those "missing causes". **Laws of *kamma* (causes and effects) operate over many rebirths. One cannot analyze the current life in isolation.**
- **Furthermore, we need to include animals and beings in other 29 realms too, in order to fully explain the laws of *kamma*.**
- Nature treats every single living being fairly, according to what they have done in the past.
- One is born into a given existence (human, animal, *deva*, etc), a given family (good, bad), under different conditions (healthy, handicapped, poor, etc), and so on based on one's *gati*. **One's *gati* are based on the types of *saṅkhāra* that one cultivates (basically how one thinks, speaks, and acts).**

Background Material in Buddha Dhamma

3. **Continuing with the key points in #2:** Another other key point is that "*kammic* energy" that leads to future *vipāka* (results) are generated in one's ***javana citta***. Don't be put off by that word. ***Javana citta*** are basically thoughts that arise in one's mind when one is generating conscious thoughts about speaking/doing **moral or immoral deeds**.

- ***Vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* become *abhisaṅkhāra* (strong *saṅkhāra*) that can lead to future *vipāka*, ONLY IF those actions or speech is either moral (good *vipāka*) or immoral (bad *vipāka*).**
- That is the difference between *saṅkhāra* and ***abhisaṅkhāra***; see, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means."

4. *Vacī saṅkhāra* are responsible for our speech (either out loud or just to ourselves). When we do something (walk, play, etc) we move our bodies with *kāya saṅkhāra* that arise in the mind (basically in the *gandhabba*). We have control over both those.

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- On the other hand, when thoughts arise automatically due to a sensory input, those are *mano saṅkhāra*.
- That is the difference between *mano saṅkhāra* (which arise without our DIRECT control) and *vacī saṅkhāra/kāya saṅkhāra* (which we have control over).
- Whether just *saṅkhāra* or *abhisaṅkhāra*, this distinction holds. For example, we can stop saying anything anytime. We can stop raising our hand anytime we want to, whether it is to say "Hi" to someone (*saṅkhāra*) or to hit someone (*abhisaṅkhāra*).

5. As we have discussed before, the word "*saṅkhāra*" comes from "*san*" + "*khāra*" or actions that involve "*san*"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra)."

- "S*an*" are responsible for just getting things done to live the current life (even everyday activities).
- **However, if they involve moral/immoral actions that can bring results (*vipāka*) in future lives, then those arise due to "strong *san*" or "*abhi san*" and thus become "*abhisaṅkhāra*."**
- ***Kamma* are *a*ctions (done with *saṅkhāra* that arise in the mind).** Most are neutral *kamma*: They do not bring significant *vipāka*.
- Those moral or immoral **strong *kamma*** — done with ***abhisaṅkhāra*** — are the ones that lead to ***kamma vipāka* in the future** (either in this life or in future lives).

Key Idea: *Vacī/kāya Saṅkhāra* are Willful

6. Let us look at some examples now.

- Thinking about going to the bathroom is a *vacī saṅkhāra* (*kammically* neutral). One gets the body to move to the bathroom using *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- Thinking about killing a human being involves *abhisaṅkhāra* with high *kammic* consequences or *vacī abhisaṅkhāra*; doing the actual killing is done with *kāya abhisaṅkhāra.* Those can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* because both are based on immoral or *apuñña abhisaṅkhāra* (or *apuññabhisaṅkhāra*).
- On the other hand, *puñña abhisaṅkhāra* (or *puññabhisaṅkhāra*) (thoughts responsible for good speech and actions) have good *kammic* consequences and can lead to "good births" (human, *Deva*, or *Brahma*). Even more importantly, they are essential for making progress on the Path.

7. I keep repeating these because it is very important to understand these key ideas.

- All *saṅkhāra* arise in the mental body (*gandhabba*).
- Then the brain helps to put those into action/speech (i.e., moving body parts).
- Most of those actions/speeches are *kammically* neutral.
- Good *kammā* that will have good *vipāka* in the future are done with *abhisaṅkhāra* that have ***sobhana cetasika* (compassion, non-greed, etc)**. Bad *kammā* that will have bad *vipāka* in the future are done with *abhisaṅkhāra* that have ***asobhana cetasika* (anger, greed, etc.)**; see, "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals."
- ***Saṅkhāra* is the generic word used in the *suttā*, even if they could be *abhisaṅkhāra*. One needs to be able to see which ones are *abhisaṅkhāra* based on the actual situation.**

8. *Mano saṅkhāra* are those automatically arise in a mind due to a sensory input, based on one's *gati*.

- **We don't really experience those initial *mano saṅkhāra* and we only experience when it comes to the next stage called *vacī saṅkhāra* ("talking to oneself").**
- This is an important point. Even if one does not say a word when one is "thinking to oneself" that is called *vacī saṅkhāra*. If one gets really interested, one may speak out and that is still a *vacī saṅkhāra.*

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- If one's interest builds up, one may even take bodily action. Those bodily actions are done with *kāya saṅkhāra* that arise in the mind.
- I strongly urge everyone to re-read the posts: "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna" and "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."
- The strength of *kammic* energy created increases in the following order: *mano*, *vacī*, *kāya saṅkhāra.*

Mano Saṅkhāra Arise Based on Our *Gati*

9. As we discussed many times, we get "attached" to something AUTOMATICALLY based on our *gati* and arise as *mano saṅkhāra*.

- If the attachment is strong enough, the mind will now start thinking about it consciously, i.e., *vacī saṅkhāra* arise and we become aware of these *vacī saṅkhāra*.
- Now, we have the ability to be mindful and think about its consequences and move away from it, as soon as we become aware of this "attachment" to something. Therefore, we can stop such thoughts at the *vacī saṅkhāra* stage; see, "Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra."
- However, our minds like to enjoy such *vacī saṅkhāra*. It is easy to do and is very tempting. Many people get their sexual satisfaction from just "daydreaming" about either event in the past or sexual encounters that one would like to have in the future.
- In order to change *mano saṅkhāra,* we need to change our *gati*; see, "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna."

10. Please read #9 again. That is the key to understanding "free will".

- We have total control over *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.
- The reason is that there is a "time delay" between the mind (in the *gandhabba*) deciding to speak or make a bodily movement and the time takes for the brain to carry out those commands and to move parts of the physical body; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- However, animals do not have this "safety barrier". Lower animals do not have a neocortex. Even in monkeys, the neocortex is only partially developed. Thus, their *mano saṅkhāra* automatically continue as *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*. Also, see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."
- **Those are the reasons why humans have free will and animals do not.**

Key Concepts in *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpāna*

11. Therefore, the concept of free will becomes clear if one can understand the concepts of *mano*, *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*.

- In fact, in order to have a firm grasp of *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpāna* meditations, it is essential to understand what is meant by "mindfulness" and how *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra* are different from *mano saṅkhāra*.
- The bottom line this: **Once we become aware of an action that we are about to take, we have the total freedom to choose to either to go ahead with it or to stop it.**
- We should stop any bad actions that we are about to do and continue with any good actions. That is the basis of *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *Ānāpāna* meditations.
- All we need to do is to cultivate the habit of "catching one's response early enough". "Being mindful" is just that; see, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)" and "Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."

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12. If one can understand the post, "Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna," one can not only see that free will is "built-in" for humans, but one will also be able to see how one can purify one's mind and make progress on the Noble Path.

- As explained in that post — and the reference posts mentioned there — only *mano saṅkhāra* arise without our control.
- We have total control over *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*, at least when one gets better in practicing *Satipaṭṭhāna/Ānāpāna*.
- This is also why humans are different from animals: Humans have the ability to think for themselves and make rational decisions.

Libet Experiments on Free Will

13. Scientists misinterpret the experiments on the famous "Libet experiments" simply because they believe that the mind resides in the brain. Therefore, they wrongly conclude that the "brain activity starts" before one makes a decision; see, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation!."

- Libet experiment is very simple: A person was asked to move his/her own finger whenever at his/her will, and scientists monitored that person's brain activity. They concluded that the brain started the "finger moving" process before the person made the decision to move the finger!
- If the brain indeed started the decision-making process, that would confirm that humans do not have free will. But then the question arises what triggered that brain activity? Of course, scientists or philosophers do not have an answer to that question. **If human decisions are random, this world would be a very chaotic place.**
- However, the explanation is simple with the concept of a mental body (*gandhabba*) controlling the physical body with the help of the brain.
- As explained in the above post, the decision made by the *gandhabba* and that started the brain activity. Scientists did not correctly monitor the time at which the person made the decision, because their "model" was incorrect.

14. *Gandhabba* or the "mental body" or the "*manomaya kāya*" is a key concept that has been neglected in even the current Theravada texts. This concept is ironically somewhat similar to the "ghost in the machine" concept; see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

- There are several subsections at the website that discuss this concept: "Mental Body – Gandhabba," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)," and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

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XI Bhāvanā (Meditation)

The numbered posts are to be read in that order. Even for those who are practicing Buddhists, I recommend starting at the Introduction (#1), and going down the list of topics at least the first time.

- It would be a good idea to read the posts in the following subsection at some point, in order to get an idea about the reasoning behind this approach: "Essential Buddhism."

- 1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation
- 2. The Basics in Meditation
- 3. The Second Level
- 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?
- 5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)
- 6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)
- 7. What is Ānapāna?
- Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?
- 8. The Basic Formal Ānāpānasati Meditation
- Possible Effects in Meditation – Kundalini Awakening
- 9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)
  - Introduction to Character or Personality (Gathi)
  - A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person"
  - How Character (Gathi) Leads to Bhava and Jathi
  - How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View
- Karaniya Metta Sutta – Metta Bhavana
- 10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava
- 11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga
- 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage
- 13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage

Important Related Posts

- Anussati and Anupassanā – Being Mindful and Removing Defilements
- Myths about Meditation
- A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)
- The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca
- Panca Indriya and Panca Bala – Five Faculties and Five Powers
- Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala
- What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness

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- Getting to Samādhi via Formal Meditation Sessions
- Are you not getting expected results from meditation?
- How to Attain Samādhi via "Vipassana Pubbanga Samatha" Bhāvanā

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11.1

1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation

Revised September 7, 2019

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects. They can clarify unresolved questions, and lead to *samādhi*. But one must contemplate on them.

Rāgakkhayo Nibbānan, Dosakkhayo Nibbānan, Mohakkhayo Nibbānan

1. We can get an idea of what "Buddhist Meditation" is, by looking at the Path described by the Buddha to achieve various stages of *Nibbāna*. *Nibbāna* is not an esoteric concept, as many people believe. That is why I like the synonyms "*niveema*" or "cooling down." *Nibbāna* can be EXPERIENCED even in the early stages.

- The Buddha defined *Nibbāna* as "*Rāgakkhayo Nibbānan, Dosakkhayo Nibbānan, Mohakkhayo Nibbānan*." ***Nibbāna* is the removal of greed, anger, and ignorance from one's mind.** That gives the essence of how this "cooling down" results. [SN 38.1 A Question About Extinguishment - Nibbānapañhāsutta "Friend, the ending of greed, hate, and delusion is called extinguishment." "*Yo kho, āvuso,* ***rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo****—idaṃ vuccati* ***nibbānan****"ti.*]
- The more one gets rid of greed, hate, and ignorance, the more one experiences *Nibbāna* or "*niveema*" or "cooling down."
- One does not, and one cannot, get rid of greed, hate, and ignorance in a few days. It is a gradual process. One can experience the "cooling down" to the extent one can purify the mind. And there will be ups and downs, especially in the early days, thus ONE MUST HAVE THE RESOLVE to stay on the Path.
- **Some people just stay with breath meditation for "stress reduction," and actually avoid anything to do with *Nibbāna*.** They equate *Nibbāna* with extinction, but there is no need to worry; the fact that one has that mindset means that one is nowhere close to *Nibbāna*. I am not saying this in a derogatory way, but just as a fact. Until one experiences some "cooling down," and get some idea about *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, it is tough to get an idea of what *Nibbāna* is.

2. Meditation provides ways to achieve this "cooling down" aby person. There are three types of people who are interested in meditation:

- Many people just want to practice some basic meditation that the Buddha advocated for achieving some "inner peace."
- Some are convinced about the rebirth process but are mainly concerned about getting a "good birth" in the next life.
- The main goal of this site is to provide enough material for one to attain the first stage of *Nibbāna*, the *Sotāpanna* stage. After that, one does not need outside help to complete the rest of the journey. However, many people who are either not ready to take that task yet. They have doubts about the existence of 31 realms, the process of rebirth, or *Nibbāna*.

Nibbāna Is Cooling Down

3. In several posts, I have tried to give an idea of what this "cooling down" is. You may want to reread them. They vary from a basic description to deeper details. They all deal with reducing greed, hate, and ignorance from our minds.

- The words greed and hate are clear, but many do not understand what is meant by ignorance. The post, "What is Avijjā (Ignorance)?" gives a bit deeper description. But since it is essential, I want to say a few words here about ignorance.

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- The "traditional method" for achieving some "cooling down" or "calming sensation" is to do "breath meditation" or "*kasina* meditation." **As I questioned in several posts, how can the greed, hate, or ignorance be removed via concentrating on one's breath or some *kasina* object?** Such meditation techniques DO NOT remove ignorance and only SUPPRESS greed and hatred.
- We need to start gradually reducing greed and hate from our minds; this called "*sīla*" (pronounced "seela") or moral living. Then one's mind becomes clear, and one starts feeling the *nirāmisa sukha*. Then it will become easier to grasp Dhamma concepts and get rid of *avijjā*.
- Buddha Dhamma is for the wise; it is not to be followed by blind faith but with understanding. One needs to learn and "see" Dhamma first. A sustained "Cooling down" cannot be attained via following a set procedure like watching the breath.
- One could go a long way (up to the *Sotāpanna* stage) just by learning Dhamma and comprehending the key concepts. When one grasps the key concepts, it begins dawn on oneself that it does not make sense to be too greedy. Or to hate someone with a level of hatred that makes one's heart to "heat up" to uncomfortable degrees.
- Thus through a better understanding of Dhamma (i.e., removing ignorance), one automatically "cools down." Removing ignorance via learning Dhamma leads automatically to reducing greed and hate.

Correct World View is Critical

4. That is why "*Sammā Diṭṭhi*" or "Correct Vision" comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path. **Actually "*sammā*" means "*san*" + "ma" or "removing defilement"; but for brevity, we will use the word "correct".** But keep in mind that "*sammā diṭṭhi*" means "removing defilement through correct vision." I cannot emphasize enough the importance of learning Dhamma. That is the first BIG step. Without understanding the message of the Buddha, how can one follow his Path?

- When one starts to understand the key Dhamma concepts, one regularly tend to think about such ideas and how they should be kept in mind while going through daily chores. That is "*sammā saṅkappa*" or "correct concepts." That automatically lead to "*sammā vācā*" (correct speech), "*sammā kammanta*" (correct action), *sammā ājīva* (correct livelihood).
- With those five steps, one becomes attuned to correct mindfulness ("*sammā sati*"). Yes. There is "incorrect mindfulness" ("*micchā sati*," pronounced "michchā sathi") too, like when a master thief plans a robbery. One needs to be "engaged" or focused accomplishing any task, either good or bad.
- With cultivated "*sammā sati*," one will be able to "see" the consequences of any action very quickly. Then one can decide whether to go ahead with it (since only good can come out of that action) or to abandon it (because it is not good for oneself or to others).
- When one sees the benefits of these steps (i.e., "cooling down") one will be motivated to work harder on all these steps, i.e., one cultivates "*sammā vāyāma*" (correct effort).
- The culmination is "*sammā samādhi*" (correct calm state of mind). Yes. There is a "*micchā samādhi*" too. When that master thief is planning a big robbery, he gets into a kind of *samādhi* also. He feels a sense of calm too, but that will have very bad consequences down the road.
- The latter three develop at the same time. One could get into "*sammā samādhi*" just via "*sammā diṭṭhi*." When one listens attentively to a Dhamma talk or gets absorbed in reading about a key Dhamma concept, one could get into "*samādhi*." A *jhānic* state is a deeper *samādhi* state.

Reading About Concepts Is Not Enough

5. That is why I recommend everyone to read these posts during a quiet time. One will absorb more and just by contemplating on the material while reading one could easily get into *samādhi*. That is what meditation is all about. "Absorbing the good" will automatically force the "bad" out, and one gets into *samādhi* automatically; we will talk about this "*ānāpāna*" process in the following posts.

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- It will get to the point that one can sit down and get into a *jhāna* within a minute or two. But that will take time.
- I hope you will be able to experience the LONG TERM benefits from the procedures we discuss in this post and the followup posts. Initially, it will be a bit slow. But if one sticks with it for a few months, one should be able to see a change in oneself that is not merely a temporary relief. For some, it will be faster.

6. In this life, we feel two kinds of suffering: bodily pains and aches as well as various diseases and mental distress (disappointments to depression).

- Bodily ailments take time to recover. But even those can be reduced by careful planning and being mindful too. If one engages in physical activity (ranging from walking to rigorous exercise) and be cognizant of what one eats, many such ailments will be reduced over time.
- Mental suffering could have direct causes in greed, hate, and ignorance. While some are due to past *kamma*, most can be avoided or reduced by being mindful of what one thinks, speaks, and does. Any thought, speech, or bodily action arising from a greedy, hateful, or ignorant view is going to cause mental anguish sooner or later.
- The easiest way to determine whether any action is inappropriate is to contemplate on the consequences. An action rooted in greed, hate, or ignorance can harm oneself or another being.

Buddhist meditation Is The Noble Eightfold Path

7. Thus Buddhist meditation is basically to cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path.

- By preventing from killing, stealing, verbal abuse, etc, what we are effectively doing is to "put out existing fires" in our minds and also prevent such "future fires" from starting. This is "*niveema*" or "cooling down" or *Nibbāna*.
- We should also do things that are conducive to a calm mindset — associating with like-minded people, actively engaging in moral behavior that makes the heart joyful, etc.
- The most important thing is to learn Dhamma so that one can "see" how all this will liberate one's mind permanently. Then the change will become "permanent".

When perfected, one will be doing meditation all day long while doing daily chores. That is what is stated as "*āsevitāya, bhāvithāya, bahuleekathāya*." That means, "associate and use what is good, and do that as much as possible."

[See, AN 8.1 Mettāsutta *āsevitāya bhāvitāya bahulīkatāya*

"Friends, the emancipation of heart's (*cetovimutti*) by loving-kindness (Metta) expected eight good results: **associated, developed, and practiced frequently, made a habit of, made a basis of (practised thoroughly), has been implemented, acquainted with, and thoroughly undertaken**.

"*Mettāya, bhikkhave, cetovimuttiyā* ***āsevitāya bhāvitāya bahulīkatāya yānīkatāya vatthukatāya anuṭṭhitāya paricitāya susamāraddhāya*** *aṭṭhānisaṃsā pāṭikaṅkhā.*

cetovimutti: [f.] emancipation of heart.

āsevita : [pp. of āsevati] associated; practised; frequented.
bhāvita : [pp. of bhāveti] increased; cultivated; developed.
bahulīkata : [pp. of bahulīkaroti] took up seriously; increased. （adj.），practised frequently.
yānīkata : [adj.] made a habit of; mastered.
vatthukata : [adj.] made a basis of; practised thoroughly.
anuṭṭhita :a. [anuṭṭhahati's pp.] has been implemented, has been affected, has been experienced (to).
paricita : [pp. of paricināti] practised; attended; acquainted with; accumulated; accustomed.
susamāraddha : [pp.] thoroughly undertaken.

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ānisaṃsa :[m.] profit; merit; good result.
pāṭikaṅkha :[adj.] to be desire or expected.]

- In a formal meditation session one does the same. The best is to read a post or two on a given Dhamma concept just before (or during) the session and then contemplate on those ideas. It is important to compare those concepts with one's life experiences, and things will become clear with time: for example, why it is unfruitful to "live life lavishly, especially if that involves hurting oneself or others."
- You will be surprised that this process itself will get you to *samādhi*, and even *jhānā* in the long term. But we will discuss some other variations too.
- As I have mentioned in several posts, one could even get to the *Sotāpanna* stage just via comprehending the key Dhamma concepts to some extent.

8. Buddha Dhamma is all about the mind; Anything we say or do also start with a thought. The Buddha said, "*manopubbangama dhamma…*", "the mind takes precedence over everything else..."

- It should be clear from the above discussion that Buddha's meditation techniques are attuned to Nature's laws. They can be followed by one with a religious background or by an atheist.
- One becomes a "*Bhauddhayā*" or a "Buddhist" in his/her mind. If one understands some basic Dhamma concepts and lives by them, then one is automatically a Buddhist. After one gets started with a firm determination on the Path, "*Dhammo have rakkhati dhammacāriṃ*," or "Dhamma will guide one to be on the right Path."
- The foremost goal is to live a moral life without causing harm to oneself or others, and to seek some "peace of mind" from the modern hectic life. That is our starting point.

9. I also recommend listening to the following discourse for anyone seriously considering Buddhist meditation (You need to adjust volume control on your computer):

"**The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand**"

WebLink: The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand

This is in the post, "Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth" in the "Living Dhamma Overview" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section.

Next, "2. The Basics in Meditation", ……

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11.2 2. The Basics in Meditation

Revised August 17, 2019

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects and can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to gain *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. Those who are doing breath meditation or "watching the stomach rise and fall" know that it is relatively easy for some to calm the mind compared to others. Some cannot even keep a calm mind for more than a few minutes; distractions start "popping up."

- This "popping up" is due to the five hindrances (*pañca nīvaraṇa*) that I have described in a post. These are the "residues" or "gunk" that we have deep inside our minds that start bubbling up to the surface when we sit down to meditate.
- that I have described in a post; see "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances." These are the basic "residues" or "gunk" that we have deep inside our minds that start bubbling up to the surface when we sit down to meditate.

2. Let us take the simile of water well contaminated with all the rotten stuff fallen into it over many years; our minds have accumulated gunk over repeated births, not just in this life. When we are engaged in stressful day-to-day activities, those activities stir up the "gunk," and the mind gets clouded; it is like taking a long pole and stirring the well water; the "gunk" at the bottom comes up.

- The two "primary rotten things" we have are the first two on the list of the five hindrances: *kāmacchanda* (excessive greed) and *vyāpāda* (deep hate). Even though the word *vyāpāda* is commonly used, the correct Pāli is *byāpāda*.
- *Vicikicchā* is a set of person "likings," and these can be likings for material things OR things that one likes to "hate"; one does these because of the ignorance of *anicca, dukkha, anatta. Vicikicchā* is sort of like a "favorite list" from the main ingredients of excessive greed and deep hate, the first two hindrances. ***Kaṅkā vicikicchā* is a worse form of *vicikicchā* that arises due to the wanton disregard of correct views.**
- The other two are more like "stirrers" that stir up these bad habits and bring them up on their own: *thina middha* ("trapped" or "frozen" mind), *uddhacca-kukkucca* (a restless mind).
- *Thina middha* or inability to concentrate on *Dhamma* concepts usually happens when tired or after a meal. But it can be a personal characteristic or a habit; we will call this the "lazy mind." An "unsettled" or "excited" mind (*uddhacca-kukkucca*) is also personal, and arises when one feels "superior" or "inferior" compared to others.
- The five hindrances discussed at "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

3. When we are engaged in day-to-day activities, we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and also think about all sorts of things; all these are "external stirrers" that make our minds look like whirlpools. All these gang up to get the mind to stress out and "heat up." That is the tension that we feel in a busy day. We need to "cool down"; we need "*niveema.*"

- One way to "cool down" is to turn off those external stirrers temporarily. That is what some people do in a breath meditation session: one goes to a quiet place and closes eyes; this will turn off mainly the five physical senses (i.e., we do not see, hear, smell, taste, touch). That helps to calm the mind for some people, especially if they have practiced a lot.
- But it is not possible to turn off the sixth one, the mind itself. The mind likes to move around and not to be focused. Many people try to fix the mind on one object, say the breath or the rising of the stomach. That provides only a temporary solution.

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- Some people try to "turn off the mind" or try to stop thoughts from arising. That is DANGEROUS. We need to PURIFY the mind, not to turn it off. The Buddha had a perfectly pure but very active mind. When one follows the Path, one's mind will become sharper, not inactive.

4. However, if we have too much gunk (defilement), then our minds can be contaminated even without the aid of "a stirrer." It is like an abandoned old well. It has dirty water, and one needs to REMOVE the existing dirty water first.

- Similarly, if one is engaged in immoral behavior, then the mind is like a well that has dirty and turbulent water. That is due to the **BIG EIGHT defilements**: killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, gossiping, slandering, harsh speech, and getting "drunk" with not only drugs or alcohol, but also with wealth, fame, power, etc.
- Those defilements cannot be removed just by focusing the mind on one object, like the breath. That is the fundamental problem with "breath meditation."
- **The mind calms down (or gets to *samādhi*,) when one lives a moral life (*sīla*.)** Stopping the BIG EIGHT is the start of a moral life (*sīla*.) With that calmed mind (*samādhi*) one can comprehend deeper aspects of *Dhamma* and cultivate wisdom (*paññā*.) That is the initial order: *sīla*, *samādhi*, *paññā*.

5. Thus it would be hard to achieve calmness even with breath meditation if one is actively engaged in the BIG EIGHT (unless one has had a lot of practice.

- That is *Kāyānupassanā*, the first step in *Satipaṭṭhāna*; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction."
- If one is habitually engaged in one or more of those eight activities, the first thing to do is to try to get rid of them. First, start with the worst habit and proceed gradually until all are bad habits removed. It is like emptying the well of the dirty water.
- That is a BIG STEP. It may take a little while, depending on how much "gunk" is there. But one thing is not to rush out and try to do much. That could be stressful too. The best thing to do is to abstain from one or two big ones and experience the "cooling down" that results from it.
- Vain talk is a habit that should be gotten rid of early. It does not do any good for oneself or others. One will inevitably say something inappropriate (possibly slandering and lying too, which are also in the BIG EIGHT) when one gets carried away during the vain talk. Getting rid of it will help with being able to calm the mind quickly.
- The mind needs to see the benefits of doing something before it gets on board. That is why, initially, it may take a lot of determination to stick with the plan.
- It is important NOT to get used to the breath meditation; if you are used to it, I urge you to gradually stop and try the procedures described here at least for a couple of months. We want LONG TERM results. Many people get addicted to breath meditation to get temporary relief. THAT IS A MISTAKE.

6. Getting rid of bad old habits and installing new good habits is a KEY in the meditation practice; we will talk about habits ("*gathi*," which become "*āsavas*" over time) in more detail in the next section. Here are some basic ideas that would be helpful:

- To form a new habit, it takes some effort initially. I tried it out by making a new habit of peeling oranges with my left hand (I am right-handed). Initially, it was hard, and the main problem was that I kept forgetting to use the left-hand. I had to set the alarm to remind myself first. But after a few days, I started remembering, and after a week or two, the new habit was working. Now I automatically do it, and now it is a bit strange to try to peel oranges with the right hand!
- When we make a new habit, a set of neurons in the brain start to wire together for that task; the more we do it, the stronger the neural connections become. That is what happens when we learn to ride a bike, drive a car, or zillions of other things that we do without even thinking about it; see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits" and "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View."

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- In breaking a habit, one needs to do the reverse. When one starts to smoke less and less, the neural connections for that task will get weaker and weaker. After a while, it will become more natural not to smoke. The brain will stop giving that signal. So it is critical to have the determination to hold off the urge in the beginning. Try to replace that activity with something else at that time. One can remove any bad habit that way. It is the same principle.

7. The primary formal meditation technique is in the next section. For those who need time to get rid of the BIG EIGHT, they can also monitor the progress by doing such formal meditation sessions. It is essential to realize that all defilement (bad habits) are removed only at the *Arahant* stage. So, there is no point in getting discouraged if it takes time to stop bad habits; **the key is to make progress, and not to go backward.**

- Sometimes when one starts on the *Ariya Bhāvanā*, things may look worse before getting better. It is like trying to cool a hot iron by sprinkling water on it when all that smoke comes out and may appear to be getting worse. But one needs to be persistent. One needs to keep in mind that uncountable beings have attained "cooling down" by having faith in the Buddha.

Next, "3. The Second Level – Key to Purify the Mind", ……..

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11.3 3. The Second Level – Key to Purify the Mind

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects and can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to gain *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. Let us go back to the example of the abandoned well. Now we have done a decent job of cleaning the dirty water that had been there for a long time, i.e., we have reduced at least some of the main immoral acts, the BIG EIGHT.

- Now we need to make sure that things do not fall into the well while we try to make the water even more cleaner; if there is no barrier around it, when it rains mud water can fall into the well. As with the well, we need to make sure that we keep those BIG EIGHT out of our minds as much as possible. **This is '*sīla*" (pronounced "seela") or moral living.**

2. In order to make sure that we will not drift back to the old ways, we need to cultivate moral mindfulness ("*sati*"): we need to be on the "lookout" for any temptations to break the BIG EIGHT. But there is a catch that most people do not comprehend: bad habits and cravings or "*gathi/āsavas*" that we have are not only from this life, but possibly from previous lives as well.

3. Again, we can use the old water well as an example: When we drained the water out of the well, the well starts filling up with water from underground fresh water oozing through cracks (from underground aquifers) which is pure.

- However, if we have lot of rotten stuff at the bottom of the well that had been there for a long time, then that pure water gets contaminated. Our bad habits (*gathi/āsavas*) are like the dirt at the bottom of the well. They give rise to the five hindrances, that we mentioned in the above section.

4. The water in the above well will now look relatively more clear if it is undisturbed, i.e, when we let the water to settle down. **This is effectively what we do in breath meditation or any such *samatha* meditation.** When someone is abstaining from the BIG EIGHT, it is relatively easy to calm the mind by going to a quiet place, closing the eyes, and then focusing on one object, say the breath.

- Such meditations are *anāriya* meditations; they provide only temporary relief. One could also get into *anāriya jhānā* this way, with lots of practice, especially if one could live a secluded life. Ancient *yogis* who lived moral lives and stayed away from other humans in forests could attain higher *jhānā*.
- What happens here is that the five hindrances are kept SUPPRESSED. It is like the rotten stuff kept undisturbed at the bottom of the well.
- If one takes a long pole and stir the well, those contaminants start coming up.

5. In the same way, when someone comes out of the quiet place, one gets "disturbed" with external sense stimuli (i.e., when a particularly strong sense object is presented). For someone with a lot of lust, it could be a picture of an attractive person. If someone has a lot of hate towards another, then hateful thoughts can come to the surface just by someone mentioning that person's name.

- This "bubbling up of bad stuff to the surface" is called "*anusaya*." To stop such *anusaya*, those *gathi/āsava* need to be removed (gradually).
- These terms are explained in, "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava."
- This is why people who have a very calm and peaceful experience at a meditation resort come back to regular hectic life and see that experience fade away gradually. That is because it WAS a temporary solution. **What we have in mind here is a more permanent solution. But this approach takes a bit more time.**

6. So, how do we really clean the well? It is not enough to let the gunk to sink back to the bottom; we need to remove the gunk that has accumulated at the bottom of the well. There could even be toxic things down

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there. Thus it takes an effort to remove all those. Once those are removed, there is nothing down there that can contaminate the fresh water coming out. When the well fills up we only need to make sure that things do not fall back in to contaminate the well.

- Similarly, what we need to do with our minds is to remove the bad habits (*gathi/āsavas*) that have been accumulated over countless past lives and reinforced in this life. If we have hate in our minds, that hate can triggered easily. This is why some people are prone to "flare-ups" than others. If we have extreme greed, we can be tempted easily to act immorally for sense satisfaction through any of the six senses.
- Even though the main ones are greed and hate, there are uncountable number of combinations (when included with ignorance). That is why we see uncountable number of habits/personalities/tendencies in different people. **No two persons are alike, even identical twins.**

7. Looking at the five hindrances, the main culprits are of course, greed, hate, and *vicikicchā* (the particular set of things one has a liking for, which can be things liked or disliked). The other two help bring out these: the "lazy mind" will not take any effort to suppress bad thoughts; the "dispersed mind" is too dispersed to be focused, to think clearly. All these are intimately connected to the habits (*gathi/āsavas*).

- By the way, if one can remove all the *gathi/āsavas*, that is when one attains *Nibbāna*. The Buddha realized the "*āsavakkhaya nana"* just before attaining the Buddhahood. *Āsavakkhaya* is "*āsava*"+"*khaya*" or removing the temptations; "*khaya*" is the getting rid of "*san*"; see, "What is "San"? – Meaning of Saṃsāra (or Samsāra)."
- Here we are trying to remove some easily removable less potent habits, and at least try to reduce the big ones. The good news is that we can EXPERIENCE the relief or "cooling down" or "*niveema*" each time we either remove a small bad habit or lessen the severity of bigger ones. We don't have to remove ALL bad habits/cravings in order to experience the "cooling down".

8. After making a commitment to abstain from the BIG EIGHT as much as possible, we need to sort out our bad habits.

- Make a list with little things on the top and more serious things towards the bottom. We all have greed and hate; those are the "big ones"; what we need to do here is try to remove easily identifiable smaller bad habits; for example, explosive temper, stinginess, seeking too much sense pleasures (i.e., being addicted to alcohol, drugs, even excess eating).
- It is important to get rid of the ones at the top (the easy ones), and that will provide incentive to continue. If one tries to tackle the big ones straight away, one might get discouraged and give up the whole effort.

9. Of course, focusing on the BIG EIGHT is very important. If one is engaging in killing animals for pleasure (eg., fishing), then that needs to be stopped if one is serious about meditation. If one is making a living by stealing from others, that needs to be stopped. If one is engaged in sexual activities with other married people, that needs to be stopped, etc.

- Those are common sense things too. If one looks at one's actions and see that it can cause harm for oneself AND/OR others, then one needs to seriously start thinking ways to initially reduce and eventually to stop such actions.

10. There are several posts on habits and *gathi/āsavas*; you may want to find and read them. And contemplate on those ideas. An English discourse on this topic is given in the post, "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?."

- As I emphasized at the beginning, one has to make an effort; even the Buddha could only show the way. We need to examine what he suggested, think through to make sure they make sense. Then the mind gets on-board, especially when it starts seeing the benefits, even small benefits.
- The key is to get started; accomplishing things (no matter how small), and that provides the fuel to go further.

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11. One could and should use the "four bases of mental power (*satara iddhipada*)" in accomplishing these goals. Tackle one goal at a time. As you accomplish more and more goals, the *iddhipāda* (*chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṃsā*) will grow as well. These are the critical factors that the *yogis* used to cultivate mundane (*anāriya*) *jhānā* and gain extraordinary mental powers too.

- *Chanda* is the desire to achieve the goal. *Citta* is the determination one makes and the *viriya* is the effort that one puts in to get it done. *Vimansa* is careful examination of the benefits of breaking the habit and the possible repercussions of keeping the habit. As the four *iddhipada* grow (with accomplishment of more and more goals), the *vīmaṃsā* faculty grows in particular; this is a facet of wisdom (*paññā)*.

12. In trying to remove any bad habit, it is essential to look at the negative repercussions or bad consequences (called *ādeenava*) from that activity. Let us take the bad habit of getting into a rage as an example:

- Think about the unpleasant feeling of getting "heated up" in a moment of rage. Of course, at the moment of rage one may actually enjoy it: In extreme cases, this is why there are people dead with 30-40 stab wounds, when all it takes to kill a person a couple of stabs; such is the danger of getting into a rage. One feels bad about it only later, and then it is too late.
- Even worse are the *sansāric* consequences: If rage becomes a dominant characteristic of one's personality, it is possible that this is what will be grasped at the moment of death and a birth of a "similar kind" could result, i.e., birth in a burning hell (this is the principle of *paṭicca samuppāda*: "*pati+ichcha*" leading to "*sama+uppada*").

13. Let us take a few examples to see how some bad habits can be tackled:

- Many people have bad temper (which could develop into hate) which is a result of *vyāpāda*. Yes. This is a *sansāric* habit, and unlike many other habits, this one is hard to control when triggered. This is one that needs to be dealt with when the anger is absent. The best is do the *metta bhāvanā*. We will use the *Ariya metta bhāvanā* later. For now, one could close the eyes at a quite time, and sincerely say, "May all beings be free of suffering, free of ailments, free of anger, and be happy". If you have a particular person that you are not in good terms, repeat with his/her name. We cannot remove the anger in the mind of that person. We can only remove the anger within ourselves. Do this a couple of times a day and if you do it sincerely it will give results (for YOU to have a peace of mind).
- If you are a person with cravings for sense pleasures (I do not mean necessities), your mind is likely to be frequently seeking such things. Try to cut down on such activities, and also try to do more giving. Donate to charities, give a few dollars to a homeless person. All these will make you feel better; this is called *pīti* ("*preethi*" in Sinhala or joy).
- Also, when you simplify your life, the burden on your mind will be less, and you will get a different kind of joy than that from sense pleasures; this is "*niveema*" or "cool down," or *nirāmisa sukha*; see, "Nirāmisa Sukha."
- Alcohol or cigarette addiction is another example. Instead of trying to stop such a habit "cold turkey," it is better to cut down gradually. But one MUST have the discipline (the importance of cultivating the *iddhipada* comes here) to stick to the plan, and not go back. It also helps to find a replacement activity at that time (taking a less potent drink or chewing a gum, etc). One of the four *iddhipada* that is essential here is *citta* or determination.

14. Now we are at a point where I can introduce the real *ānāpānasati bhāvanā* that was described by the Buddha.

Next, "4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?", …….

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11.4

4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?

Revised April 11, 2020

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects and can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to gain *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. Buddha Dhamma is focused on purifying the mind of greed, hatred, and ignorance. A pure mind does not attach to even a trace of material form and has attained *Nibbāna*. As the mind is purified, it gains *nirāmisa sukha* which can be experienced at various levels from the beginning. If one can "stick to" this program for a couple of months, and then one can look back and see the change in oneself. One should have a more peaceful, calm mind that has "cooled down".

- A mind is impure because it attaches to "things in this world" with the misconception that things in this world (31 realms) can be maintained to one's satisfaction, i.e., with the perception of ***nicca***. Thus the prevailing mindset is that happiness (***sukha***) should be attained by employing any means. And once attained it can be maintained and thus one is in total control of one's affairs (***atta***).
- These three misconceptions of *nicca, sukha, atta* are the three culprits that keep us bound to "this world" of 31 realms, i.e., bound to the endless rebirth process in *saṃsāra*. What the Buddha showed was that the actual reality of "this world" is described by the three characteristics of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*: No matter how hard we try, we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction in the long term (***anicca***), thus we get distraught (***dukkha***), and thus we are not in control (***anatta***).
- More details in the first discourse at, "Tilakkhaṇa – English Discourses."

2. I am NOT saying that one should not work hard to get educated and get a good job. That MUST be done; one cannot have a peace of mind if one is hungry and homeless. But we also need to be aware of the FACT that all mundane achievements are temporary. Even if we get a live this life without a major catastrophe, we have to leave all behind when we die.

- One acts with greed, hate, and ignorance and makes the mind impure because of the wrong perceptions of *nicca, sukha, atta*. Then one is capable of immoral acts to get some temporary satisfaction because one does not see the bad consequences of such actions may not be clear. However, when one truly understands the reality (i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta*,) such immoral actions become unlikely.
- For that stage to be reached, one has to train one's mind to "take in the good" and "reject the bad". For that, a change in one's habits (with *Ānāpānasati* meditation) is necessary.

The following is a logical sequence for meditation:

3. First one needs to sort out what is good and what is bad, and the consequences of good and bad actions. This is why the vision, *Sammā Diṭṭhi*, comes first in the Noble Eightfold Path. To get to *Sammā Diṭṭhi* one need to "sort out the good from the bad."

- *Vipassanā* (*vi+passa* means "to see clearly" and discard. Here, where "*vi*" means "special" and "*passa*" is to "see." *Vidassana* (*vi+dassana* means sort out by clear vision, where "*dassana*" means the vision) mean the same thing. To understand Buddha Dhamma and acquire the vision needed to be able to sort out the "good" from the "bad".
- I cannot emphasize enough the importance of *vipassanā* (*vidassana*) or insight meditation. Without the "correct" vision, one could strive for the whole life and not get anywhere: one has to understand the true nature of this world (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), the Four Noble Truths, and the Noble Eightfold Path. It is not memorization, but understanding that counts.

4. A huge amount of defilements are removed from one's mind with this insight meditation. The key is to understand the "*anicca* nature of this world". It is the first type of meditation that is needed. One can attain the *Sotāpanna* stage without doing any other types of meditation discussed below.

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The Buddha once took a bit of soil to a fingertip and told the *bhikkhus* that, "if the amount of defilements a *Sotāpanna* needs to get rid of is comparable to this amount of soil, then a normal human being has to get rid of an equivalent to the soil in the whole Earth".

- That is not a misprint or an exaggeration. A *Sotāpanna* is bound to attain *Nibbāna* within a maximum of seven "*bhava*." A normal human being could be trapped in the rebirth process for trillions of years to come. We all have been through the rebirth process for uncountable trillions of years; see, "Infinity -How Big is It?".
- Many people say, "I do like my life. Why would I not want to be reborn?". **The problem is, that future rebirths may not be in the human realm.** We have no idea what we have done in past lives. Thus even if we live a perfectly moral life, there are no guarantees that we will get a good rebirth. This is why understanding *kamma*, rebirth, etc via insight meditation is important.

5. How does one do the insight meditation? Listening to discourses and reading Dhamma concepts are the two main forms of getting the correct information. Then one could contemplate on those concepts in a sitting meditation. But reading up on Dhamma concepts during a quiet time itself is meditation; also see, "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā" and the follow-up post.

- Once some understanding is reached via *vipassana* (*vidassana*) *bhāvanā* or insight meditation, one can start the next two key steps. *Mettā bhāvanā* and various forms of *anupassanā bhāvanā.*
- Once one understands the true status of affairs in the wider world of 31 realms, one can really comprehend the amount of suffering that has been hidden. With that understanding, one can engage in the *Ariya mettā bhāvanā*, which is an excellent way to pay back our old debts to other beings. **This is the second way to purify our minds too.**
- I hope I have been able to convey the idea that the bulk of work can be done with just insight meditation, contemplating "*anicca, dukkha, anatta*." However, doing the other two types of *bhāvanā*, i.e., *mettā bhāvanā* and *ānāpānasati*, can be helpful for the insight meditation too.

6. **The last and third way to purify the mind is via *anupassana.*** *Anupassana* means "discard according to the principles learned" ("*anu*" means according to and "*passana*" means to "see." Another meaning of "*anu*" is defilements, which is applicable too). *Anupassanā* can take various forms: *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā* is the foundation. Once "*ana*" and "*pana*" are sorted out by *vipassana* (*vidassana*), one needs to engage in *ānāpānasati* all the time. This means one needs to be mindful of what one is about to do and make sure it is a "right thing to do".

- When one starts understanding *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, one can start doing the *aniccānupassanā, dukkhānupassanā*, and *anattānupassanā*, and four more related "*anupassanā*". I will elaborate on this later.
- *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* (with *kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā*, and *dhammānupassanā*) includes all the *bhāvanā* techniques that we have discussed so far. It is THE ultimate which encompasses everything needed to attain stress relief. It can take one all the way to attain the *Arahanthood*. *Ānāpānasati* is a big part of the *satipaṭṭhāna*, and that is the first step to attain the *Sotāpanna stage*.

7. Thus one could make things simpler by just doing insight meditation, *ānāpānasati*, and the *metta bhāvanā*. That is all one needs to do to have a "better state of mind" or even to become a *Sotāpanna*.

8. The problem with meditation techniques taught even in *Theravāda* schools these days is the following. They are either breath meditation or chantings. How can one remove defilements by watching the breath? Even though it can calm the mind, there are no long-term benefits, because watching the breath CANNOT reduce defilements from the mind.

- Another popular technique is to just contemplate on the impermanence, a popular form. They keep repeating something like, "my body is impermanent, it is subjected to decay and death". Has anyone

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achieved any progress doing that for even twenty, thirty years? A Buddha does not need to tell us that. All people, belonging to any religion, know those are facts of life.

- Yet another popular "chanting" is to contemplate the "foulness of the body". That is not what the Buddha meant by the "*patikula manasikara bhāvanā*." Again, everyone knows that our bodies are subject to decay and death; see, "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."

Next, "5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)", ……

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11.5

5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)

Revised February 11, 2020

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects. They can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to get to *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

Introduction

1. We all have acquired innumerable "bad *kamma vipāka*" in this cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*) that has no beginning. There is a very simple recipe for stopping many of such "bad *kamma vipāka*" from coming to fruition by "wearing out" and ultimately removing the "*kamma* seeds" (*kamma bīja*) associated with them.

- We acquire a bad "*kamma* seed" when we do something wrong to a living being, and we become indebted to that being. Just like we can become "debt-free" by paying off debts, we can pay off that debt. The problem is that we have become indebted to innumerable beings in previous rebirths. In the *Mettāsahagata Sutta* (SN46.54) and other *suttā*, the Buddha has explained how much of this debt can be paid off by doing the *Ariya metta bhāvanā* and also by transferring merits to "all beings" when we do a good deed; see, "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How Does it Happen?."
- Here we focus on the *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā*. First some background material to clarify what this means. Also see, "Karaniya Mettā Sutts – Mettā Bhāvanā."

Mundane *Mettā Bhāvanā*

2. The standard or mundane *Mettā bhāvanā* (loving kindness meditation) goes something like, "May myself and all beings be free of suffering, healthy, happy, and be free of all suffering", or some similar (longer) passages.

- Any type of such meditation is of course good. It makes your own mind calm down, and makes you think about the (mundane) welfare of the other beings.

Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā

3. However, the *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā* has a much more deeper meaning. It is done with at least some idea of the complexity of "this world" with 31 realms and the status of the beings in those realms. In order to cultivate true compassion and loving-kindness one NEEDS TO FEEL the possible suffering in all those realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma":

- The beings in the lowest four realms (*apāyā*) undergo unimaginable suffering, both physical and mental.
- In the lowest five realms (the *apāyā* and the human realm), beings have physical bodies that are subject to sicknesses, body aches, and getting old before dying.
- The sixth through eleventh realms are that of the *devas*. They have spontaneous births with fully formed (but less dense) bodies that are not subjected to sickness, aches and pains. There are no visible signs of old age until close to death. But they also have all five physical senses just like the lower five realms. But their physical bodies are much more dense, "Body Types in 31 Realms – Important of Manomaya Kāya."
- The higher 20 realms that include *rūpa loka* and *arūpa loka* have even less dense bodies than the *devas*, and do not have the physical sense faculties for taste, smell, and body touch. Thus any suffering they have is all mental, and not as intense as in the lower realms.

The Difference With the *Sotāpanna* stage

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4. Therefore, no living being is free of FUTURE suffering in any of the 31 realms, because unless the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* has been attained, even the beings in the highest realm can end up even in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms) in future rebirths.

- And the only way to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* is by comprehending the Three Characteristics of this world of 31 realms: *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*
- The first level of understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* leads to the *Sotāpanna* stage; when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one becomes free from the *apāyā* FOREVER. This happens via the inability of the mind of a *Sotāpanna* to generate certain *cittā* with "*apāyagāmī*" *kammic* power; see, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna avoids Apayagami Citta" and "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna".

Higher Stages of *Magga Phala*

5. When the next stage of *Nibbāna* (*Sakadāgāmī* stage) is attained, one becomes free of births in the lower five realms where suffering due to physical ailments and diseases are possible. Thus one PERMANENTLY becomes "healthy" by attaining the *Sakadāgāmī* stage.

- At the *Anāgāmī* stage, one removes more *akusala citta* (and other fulfill other conditions; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna"), and will never be born again in *kāma loka* including the *deva* realm. Thus one becomes PERMANENTLY free of any physical suffering.
- Then at the *Arahant* stage, all defilements are removed from the mind, and one will never be reborn in any of the 31 realms. The mind truly becomes free and one attains permanent *nirāmisa sukha*; see, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is nirāmisa sukha?" and other posts on *nirāmisa sukha*.
- As you can see, the *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā* is similar in structure to the conventional one, but the words have deeper meanings. For example, by saying "be healthy" now it is meant to be healthy forever. That means not to be born ever with a body that is subject to diseases and old age.

Elements of the *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā*

6. **Now we can see how the *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā* is formulated**:

- "May myself and all living beings attain the *Sotāpanna* stage and be free from suffering in the *apāyā* forever"
  "May myself and all living beings attain the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and be healthy forever".
  "May myself and all living beings attain the *Anāgāmī* stage and be content (attain peaceful happiness) forever".
  "May myself and all living beings attain the *Arahant* stage and be free from all suffering and attain the full *Nibbānic* bliss".
- All four *Brahma Vihāra* (*mettā, karuṇā, muditā, upekkhā*) cultivate with this *bhāvanā*.
- Off course, the *Bhāvanā* becomes increasingly effective as one starts to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa* better.

Just Chanting Is Not Enough

7. What matters is not the particular set of word used, but what is felt in one's heart. In order to do that one needs to truly comprehend that there is REAL SUFFERING in this world, not only at the human or animal realms but in many other realms.

- The impact of the *Mettā Bhāvanā* increases gradually with an increased understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* because then one realizes the dangers and suffering that all living beings face in future lives.

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- The potential of the *Mettā Bhāvanā* is enormous. The Buddha said one could attain the *Anāgāmī* stage by correctly doing the *Mettā Bhāvanā*. But that entails understanding *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, i.e., attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage or at least embark on the path to *Sotāpanna* stage.
- However, even before attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, one could reap many benefits by doing this correct *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā*; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

Essential of Meditation

8. It is best to do *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā* and *Vipassanā Bhāvanā* (meditation on *anicca, dukkha, anatta* and other dhamma concepts) in a sitting meditation session every day; see, "4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?."

- Initially, 10-15 minutes would be good for formal meditation. That time will automatically increase as the *nirāmisa sukha* sets in one starts seeing the benefits. Later on, one could stay in meditation for hours.
- Of course, *Ānāpānasati* needs to be practiced the whole day. *Ānāpānasati* means being aware of what is "taken in" (*āna*) and what is "discarded" (*āpāna.*) See, "7. What is Ānāpāna?" and other related posts in the meditation section.
- Listening to discourses and reading about Dhamma are also forms of meditation. That should be done during quiet times so the key concepts can be absorbed.

Results Will Grow With Better Understanding

9. The *Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā* is one of the most POTENT tools that we have. It is a simple concept, but the main difficulty is with the "*Ariya*" part. One needs to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta* for the *bhāvanā* to be fully effective.

- Still, even the mundane version stated in #2 above is a good start. As one follows the Path and understands the concepts better (not the book knowledge), the *javana* power in one's thoughts become strong, and the *bhāvanā* becomes stronger and more effective.
- In the *Abhidhamma* language, the most potent *kusala citta* is the "*somanassa sahagata ñāṇa sampayutta asaṅkhārika citta*," i.e., the "thought that arises with joy and wisdom automatically". This thought also gets stronger with increasing wisdom and gets stronger as one gets to *Sotāpanna magga*, *Sotāpanna phala*, etc and optimum only at the *Arahant* stage.
- Yet even when one is following the mundane eightfold path, this *citta* is there, at a lower strength. One needs to be cultivate it. See, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart," and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma."

Next, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)", ……..

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11.6 6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)

Revised July 22, 2020

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help gain *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. I hope that several key points are clear from the discussion in the post, "3. The Second Level – Key to Purify the Mind":

- Bad habits (*gati*/*āsava*) are associated with one more immoral or unworthy acts, speech, or thoughts. We need to discard those.
- To counter the bad habits, one needs to cultivate good habits. For this, we need to improve moral behavior by engaging in ethical activities that bring joy to the heart.
- AND we need to do this all the time; we cannot let bad habits come back, which means we need to be on the lookout for any lapses in our practice. And we need to be on the lookout for opportunities to do moral acts that are beneficial for oneself and others.

2. In a general sense the Pāli word *ānāpāna*, "*āna"* includes anything that needs to "taken in" for the betterment of life, and "*āpāna"* the opposite. For example, we should eat only foods that are good for the body and stay away from or discard bad foods.

- Nowadays, "*āna"* is taken to be "breathe in" and "*āpāna"* is assumed to be "breathe out." Now, "*sati"* means mindfulness, and thus, the word "*ānāpānasati"* interpreted as "mindfully breathing in and mindfully breathing out." That is the mundane (or "*padaparama"*) interpretation of "*ānapāna."*
- Buddha meant something deeper that would help cleanse the mind.

3. The Buddha described *bhāvanā* as follows: "*āsevitāya, bhāvitāya, bahuleekathāya,*…" or "keep close association, use often, and use all the time (what is good)……". When one is making an effort to form a new habit, one should be thinking about it and doing things to support that whenever possible. Trying to do it in a formal meditation session will not be enough.

- We discussed the current scientific explanation of how repeated acts help form habits by strengthening a set of neural connections in the brain. See, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits." The same thing works to break bad habits by NOT doing it whenever that comes to the mind. Then existing neural connections will get weaker.
- What is to contemplate: To be mindful to "take in good things (*kusala* or moral things), and to "discard bad things (*akusala* or immoral things)." That is the real meaning of *ānāpānasati* bhāvanā.

4. Now, with all the discussion we have had up to this point, how can just a process of "breathing in" and "breathing out" mindfully GET RID OF either the bad habits (*gati*/*āsāvā*) or the five hindrances?

- Of course, that is not possible.
- But it CAN do one thing, as we mentioned before. If we sit in a quiet place with the eyes closed (i.e., turn off the five physical senses in effect), AND fix the mind on the breath, we can get the five hindrances to settle down and not come up (assuming that we are staying away from committing the BIG EIGHT immoral acts).
- However, this calming down or getting to *Samatha* is a TEMPORARY solution. The moment we come back to the real world with all its distractions and temptations, those habits take over.

5. The breath meditation needs to be used appropriately, with the understanding that it can provide only temporary relief. This breath meditation is the same meditation that was used by the Hindu *yogis* to attain mundane (*Anāriya*) *jhānā* even before the Buddha.

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- Since the time Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga was accepted as the basis of Theravāda Dhamma (in the fifth century CE), this "literal interpretation" of the *ānāpānasati* has been used.
- The real *ānāpānasati bhāvanā* is not described in the *Visuddhimagga* and is not described in any Mahayana or even Theravāda texts today. One needs to go directly to the *Tipiṭaka* to find it; it is described in many *suttā*, for example, the *Assāsa sutta*. I could not find an English translation of this *sutta*. Another one *Arittha Sutta*, and the translation published at the Access to insight site is not complete, even though it does contain Buddha's admonition to Ven. Arittha that in and out-breathing is only one version of *Ānāpānasati* (in the *sutta* it says it is NOT the *Ariya* or Noble version) : WebLink: ACCESSTOINSIGHT: Arittha Sutta: To Arittha
- Arittha Sutta: To Arittha (On Mindfulness of Breathing)

6. Thus there are two interpretations of the *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*. One is the conventional "breathing" version and the other is the real version recommended by the Buddha, which has a wider interpretation, including breathing to a minor extent.

- The correct meaning is in many suttā. Of course, the main sutta is "WebLink: suttacentral: *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (MN 118)."The *Ānāpānasati sutta* is the condensed version of the Buddha's discourses on *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*. As with most main *suttā*, the discourse was condensed into the form for easy transmission. Other *suttā*, mostly by Ven. Sariputta, have explained the terms like "*āna*" and "*āpana*" in detail (like the *Assāsa Sutta*).
- I have discussed the *sutta* at a bit deeper level in "7. What is Ānāpāna?" and "8. The Basic Formal Anāpānasati Meditation."
- See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?," where I provide a detailed discussion based on the *Tipiṭaka*.
- Furthermore, Sinhala commentaries (*Atthakathā*) were also written to explain the main *suttā*. Unfortunately, these *atthakathā* were burned down shortly after Buddhaghosa wrote his Visuddhimagga and other books. However, three important ones (*Paṭisambhidā Magga Pakarana*, *Pitakopadesa*, and *Netthipakarana*) have survived because they had been included in the *Tipiṭaka*. What I describe here is from those books in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- Buddhaghosa was a Hindu before converting to be a Buddhist later on; see, "The Life and Work of Buddhaghosa" by B. C. Law (1927). Some say he became a Buddhist in order to introduce Hindu concepts to Buddha Dhamma. Either that or he just used whatever he understood to be the *Ānāpānasati* without any malicious intentions. Either way, the correct interpretation had been hidden for all these years; see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."

7. The key message of the Buddha was that we need to remove the greed, hate, and ignorance that we all have in our minds, and by doing that we can experience the *nirāmisa sukha* that is of better quality and of permanent nature. Let us now discuss the basic meditation technique that will start us on the correct path to achieve lasting happiness.

- More evidence from the *Tipiṭaka*: "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

Next, "7. What is Ānāpāna?", ……..

11.6.1 Arittha Sutta - To Arittha (On Mindfulness of Breathing)

SN 54.6
PTS: S v 314
CDB ii 1768
Arittha Sutta: To Arittha
(On Mindfulness of Breathing)
translated from the Pāli by
Thanissaro Bhikkhu
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At Savatthi. There the Blessed One said, "Monks, do you develop mindfulness of in-&-out breathing?"

When this was said, Ven. Arittha replied to the Blessed One, *"I* develop mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, lord."

"But how do you develop mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, Arittha?"

"Having abandoned sensual desire for past sensual pleasures, lord, having done away with sensual desire for future sensual pleasures, and having thoroughly subdued perceptions of irritation with regard to internal & external events, I breathe in mindfully and breathe out mindfully."[1]

"There is that mindfulness of in-&-out breathing, Arittha. I don't say that there isn't. But as to how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is brought in detail to its culmination, listen and pay close attention. I will speak."

"As you say, lord," Ven. Arittha responded to the Blessed One.

The Blessed One said, "And how, Arittha, is mindfulness of in-&-out breathing brought in detail to its culmination? There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the shade of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore.[2] Always mindful, he breathes in; mindful he breathes out.

"[1] Breathing in long, he discerns, 'I am breathing in long'; or breathing out long, he discerns, 'I am breathing out long.' [2] Or breathing in short, he discerns, 'I am breathing in short'; or breathing out short, he discerns, 'I am breathing out short.' [3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the entire body.'[3] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the entire body.' [4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming bodily fabrication.'[4] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming bodily fabrication.'

"[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to rapture.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to rapture.' [6] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to pleasure.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to pleasure.' [7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to mental fabrication.'[5] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to mental fabrication.' [8] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in calming mental fabrication.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out calming mental fabrication.'

"[9] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in sensitive to the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out sensitive to the mind.' [10] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in satisfying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out satisfying the mind.' [11] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in steadying the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out steadying the mind.' [12] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in releasing the mind.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out releasing the mind.'[6]

"[13] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on inconstancy.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on inconstancy.' [14] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on dispassion.'[7] He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on dispassion.' [15] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on cessation.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on cessation.' [16] He trains himself, 'I will breathe in focusing on relinquishment.' He trains himself, 'I will breathe out focusing on relinquishment.'

"This, Arittha, is how mindfulness of in-&-out breathing is brought in detail to its culmination."

Notes

1. The Commentary reads this statement as indicating that Arittha has attained the third level of Awakening, non-return, but it is also possible to interpret the statement on a more mundane level: Arittha is simply practicing mindfulness in the present moment, having temporarily subdued desire for past and future sensual pleasures, and having temporarily subdued any thought of irritation with regard to the present.

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2. To the fore *(parimukham):* The Abhidhamma takes an etymological approach to this term, defining it as around *(pari-)* the mouth *(mukham).* In the Vinaya, however, it is used in a context (Cv.V.27.4) where it undoubtedly means the front of the chest. There is also the possibility that the term could be used idiomatically as "to the front," which is how I have translated it here.

3. The commentaries insist that "body" here means the breath, but this is unlikely in this context, for the next step — without further explanation — refers to the breath as "bodily fabrication." If the Buddha were using two different terms to refer to the breath in such close proximity, he would have been careful to signal that he was redefining his terms (as he does below, when explaining that the first four steps in breath meditation correspond to the practice of focusing on the body in and of itself as a frame of reference). The step of breathing in and out sensitive to the entire body relates to the many similes in the suttā depicting jhāna as a state of whole-body awareness (see MN 119).

4. "In-&-out breaths are bodily; these are things tied up with the body. That's why in-&-out breaths are bodily fabrications." — MN 44.

5. "Perceptions & feelings are mental; these are things tied up with the mind. That's why perceptions & feelings are mental fabrications." — MN 44.

6. AN 9.34 shows how the mind, step by step, is temporarily released from burdensome mental states of greater and greater refinement as it advances through the stages of jhāna.

7. Lit., "fading."

See also: MN 118; SN 54.8.

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11.7

7. What is Ānāpāna?

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The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section discuss meditation subjects. They clarify unresolved questions and help gain *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. The *Ānāpānasati Sutta* in the *Majjhima Nikāya* (WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānasati Sutta, MN 118) has the following verse:

"*Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulīkatā vijjā vimuttim paripūrenti.*"

That means: "*Ānāpānasati, Bhikkhus*, when practiced frequently bears many fruits and leads to many benefits. *Ānāpānasati, Bhikkhus*, when cultivated and pursued, brings the four *Satipaṭṭhānā* to their completion. The four *Satipaṭṭhānā*, when cultivated and pursued, bring the seven *Bojjhaṅgā* to their completion. The seven *Bojjhaṅgā*, when cultivated and pursued, bring *vijjā* (opposite of *avijjā*) and *vimutti* (or *Nibbāna*) to their completion."

- Now, if *ānāpāna* means "breathing in and breathing out", how can that lead to the completion of the four *satipaṭṭhānās, the seven bojjhaṅgas,* removal of *avijjā,* and the attainment of *Nibbāna?* Can anyone seriously think that is possible?
- Instead, *ānāpāna* MEANS cultivating *Satipaṭṭhāna*, *Satta Bojjhaṅga*, etc., by "taking in morals" and "expelling immorals" as we discuss below.

2. *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā* is a more detailed version of the *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*. Thus it is important to learn the correct version of the *Ānāpānasati*. If one does *Ānāpānasati* correctly, it can be easily turned to *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā*.

- Section 4 on "Dhammānupassanā" describes how the cultivation of the four types of *Satipaṭṭhāna* leads to the removal of the five hindrances and fulfillment of the seven *Bojjhaṅga* to their completion. See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (MN 10)." That confirms the statements in the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* mentioned above.

3. First, let us figure out exactly what the Buddha meant by "*āna*" and "*āpāna*" in "*āna+āpāna+sati*" which rhymes as *ānāpānasati*; of course "*sati*" is mindfulness.

- "Āna" is taking in; In Sinhala, "*ānayānaya*" is "import". "*āpāna*" is discarding; In Sinhala, "*apānayānaya*" is "export". Thus "āna"+"āpāna" or *ānāpāna* is "taking in/discarding" or import/export.
- "Assa" is same as "āna", and "passa" is the same as "āpāna". In Sri Lanka, parents tell their child to clean his/her room by saying, "*kāmaraya* (room) *assa passa* (or *aspas*) *karāganna*".
- When cleaning the room, the child needs to get rid of the clutter (*passa*), but also can take in (*assa*) something like a flower vase to make the room look more pleasant, or to take in a chair that can be useful.

4. **During the time of the Buddha itself, auxiliary *suttā* as well as commentaries ("*Atthakatha*") were written to explain the key words/phrases in the main suttā that were abbreviated for easy transmission; see, "Preservation of Dhamma."**

There are two important *suttā*, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Assāsappatta Sutta* (SN 38.5)" and the "WebLink: suttacentral: *Paramassāsappatta sutta* (SN 38.6)" that describe how one should "take in" *kusala* thoughts and "discard" *akusala* thoughts; that is "āna" + "āpāna" (*ānāpāna*) or "*assa/passa*", for cleaning up (the

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mind). The English translation there is hopeless, but one can get the idea by just looking at the Pāli version. You don't need to be an expert on Pāli to see that.

- In the *Mahasaccaka Sutta*, "*assa/passa*" was also used to indicate "in and out breathing" when the Buddha was describing to Saccaka how he engaged in the "breath meditation" per instructions by Āḷāra Kālāma and Uddaka Rāmaputta while he was searching for the truth as Bodhisattva.
- But the very next verses of that *sutta* describes how he gave up on that technique and moved onto the correct path.
- So, we need to be careful about making sure a given phrase is used in the right context, depending on the situation.
- For example, there are several conventional and deeper meanings to the key words "*atta*" and "*anatta*," and one needs to be able to figure out which meaning to use for a given case; see, "Attā Hi Attano Nātho," "Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?," and links in those posts.

5. When one knows what *kusala/akusala kamma* are, the first thing to do is to prevent from doing *akusala kamma* and to make an effort to do *kusala kamma* by engaging in meritorious actions (*puñña kriya*); see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)," and "Punna Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

- Thus when one leads a moral life, one is automatically engaging in the basic form of *Ānāpānasati*.
- AND one cannot do a proper formal *Ānāpānasati* meditation and get to even *samādhi*, let alone a *jhāna*, unless one leads a moral life. The five hindrances are too strong to be suppressed; see, "Key to Calming the Mind – Five Hindrances".

6. **Formal *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*** can be done in a formal sitting or walking meditation session, while engaging in the basic version (taking in what is good/discarding what is bad) all the time.

- There is no need to do *Samatha Bhāvanā* separately. If one does a formal *Ānāpānasati* session with the eyes closed in a quiet place, one will automatically get into *samādhi*. **Let good thoughts grow, and discard bad thoughts. Very simple.**
- Another thing to do in a formal meditation session is to **contemplate on a particular dhamma concept like *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. This is really focusing on "āna".**
- When one gets to *samādhi*, the mind goes on "auto-pilot"; you will feel that your mind is taking charge and you need to exert less effort to keep the focus.

7. When one does the basic version while engaged in other activities, one is only being mindful of what one is engaged in, i.e., the task at hand. That task presumably does not involve any of the BIG EIGHT we discussed previously; see, "The Basics in Meditation." It could be a technical task or a daily chore like washing dishes or driving. **Be mindful of just the task (washing, driving, etc).** Here one will NOT get into samādhi, so there is no danger in injuring oneself; Many people get into accidents while driving, because they are not being mindful of driving.

- However, if one does not have a specific task (say, when riding a bus or waiting at the doctor's office), one could be engaged in *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*. When our minds are not focused on something (like in the above mentioned cases), all sorts of ideas bubble up. As we discussed in "The Basics in Meditation." These are due to deeply-ingrained habits or *āsavā* that we have acquired not only in this life but also from previous lives.

8. The more we keep reviving or re-living this habit (i.e., doing *āna/apāna* or *assa/passa*), we strengthen that good habit (*gati*).

- We have come all this way in the cycle of rebirths that are mostly filled with suffering because of our bad habits (*gati*) that have been percolated to a very dense state of deep-seated cravings (*āsavā*). It may take some time to develop this "*āna/pāna*", but you will definitely see results in a few weeks to few months.

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9. In the *ānapānapabba* of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, it says, *"..so sato vā assa sati, sato vā passa sati. Dīghaṃ vā assasanto dīghaṃ assasāmī ti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto dīghaṃ passasāmī ti pajānāti, ……"* Here it DOES NOT mean "take long breaths in, expel long breaths out"; rather it means, "get rid of old bad habits, and cultivate the old good habits".

- Similarly, the very next sentence ("*..rassaṃ vā assasanto…"*) is not about short breaths, but on those good habits that you started to work on recently, and those bad habits that started to creep in to the mind recently (if there is any).
- There is no way that one can purify one's mind by breathing in/out, even though it can get one's mind to calm down (*Samatha*). The correct way of doing it does both *Samatha* and *Vipassāna* together.

10. When we think a bit more about this, we realize that what needs to be discarded are *micchā diṭṭhi* (wrong views), *micchā saṅkappa* (wrong thoughts or ideas), *micchā vācā* (incorrect, harmful speech), *micchā kammanta* (incorrect/harmful actions), *micchā ājīva* (incorrect/harmful way of living), *micchā vāyāma* (tendency to strive on immoral activities), *micchā sati* (tendency to focus on immoral activities); when one does all that *micchā samādhi* (tendency to get absorbed in immoral ideas/actions) is the result.

- In the same way, what we need to "take in" are *sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappa, sammā vācā , sammā kammanta, sammā ājīva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati*, and when one keeps doing that one automatically gets to *sammā samādhi.*
- Put it in another way, *Ānāpānasati* is nothing but "taking in" the Noble Eightfold Path and ""discarding" the opposite.

11. The longer one "takes in" or "lives" the Noble Eightfold Path and "rejects" the opposite, the easier it becomes to get to samādhi in a formal meditation session. When samādhi grows little by little, one day, one will automatically get into the first *Ariya jhāna*. However, there is one more thing that is needed before getting to the *Ariya jhānā*, an understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?"

- Keep practicing "*ānāpāna*" as much as possible throughout the day. With time, you will feel the "cooling down" or '*nivāna*" or "a taste of *Nibbāna*."
- Buddha Dhamma is NOT about following rituals. It is all about cleansing one's mind and that takes an effort and concentration. Initially, it could be hard, but as one gains samādhi bit by bit, one gets motivated. In a few months, one can look back at one's life and see that it has changed for the better.
- Even though one can start with discarding immoral deeds and cultivating or taking in moral, one needs to know the real meanings of "*san*," *anicca* and *anatta* in order to do the *ānāpānasati bhāvanā* in a deeper sense: (i) One needs to comprehend which "*san*" or defilements to be discarded; see, "San." (ii) One needs to know the deeper meanings of *Tilakkhaṇa*; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

Next, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?", ……..

11.7.1 Ānāpānassati-sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 118)

Majjhima Nikāya 118

Ānāpānassati-sutta

Evaṃ me sutaṃ— ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā sāvatthiyaṃ viharati pubbārāme migāramātupāsāde sambahulehi abhiññātehi abhiññātehi therehi sāvakehi saddhiṃ—āyasmatā ca sāriputtena āyasmatā ca mahāmoggallānena āyasmatā ca mahākassapena āyasmatā ca mahākaccāyanena āyasmatā ca mahākoṭṭhikena āyasmatā ca mahākappinena āyasmatā ca mahācundena āyasmatā ca anuruddhena āyasmatā ca revatena āyasmatā ca ānandena, aññ ehi ca abhiññātehi abhiññātehi therehi sāvakehi saddhiṃ.

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Tena kho pana samayena therā bhikkhū nave bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti. Appekacce therā bhikkhū dasapi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū vīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū tiṃsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū cattārīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti. Te ca navā bhikkhū therehi bhikkhūhi ovadiyamānā anusāsiyamānā uḷāraṃ pubbenāparaṃ visesaṃ jānanti.

Tena kho pana samayena bhagavā tadahuposathe pannarase pavāraṇāya puṇṇāya puṇṇamāya rattiyā bhikkhusaṃghaparivuto abbhokāse nisinno hoti. Atha kho bhagavā tuṇhībhūtaṃ tuṇhībhūtaṃ bhikkhusaṃghaṃ anuviloketvā bhikkhū āmantesi: "āraddhosmi, bhikkhave, imāya paṭipadāya; āraddhacittosmi, bhikkhave, imāya paṭipadāya. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, bhiyyoso mattāya vīriyaṃ ārabhatha appattassa pattiyā, anadhigatassa adhigamāya, asacchikatassa sacchikiriyāya. Idhevāhaṃ sāvatthiyaṃ komudiṃ cātumāsiniṃ āgamessāmī"ti. Assosuṃ kho jānapadā bhikkhū: "bhagavā kira tattheva sāvatthiyaṃ komudiṃ cātumāsiniṃ āgamessatī"ti. Te jānapadā bhikkhū sāvatthiṃ osaranti bhagavantaṃ dassanāya. Te ca kho therā bhikkhū bhiyyoso mattāya nave bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti. Appekacce therā bhikkhū dasapi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū vīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū tiṃsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti, appekacce therā bhikkhū cattārīsampi bhikkhū ovadanti anusāsanti. Te ca navā bhikkhū therehi bhikkhūhi ovadiyamānā anusāsiyamānā uḷāraṃ pubbenāparaṃ visesaṃ jānanti.

Tena kho pana samayena bhagavā tadahuposathe pannarase komudiyā cātumāsiniyā puṇṇāya puṇṇamāya rattiyā bhikkhusaṅghaparivuto abbhokāse nisinno hoti. Atha kho bhagavā tuṇhībhūtaṃ tuṇhībhūtaṃ bhikkhusaṅghaṃ anuviloketvā bhikkhū āmantesi:

"Apalāpāyaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā; nippalāpāyaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā; suddhā sāre patiṭṭhitā. Tathārūpo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṃgho; tathārūpā ayaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpā parisā āhuneyyā pāhuneyyā dakkhiṇeyyā añjalikaraṇīyā anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassa. Tathārūpo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṃgho; tathārūpā ayaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpāya parisāya appaṃ dinnaṃ bahu hoti, bahu dinnaṃ bahutaraṃ. Tathārūpo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṃgho; tathārūpā ayaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpā parisā dullabhā dassanāya lokassa. Tathārūpo ayaṃ, bhikkhave, bhikkhusaṃgho; tathārūpā ayaṃ, bhikkhave, parisā yathārūpaṃ parisaṃ alaṃ yojanagaṇanāni dassanāya gantuṃ puṭosenāpi.

Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṃghe arahanto khīṇāsavā vusitavanto katakaraṇīyā ohitabhārā anuppattasadatthā parikkhīṇabhavasaṃyojanā sammadaññāvimuttā—evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṃghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṃghe pañcannaṃ orambhāgiyānaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā opapātikā tattha parinibbāyino anāvattidhammā tasmā lokā—evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṃghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṃghe tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā rāgadosamohānaṃ tanuttā sakadāgāmino sakideva imaṃ lokaṃ āgantvā dukkhassantaṃ karissanti—evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṃghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṃghe tiṇṇaṃ saṃyojanānaṃ parikkhayā sotāpannā avinipātadhammā niyatā sambodhiparāyanā—evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṃghe.

Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṅghe catunnaṃ satipaṭṭhānānaṃ bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti—evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṅghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṅghe catunnaṃ sammappadhānānaṃ bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti … pe … catunnaṃ iddhipādānaṃ … pañcannaṃ indriyānaṃ … pañcannaṃ balānaṃ … sattannaṃ bojjhaṅgānaṃ … ariyassa aṭṭhaṅgikassa maggassa bhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti—evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṅghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṅghe mettābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti … karuṇābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti … muditābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti … upekkhābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti … asubhabhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti … aniccasaññābhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti—evarūpāpi, bhikkhave, santi bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṅghe. Santi, bhikkhave, bhikkhū imasmiṃ bhikkhusaṅghe ānāpānassatibhāvanānuyogamanuyuttā viharanti. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā. Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti.

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Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati kathaṃ bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu araññagato vā rukkhamūlagato vā suññāgāragato vā nisīdati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā. So satova assasati satova passasati.

Dīghaṃ vā assasanto ‘dīghaṃ assasāmī’ti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto ‘dīghaṃ passasāmī’ti pajānāti; rassaṃ vā assasanto ‘rassaṃ assasāmī’ti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā passasanto ‘rassaṃ passasāmī’ti pajānāti; ‘sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati. (1)

‘Pītipaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘pītipaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘sukhapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘sukhapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati. (2)

‘Cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati. (3)

‘Aniccānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘aniccānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘virāgānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘virāgānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘nirodhānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘nirodhānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati.

Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evaṃ bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā. (4)

Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati kathaṃ bahulīkatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti? Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu dīghaṃ vā assasanto ‘dīghaṃ assasāmī’ti pajānāti, dīghaṃ vā passasanto ‘dīghaṃ passasāmī’ti pajānāti; rassaṃ vā assasanto ‘rassaṃ assasāmī’ti pajānāti, rassaṃ vā passasanto ‘rassaṃ passasāmī’ti pajānāti; ‘sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘sabbakāyapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; kāye kāyānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Kāyesu kāyaññatarāhaṃ, bhikkhave, evaṃ vadāmi yadidaṃ—assāsapassāsā. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, kāye kāyānupassī tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. (1)

Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu ‘pītipaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘pītipaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘sukhapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘sukhapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘cittasaṅkhārapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘passambhayaṃ cittasaṅkhāraṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; vedanāsu vedanānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Vedanāsu vedanāññatarāhaṃ, bhikkhave, evaṃ vadāmi yadidaṃ— assāsapassāsānaṃ sādhukaṃ manasikāraṃ. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, vedanāsu vedanānupassī tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. (2)

Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu ‘cittapaṭisaṃvedī assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘cittapaṭisaṃvedī passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘abhippamodayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘samādahaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘samādahaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; ‘vimocayaṃ cittaṃ assasissāmī’ti sikkhati, ‘vimocayaṃ cittaṃ passasissāmī’ti sikkhati; citte cittānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. Nāhaṃ, bhikkhave, muṭṭhassatissa asampajānassa ānāpānassatiṃ vadāmi. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, citte cittānupassī tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. (3)

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Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu 'aniccānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'aniccānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; 'virāgānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'virāgānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; 'nirodhānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'nirodhānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; 'paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati; dhammesu dhammānupassī, bhikkhave, tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. So yaṃ taṃ abhijjhādomanassānaṃ pahānaṃ taṃ paññāya disvā sādhukaṃ ajjhupekkhitā hoti. Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, dhammesu dhammānupassī tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ. (4)

Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, ānāpānassati evaṃ bahulīkatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti.

Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, cattāro satipaṭṭhānā kathaṃ bahulīkatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti? Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ, upaṭṭhitāssa tasmiṃ samaye sati hoti asammuṭṭhā. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno upaṭṭhitā sati hoti asammuṭṭhā, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti. Satisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (1)

So tathāsato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicayati parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicayati parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (2)

Tassa taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjato āraddhaṃ hoti vīriyaṃ asallīnaṃ. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjato āraddhaṃ hoti vīriyaṃ asallīnaṃ, vīriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, vīriyasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, vīriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (3)

Āraddhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno āraddhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, pītisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (4)

Pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (5)

Passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, samādhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (6)

So tathāsamāhitaṃ cittaṃ sādhukaṃ ajjhupekkhitā hoti. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsamāhitaṃ cittaṃ sādhukaṃ ajjhupekkhitā hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (7)

Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu vedanāsu … pe … citte … dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ, upaṭṭhitāssa tasmiṃ samaye sati hoti asammuṭṭhā. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno upaṭṭhitā sati hoti asammuṭṭhā, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, satisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, satisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (1)

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So tathāsato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicayati parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsato viharanto taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinati pavicayati parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjati, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (2)

Tassa taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjato āraddhaṃ hoti vīriyaṃ asallīnaṃ. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno taṃ dhammaṃ paññāya pavicinato pavicayato parivīmaṃsaṃ āpajjato āraddhaṃ hoti vīriyaṃ asallīnaṃ, vīriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, vīriyasambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, vīriyasambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (3)

Āraddhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno āraddhavīriyassa uppajjati pīti nirāmisā, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, pītisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, pītisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (4)

Pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno pītimanassa kāyopi passambhati, cittampi passambhati, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, passaddhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (5)

Passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhuno passaddhakāyassa sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, samādhisambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, samādhisambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. (6)

So tathāsamāhitaṃ cittaṃ sādhukaṃ ajjhupekkhitā hoti. Yasmiṃ samaye, bhikkhave, bhikkhu tathāsamāhitaṃ cittaṃ sādhukaṃ ajjhupekkhitā hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno āraddho hoti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaṃ tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhu bhāveti, upekkhāsambojjhaṅgo tasmiṃ samaye bhikkhuno bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchati. Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, cattāro satipaṭṭhānā evaṃ bahulīkatā satta sambojjhaṅge paripūrenti. (7)

Kathaṃ bhāvitā ca, bhikkhave, satta bojjhaṅgā kathaṃ bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu satisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti vivekanissitaṃ virāganissitaṃ nirodhanissitaṃ vossaggapariṇāmiṃ. Dhammavicayasambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti … pe … vīriyasambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti … pītisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti … passaddhisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti … samādhisambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti … upekkhāsambojjhaṅgaṃ bhāveti vivekanissitaṃ virāganissitaṃ nirodhanissitaṃ vossaggapariṇāmiṃ. Evaṃ bhāvitā kho, bhikkhave, satta bojjhaṅgā evaṃ bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrentī”ti.

Idamavoca bhagavā. Attamanā te bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandunti.

Ānāpānassatisuttaṃ niṭṭhitaṃ aṭṭhamaṃ.

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11.8 Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?

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Introduction

1. If you Google "Ānāpānasati", almost all websites that come up identify it as "Buddhist breath meditation" or "mindfulness of breathing". But *Tipiṭaka suttā* clearly lead to the conclusion that breath meditation is not Buddhist *Ānāpāna Bhāvanā*.

- Breath meditation was practiced by *yogis* even at the time of the Buddha. So, breath meditation predates Buddha's *Ānāpāna Bhāvanā*. Buddha rejected it because it does not lead to *Nibbāna*, or PERMANENT relief from suffering.
- There are many *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* that clearly state that *Nibbāna* can be attained with the *Ānāpāna Bhāvanā* . It automatically fufills *Satipaṭṭhāna*, *Satta Bojjhaṅga*, and all 37 Factors of Enlightenment. **Therefore, *Ānāpānasati* is infinitely deeper than just focusing on one's breath.**
- I will provide evidence for those two statements below. First, let us see what can be accomplished with Buddhist *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā*.

Ānāpānassati by Itself Is Sufficient to Attain *Nibbāna*

2. According to the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpānassati Sutta (MN 118): "*..Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā cattāro satipaṭṭhāne paripūreti. Cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvitā bahulīkatā satta bojjhaṅge paripūrenti. Satta bojjhaṅgā bhāvitā bahulīkatā vijjāvimuttiṃ paripūrenti.*"

- Translated, "*..Ānāpānassati*, when used (*bhāvitā*) and used frequently (*bahulīkatā*), completes (*paripūreti*) four types of *Satipaṭṭhāna*. *Cattāro satipaṭṭhāna*, when used and used frequently, completes *Sapta Bojjanga*. *Sapta Bojjanga* when used and used frequently, completes the full release (*Nibbāna* or *Arahanthood*)".
- Exactly the same statement was made in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ānanda Sutta (SN 54.13). In fact, most of the *suttā* in WebLink: suttacentral: Ānāpāna Saṃyutta (SN 54) has that phrase or the phrase: "..*"Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā.*" Here, "*mahappalā*" ("*mahā*" + "*pala*") means the four Noble stages: *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī, Arahant*.
- Therefore, it is quite clear that *ānāpānassati,* **by itself**, can lead to all the way to the *Arahanthood*. Thus, one does not need to do **"separate *vipassana* (insight) meditation after getting to *Samatha* with *Ānāpānassati"*** as some suggest.

Can *Nibbāna* be Attained With Breath Meditation?

3. **The key question is: "Can breath-meditation, by itself, lead to *Arahanthood*?** That is the critical question that needs to contemplated by those who equate *Ānāpānassati* to breath meditation.

- *Nibbāna* is the removal of greed, hate, ignorance: "*rāgakkhayo dosakkhayo mohakkhayo idaṃ vuccati nibbānanti.*" This verse is in many *suttā*, for example, in WebLink: suttacentral: Nibbāna pañhā Sutta (SN 38.1).
- If *Ānāpānassati* means breath meditation, how could keeping the mind on one's breath **by itself** REMOVE *rāga, dosa, moha* from one's mind?

4. **The conventional (and erroneous) teaching in many texts today is that one needs to get to *samādhi* with *Ānāpānassati* and then one needs to do *Vipassanā* or insight meditation to attain *magga phala*.**

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- However, from the above-discussed *suttā*, it is quite clear that *Ānāpānassati* **by itself can** lead to even the *Arahanthood!*
- Of course, this erroneous interpretation — that breath meditation is Buddhist *Ānāpāna bhāvanā* — is not something that current practitioners came up with. It can be traced back to Buddhaghosa's *Visuddhimagga*, see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."

The *Arittha* Sutta

5. The incorrect version of *Ānāpānassati* was there even before the Buddha. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Arittha Sutta (SN 54.06), the Buddha, upon finding out that *Bhikkhu* Aritta was practicing the incorrect breath meditation as *Ānāpānassati,* told him the following. "..*Atthesā, ariṭṭha, ānāpānassati, nesā natthī'ti vadāmi. Api ca, ariṭṭha, yathā ānāpānassati vitthārena paripuṇṇā hoti taṃ suṇāhi, sādhukaṃ manasi karohi; bhāsissāmī*"ti.

- Translated, "..**There is that *ānāpānassati*, Arittha.** I don't say that there isn't. But I will describe the real (*yathā*) *ānāpānassati*, listen and pay close attention. I will speak."
- Furthermore, that incorrect version of breath meditation was used by *yogis* at that time even to attain higher *jhāna*. However, those *anāriya jhāna* are attained by just SUPPRESSING defilements (*keles*), and will not lead to ANY *magga phala*. Those who cultivate such *anāriya jhāna* will also have next birth in *Brahma* realms, but after that they can be reborn even in the *apāyā*.

Assāsa/Passāsa And *Āna/Āpāna*

6. The main reason for the incorrect interpretation of *Ānāpānassati* as breath meditation is that in many *suttā* it is described as *assāsa/passāsa*, which conventionally means taking in/putting out of something, and particularly to breathing in/breathing out.

- In fact, *āna/āpāna* (which rhymes as *ānāpāna*) also mean taking in/putting out, as we discuss below.
- However, in the *suttā* on *Ānāpānassati, assāsa/passāsa* or *āna/āpāna* specifically mean taking in *kusala*/getting rid of *akusala*, or, equivalently, taking in the Noble Eightfold Path/discarding the *micchā* eightfold path.
- That should be clear to anyone who knows that *Nibbāna* is attained via getting rid of *dasa akusala*.

Evidence from the *Tipiṭaka*

7. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Assāsappatta Sutta (SN38.5), it is specifically said what needs to be "taken in" (*assāsa*):

- "*Katamo panāvuso, maggo katamā paṭipadā, etassa **assāsassa** sacchikiriyāyāti* (what needs to be "taken in"). *Ayameva kho, āvuso, ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo etassa **assāsassa** sacchikiriyāya* (it is the Noble Eightfold Path that needs to be "taken in"). *Seyyathīdaṃ* (namely)*: sammādiṭṭhi sammāsaṅkappo sammāvācā sammākammanto sammāājīvo sammāvāyāmo sammāsati sammāsamādhi*". [***paṭipadā*** : （f.） line of conduct; mode of progress. ***sacchikiriyā*** : [f.] realisation; experiencing.]
- WebLink: suttacentral: Parama assāsa Sutta (AN38.6) has the same statement, emphasizing with the term "*parama*" or "superior".
- Therefore, there should not be any confusion about what *assāsa* means.

8. A detailed description of how the cultivation of correct *Ānāpānassati* leads to *Ariya jhānā* as well as *magga phala* is described in the WebLink: suttacentral: Padīpopama sutta (SN 54.8), also called the *Dipa Sutta*.

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- "*So satova assāsati, satova passāsati*" means "He maintains his mind on *dhamma* that should be taken in (*kusala* or moral) and those that should be gotten rid of (*akusala* or immoral)".
- "*paṭinissaggānupassī assasissāmī'ti sikkhati, 'paṭinissaggānupassī passasissāmī'ti sikkhati*" means, "one cultivates discipline (*sikkhati*) by removing bonds that bind one to the rebirth process (*patinissaganupassi*) by taking in morals (*assasissāmi*) and getting rid of immoral (*passasissāmī*)".

Meaning Embedded in *Ānāpāna*

9. As is the case with many Pāli words, the meaning of the word *Ānāpāna* is embedded in the word itself. The two words "*āna*" and "*āpāna*" combine to rhyme as *ānāpāna.* When *"sati"* is added for being mindful of that, it becomes *ānāpānassati.*

- "*Ā*na" is taking in; In Sinhala, "*ānanaya*" is "import". "*Āpāna*" is discarding; In Sinhala, "*apānanaya*" is "export". Thus "*āna*" + "*āpāna*" or *ānāpāna* is "taking in/discarding" or import/export.
- "Assa" is same as "*āna*", and "*passa*" is the same as "*āpāna*". In Sri Lanka, parents tell their child to clean his/her room by saying, "*kāmaraya* (room) *assa passa* (or *aspas*) *karāganna*".
- When cleaning the room, the child needs to get rid of the clutter (*passa*), but also can take in (*assa*) something like a flower vase to make the room look more pleasant, or to take in a chair that can be useful.
- So, one does not throw away everything or take in everything. One needs to be selective in taking in "good things" and throwing away "bad things." That is where mindfulness comes in. That cannot be done with the breath.

Breath Meditation Can be Harmful

10. Most people are reluctant to give up the wrong practice of "breath meditation" simply because they are attached to a "state of well being" that can be reached with breath meditation. But that relief is only temporary.

- It is even possible to attain *anāriya jhānā* with breath meditation. Yet, those *jhānā* are also temporary because the defilements are only SUPPRESSED. On the other hand, the *Ariya jhānā* attained via correct *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā* are permanent. That is because even to attain the first Ariya jhāna, one MUST have first removed kāma rāga, not merely suppress it. See, "Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala – Introduction" and "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna."
- It must also be mentioned that breath meditation can be used to calm down one's mind. But one should not expect to make much progress towards *Nibbāna* using it. **In fact, if one gets "addicted" to it (as I have seen many people do), it could be a serious distraction to the Noble Path.** See, "Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run."

Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā Is Not Only a Formal Meditation

11. As I have emphasized in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" and the "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta," one should not restrict either *Ānāpānasati* or *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* to formal sessions conducted sitting down at an isolated place.

- When the Buddha said, "*..Ānāpānassati, bhikkhave, bhāvitā bahulīkatā..*" in #2 above, he meant doing it as much as possible, anywhere possible. That means basically all the time! One just needs to be mindful of one's actions, speech, and thoughts, and stop bad ones and cultivates good ones.
- This is the fundamental approach to practice, see, "Living Dhamma" section for a step-by-step process that can be used by even those who do not believe in the basic tenets of Buddha Dhamma, like rebirth or *kamma*.

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- In particular, see, "Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently" and "Ānāpāna and Satipaṭṭhāna – Fundamentals."

Mistranslated Verses

12. Some people believe that *Ānāpānasati* or *Satipaṭṭhāna bhāvanā* should be done in formal sessions. That belief has origins in the verse, *"Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu aranna gato vā rukkhamüla gato vā sunnāgāra gato vā nisidati pallankaṃ ābhujitvā, ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya, parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā*", that appears in multiple *suttā* explaining both *Ānāpānassati* and *Satipattāna bhāvanā.*

- **In most English translations** this verse is written as, "There is the case where a monk, having gone to the wilderness, to the foot of a tree, or to an empty building, sits down folding his legs crosswise, holding his body erect, and setting mindfulness to the fore".
- But there is a deeper meaning to this verse. For example, in the word "*rukkhamūla*," "*rukkha*" is "tree" and "*mūla*" is the "root"; even though the top of a tree sways back and forth with the wind, the tree trunk close to the root is very stable. Thus "*rukkhamūla gato vā*" means getting to a stable mindset. In the conventional interpretation is says, "having gone to the foot of a tree".
- The **deeper meaning** of that complete verse is discussed in detail in, "Prerequisites for the Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā." Then the verse can be stated something like, "get into a calm and stable mindset that is devoid of greed, hate, and ignorance; keep a modest attitude without any sense of superiority; be forthright and honest, and keep the mind on the main object of cooling down the mind". That can be done anywhere, a formal session is not needed, even though that could be helpful.
- One could also use the conventional meaning for formal sessions. But of course, it is the deeper meaning that is much more important even in formal sessions.

Only Three Commentaries Can be Trusted

13. If anyone has any evidence to the contrary **from the *Tipiṭaka***, please make a comment at the "Discussion Forum." I will be happy to address any such issues.

- There are only three commentaries (*Patisambhidāmagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana [Netti]*) that can be trusted. Those are in the *Tipiṭaka*. All other commentaries written later have many inconsistencies and outright misinterpretations; see, for example, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."

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11.9 8. The Basic Formal Ānāpānasati Meditation

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects and can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to gain *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

1. As we discussed in the previous posts of this series, it is important to live a moral life without engaging in the BIG EIGHT in order to achieve the full benefits of meditation. One could start even while making progress on the BIG EIGHT, and these formal sessions will help with those as well.

2. Now let us talk about how to do the correct *Ānāpānasati* meditation as taught by the Buddha; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."

- First pick out a quiet time slot that you can allocate without having to worry about other tasks. Initially, 10-15 minutes a day would be fine and you can extend the time to several hours when the benefits of proper meditation becomes clear and you start feeling the *nirāmisa sukha*.

3. Pick out a room away from external disturbances as much as possible. A room that can be darkened and the door can be closed would be ideal. Sit in a comfortable chair with arm rest, and this becomes important when one start getting into *samādhi*, because the body could become less rigid and tends to slide off (however, some people including myself tend to "freeze" just like in *samādhi* statues).

- Anyway, do not make the chair too comfortable because you may fall asleep. With practice this sleepiness will automatically go away, when the mind starts liking the meditation sessions, i.e., when one of the *pancanivarana*, *thina middha*, is automatically removed. One comes out of *samādhi* energized.

4. Sit in the chair with the hands on the lap and eyes closed. What we will be trying to do is to ward off any thoughts of lust, cravings, etc. (*kamachanda*), any thoughts of hate (*vyāpāda*) in particular, and also any stray thoughts such as on kids or other pending tasks. We want to experience the "cooling down" due to the absence of *kamachanda* and *vyāpāda*, and also to focus the mind on a Dhamma concept. For those who are starting out, it may be good to do the following first:

- In order to keep the mind from running away, keep saying in your mind, "May all beings be happy and healthy". Or, you could think about some act of generosity that you did recently. But all of a sudden you may drift to a thought of some type of a sensual pleasure (involving any of the senses). Deliberately get rid of that thought and focus the mind back on the original task.
- If a hateful thought (towards someone or something) comes to mind, forcefully stop that thought as well. Here you should deliberately think about good thoughts about that person. It is important to remember that even the most vile person has friends/family that love that person. Sincerely say, "May X be happy and healthy". Even if you have good reasons to despise that person, it is important to realize that our task is to remove the hateful feelings that WE have. When we do that, in the future we will not generate strong hateful feelings even if someone does something that may appear to be against us.
- Thinking about the serenity of a Buddha statue helps in the case of both *kamachanda* and *vyāpāda* (and any stray thought).

5. Once one gets some practice to sit at one place with a focused mind for a little while, one should start meditating or contemplating on Dhamma concepts. It may be a good idea to start with the introductory posts (posts above this post).

- After that, one could read one of the posts from the "Key Dhamma Concepts" on the top menu just before the meditation session and then contemplate on those concepts; for example, one could think about examples on "*anicca*": We cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction over long term. If you are old enough you have many examples on your own. If you are young, you can still maintain your body, hair, teeth, etc to your liking but when you get to middle age, you will see that it is an impossible task. The easiest is to think about your parents/grand parents and see how their bodies have changed, how they are unable to keep their bodies the way they would like.

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- For this purpose, I have also added new posts on how one can look at the world through Buddha Dhamma in this section. The posts that I have added after the "Myths about Meditation" are good ones to read before the session and then to meditate on those ideas; for example, "A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)." The other three posts below that one may be a bit advanced for some; if so, browse around and find ones that are suitable. Eventually, the key concepts in the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section need to be grasped. I encourage everyone to read the posts in the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section first.
- You could actually read any post from any area of the site and use that as a "focal point" on the meditation session later on. Not all sections are relevant to everyone. Different people can get to samādhi focusing on different topics. **The only posts that is absolutely necessary are the ones on *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*. But if they are hard to grasp, one should probably start at the "Moral Living" section. It is a matter of getting used to new concepts. In meditation, one will automatically "drift to *samādhi*" when the concepts become clear; the mind becomes awake and clear.**

6. Inevitably, your mind will try to wander off during the session. Stopping lustful and hateful thoughts is the main task of this formal meditation session. **If any distracting thought comes to the mind, DO NOT let it "run wild"; this is what is called "being mindful". Keep a sharp eye on such stray thoughts and put a stop soon as they surface.**

- The other three hindrances *(thina midha*, uddhacca kukkucca, and *vicikicchā*) will automatically come down. You will be surprised how refreshed you feel after a "good meditation session".
- Initially it may be hard, but if you are persistent you should be able to see the results within a week to a month depending the situation with the BIG EIGHT. Those will also gradually diminish too.
- Once one gets the mind to calm down some, one could start focusing on the good/bad habits that one has, in addition to "taking in" Dhamma concepts.

7. In the *Anapanapabba* of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, it says, *"..so sato va assa sati, sato va passa sati. Digham va assasanto digham assasami ti pajanati, digham va passasanto digham passasami ti pajanati, ……"* Here it DOES NOT mean "take long breaths in, expel long breaths out"; rather it means, "get rid of old bad habits, and cultivate the old good habits".

- Similarly, the very next sentence ("*..rassam va assasanto…"*) is not about short breaths, but on those good habits that you started to work on recently, and those bad habits that started to creep in to your mind recently (if there is any).
- This is why understanding how habits are formed and becomes āsavas is important; there are several posts on this subject.
- There is no way that one can purify one's mind by breathing in/out, even though it can get one's mind to calm down (*samatha*). The correct way of doing it does both *samatha* and *vipassana* together.
- In the above verse, *sati* is a very important term; it is not mere concentration, but contemplation with an understanding of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* (actually any form of meditation cannot be done effectively without at least some understanding of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*).

8. The key to success is to do this as often as possible. You do not need to be in a quiet place either, even though it helps especially initially. As you make progress, try to do it while riding the subway or a bus (but not while driving!), while waiting at the doctor's office, during a lunch break, etc.

9. When one starts on *Ariya Bhāvanā*, sometimes things may look worse before getting better. It is like trying to cool a hot iron by sprinkling water on it, when all that smoke comes out and may appear to be getting worse. But one needs to be persistent. One needs to keep in mind that uncountable beings have attained "cooling down" by having faith in the Buddha.

- Understanding key Dhamma concepts is key to any type of meditation. Whenever you have time, try to read on different topics. Things will start "falling into place" at some point, if it hasn't yet. From that point

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on, one will start feeling the joy of Dhamma, and will be seeking to clarify things with enthusiasm. It is a good addiction to have!

Next, "Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Character and Habits (Gathi)", ……..

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11.10 Possible Effects in Meditation – Kundalini Awakening

June 25, 2016; updated July 19, 2016

In the post, "Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?" in the Section "Myths or Realities," I discussed some possible effects of meditation, both in conventional and in true Buddhist meditations. Here I will focus on just Buddhist meditation, and explain the physical and mental changes that one may experience. However, this does not mean everyone will experience these; these symptoms cannot be generalized, and some may not even feel them.

1. It is possible that one may encounter some soothing physical sensations first and then even some discomforts, when one starts seriously cleansing one's mind. I did not want to discuss this topic until I had enough background material to explain the origins of such effects.

- Some people may feel such first experiences to be not bad at all, and even get attached to them. I believe that what is known in Hinduism as "*kundalini* awakening" is also a manifestation of this effect. Those are supposed to be encountered in *anāriya* meditation techniques, where one stops the cleansing process at this stage. It is the **goal** of most of those non-Buddhist meditators.
- Such effects could also be experienced in genuine Buddhist meditation. Then, they may even turn a bit painful before it gets better. In order to go through such stages and to end up with genuine tranquility, one needs to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and proceed further.
- Before reading this post, it is advisable to first read the introductory post, "Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?," because some body sensations encountered in early stages of meditation are discussed in that post.

2. Fully understanding the current post requires some background material on the concept of *gandhabba;* Click to hear pronunciation:

WebLink: Listen to "Gandhabba" pronounciation

The inert physical body is made alive by the *gandhabba* (or "*manomaya kāya*") that comes out of the physical body in the case of "out-of-body experiences"; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

- There are many posts at the site that explain various aspects of the *gandhabba*; see the sections "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)," "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," and "Udayavaya Ñāna."
- While it is not necessary to learn about the *gandhabba* to attain *Nibbāna*, if one needs to understand the mechanisms underlying these "meditation experiences", it is the bridge between mind and the physical body. **In any case, it is good to know about these possible effects (more of which are discussed below), so that if one gets to experience them, one would not be perplexed.**

3. The *gandhabba* has a very fine body which is really an invisible blueprint of the physical body. And that fine body is the one that controls the heavy physical body according to the commands from the mind, which is also located in the *gandhabba* (at the *hadaya vatthu*).

- The best way to visualize this is to imagine the *gandhabba* as a fine mesh that overlaps the physical body; its fine body has all the parts of the physical body, and is able to move any part that it wishes to move. For example, when the *gandhabba* moves its fine arm, the physical arm moves with it.
- This is how we control our physical bodies. Of course, there are more details with the brain acting out as an intermediary; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- For example, most of the energy to move the heavy body parts comes from the food that we eat. Gandhabba just

4. The nervous system of the physical body overlaps the fine nervous system of the *gandhabba*, and tries to maintain that overlap all the time. If one sits down cross-legged, for example, the nervous system of the

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physical body may shift from that of the *gandhabba*. Then the physical nervous system will try to adjust for that shift, pulling the attached muscles with it.

- That is why it could become uncomfortable, especially for those who are not used to sit cross-legged (when one gets used to it, the physical system will learn to adjust quickly).
- Therefore, this effect does not give an indication of a progress in the meditation program. Significant effects are discussed below.

5. Our thoughts (i.e., the *cittaja kaya*) can influence the fine body (*utuja kaya*) of the *gandhabba*. In fact, the *utuja kaya* arises out of *suddhaṭṭhaka* produced by the *cittaja kaya* and the *kammaja kaya*.

- **Thus the fine body of the *gandhabba* can be affected by two methods:** by the *kammaja kaya* (i.e. by *kamma vipāka*) AND by the *cittaja kaya* or according to how we think.
- **The first effect** can bring about aches and pains in the physical body due to *kamma vipāka* (by shifting the *gandhabba*'s body to out-of-balance in a short time, so we can feel the shift). These are mostly experienced as we get old (e.g., chronic back pains) and are of course not due to meditation. Some of these may get better with meditation.

6. **In addition to the shifts caused by *kamma vipāka*, we can change the equilibrium position of the *gandhabba*'s fine nervous system with consistent thoughts over long periods of time.** For example, if we think hateful thoughts a lot, the nervous system of the *gandhabba* may twist in a certain way; if we think mostly greedy thoughts, it may shift in a different way.

- Thus, as we think defiled thoughts and act on them on a regular basis, it leads to gradual twisting of nerve bundles in the *gandhabba*, and physical muscles also get twisted accordingly. Since it is a gradual process compared to the first effect, we do not normally feel it (until we get old).
- However, when we start cleansing our minds the fine body of the *gandhabba* tries to come back to its equilibrium position. During a good meditation session, this can happen fairly quickly and that when one starts feeling such nerve (and muscle) movements. We are basically trying to "undo" those twists in nerve bundles that occurred over years and years.
- This is why this effect is much less in young children. Their nerves have not yet being shifted too much.

7. **Thus the second effect has its origins in our thoughts.** Normally such effects occur above the waist, along the spine, neck, and in the head. This is related to the fact nerve bundles propagate through the spine and also there are cranial nerves in the brain. Thus *Kundalini* awakening is an example of this category.

- This effect is experienced by different meditators somewhat differently. But the dominant feature is the "pressure waves" that arise above the waist, and normally located around the spine, neck, throat, and the head. These have been attributed to energy centers or "*chakras*" in *Kundalini* awakening; see, "WebLink: wiki: Kundalini."
- That is why they say that the *kundalini* energy is "uncoiled" (or "awakened") during meditation. But this is nothing more than the out-of-balance nervous systems coming back to the equilibrium position. In *anāriya* meditations there is not much further cleansing possible, because in order to proceed further, one needs to comprehend the *anicca* nature of this world.

8. In Buddhist or *Ariya* meditations, one should start contemplating on the *anicca* nature when one starts any type of body sensations. **Any type of body sensations means the mind is beginning to affect the body, and that one has made progress in the cleansing process.** Of course those Hindu yogis who got to this stage had prevented from immoral acts and suppressed such thoughts, and thus had gained a tranquility of mind at least temporarily.

- But if one does not cleanse one's mind in a permanent way, with the comprehension of the true nature of this world (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), such corrections are temporary and can go right back to the twisted positions. Thus such effects can be re-experienced in varying degrees.

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9. When one starts comprehending the *anicca* nature, this "unwinding process" can accelerate (and the body sensations too), and this is when one may even start feeling significant discomfort or even mild pain.

- If the body is really "out-of-alignment", the realignment process can lead to different types sensations; some may be mild, but some could be even a bit painful.

10. Many people experience sweating, which is definitely part of the "cleansing process". Our defiled thoughts lead to the generation of "impurities" in various body sites. The pure *citta* generated in meditation can burn them and the body will get rid of the waste via sweat too. Thus sweating is also possible during a good meditation session (in the early stages of progress; of course all these go away eventually).

- Another related symptom is becoming thirsty during a good session; mouth can get dry. It is good to keep a glass of water close-by if that is the case.
- By the way, one can move around even while in a *jhāna*. In fact, when one cultivates the *jhāna*, one can open eyes and not be bothered by it. I can confirm that. In fact, those who have *abhiññā* powers are said to be able to do regular work while using *abhiññā* powers.
- For example, a famous story in the *Tipiṭaka* describes how Ven. Chullapanthaka had created thousand copies of himself with *abhiññā* powers and how they were all sweeping the temple premises.

11. Here is another experience that I have heard people described according to my teacher *Thero's* recorded *desanās*:

- "Something propagated from the neck area to the top of the head and stayed there during the session. This happened during subsequent sessions too". Such a "propagation" is probably more like a "pressure wave". This is another "*kundalini* type" effect.
- When these "pressure waves" are strong, it may be a bit painful too. But be rest assured that those effects will gradually go away as one continues when the nervous system comes back to equilibrium. However, if such sensations persist outside the meditation session it may be a good idea to go for a medical examination, since it could be due to a medical condition.

12. There is actually a way to reduce these sensations to some extent. This was suggested by my teacher Thero in a *desanā* that I listened to. Even if one meditates with the eyes closed (as most people should do in early stages), the eye balls inside eyelids are in constant motion; they move around a lot.

- One should try to focus the eyes to the nose area. This is done sort of by one's mind, but the eye balls then keep steady pointing towards to nose. In my case it stopped most of the sensations in the head. Eventually, of course these sensations go away, once one attains "equilibrium". Then one can proceed even with the eyes open, but still focused towards the nose/mouth area.
- Now I do not have any of those "pressure waves" that experienced in the throat area and recently those in the head area also went away.
- By the way, I have not been able to make it past the third *jhāna* for the past year and a half or so, even though I am making progress (*jhānā* have three levels: weak, medium, and strong). Getting to the fourth *Ariya jhāna* means one has reached the *Anāgāmī* stage, where one loses desire for all sense pleasures (i.e, transcend *kāma loka*).

13. Our thoughts or our "*cittaja kaya*" is the most important of the four types of "*kaya*" that we have. For a discussion of those four types of bodies, see, "Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa," in the Section: Udayavaya Ñāṇa.

- As discussed there, our physical bodies (*karaja kaya*) that we value so much are there only for about 100 years, while our human *bhava* or human existence can possibly last many hundreds of years. The other three types of bodies of *kaya* that we have are *kammaja kaya*, *cittaja kaya* and *utuja kaya*. All three of these prevail through the whole human *bhava* (of course they undergo constant change); they make a "big transition" when a new *bhava* is grasped at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment).

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- And it is this *cittaja kaya* (or basically our thought stream) that is the most important. If we use the *cittaja kaya* wisely we can make progress in our mundane lives as well as in pursuing *Nibbāna*. We will discuss this in detail in the last post in on the Udayavaya Ñāṇa in an upcoming post.

14. The key point here is that if one starts feeling these body sensations, one has cleansed the mind to the point of being able to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (or any other Dhamma concept) with more ease; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart," and the post discussed there.

- At this stage (i.e., when feeling thirst, sweating, body sensations, etc), one is likely to be somewhere around "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)" in the meditation section.
- Of course it is also possible that one could have already comprehended *anicca, dukkha, anatta* and has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage without any such symptoms. Each person needs to decide that for him/herself; see, "How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?." The fundamental guide is whether one has removed those "*apāyagāmī gathi*" via cleansing the mind. The physical body may or may not give those clues that we discussed above.
- For attaining *magga phala*, *jhānā* are not necessary. Furthermore, *Ariya jhānā* cannot be attained without attaining at least the *Sotāpanna* stage first; see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga."
- **Mental (and associated physical) phenomena are highly personal. Thus above discussed symptoms may or may not be experienced by a given person.**

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11.11 9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects. They can clarify unresolved questions, and lead to *samādhi*. But one must contemplate on them.

Meditation is all about purifying one's mind. We all have individualized cravings and habits that we have acquired in our past lives that continue during this life unless we act to change or stop them. We need to cultivate good habits and stop bad ones. The only way to do this is to be mindful of our actions and stop bad actions as they start as thoughts in our minds. Most bad thoughts arise due to bad habits; they just "pop up".

- Introduction to Character or Personality (Gati)
- A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person"
- How Character (Gati) Leads to Bhava and Jāti
- How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View

11.11.1 Introduction to Character or Personality (Gathi)

1. Here is a good place to see why the Buddha rejected both the concept of a "self" AND a "no-self" (or "soul" AND "no-soul"). We first need to realize that the task of purifying the mind is very personal; only you know about your mind and only you can purify it. The perception of a "no-self" is a bad starting point to do this cleansing.

- We can easily see that "a person" changes over time, both physically and mentally (see the next post). Thus it is easy to see that a concept of a "soul" or "self" does not hold water.
- However, each of us is DIFFERENT, and UNIQUE; no two are the same even at a fixed time. Even though each person changes, the change itself is unique to "that person" and CAN BE initiated by that person. What makes one person different from another is his/her character (*gathi*).
- For those people who say, "there is no-self" or "there is no real me", I ask: "Then is it OK if someone hits you with a stick or hurt you badly in some way?". Obviously, that is not fine. Just by denying something that is as real as suffering itself, will not make the problem go away. Just being philosophical is not going to make the problem disappear.
- This is why the Buddha rejected both extremes of "self" and "no-self".

2. Actually as one increasingly realizes the fruitlessness of struggling to seek sense pleasures, the feeling of "self" starts to decrease. An *Arahant* is the closest to a "self-less person"; but even an *Arahant* has some unique character qualities: nothing to do with greed, hate, and delusion, but more like kammically neutral habits.

- For example, there is this story about a very young *Arahant*. One day a man came to take this *bhikkhu* to his house for a "dāna", which consists of a lunch followed by a gift (usually things that are needed for a *bhikkhu* like a robe, a towel, etc). On the way, they ran into some puddles on the ground and the young *bhikkhu* jumped over one. The man thought, "Oh, this *bhikkhu* is not even disciplined let alone having any *magga phala*; maybe I should not give him the gift". They came across a few more puddles and the *bhikkhu* went around them. So, the man asked, "Why did you jump over only that one?". The *bhikkhu* told him, "If I jumped over anymore puddles, I would probably lose my lunch too". It turned out that the *bhikkhu* was an *Arahant* with *abhiññā* powers and read the man's mind! Also it is said that the *bhikkhu* was born a monkey for many lives in the recent past, and he still had that *sansāric* "monkey habit" of jumping over things.

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3. Habits are formed via repeated use. The Buddha said, *"yā yan taṇhā pono bhavitha....."* or "*bhava* or habits are formed by *taṇhā* for various things, activities. Remember that *Taṇhā* means "getting attached to something via greed, hate, of ignorance"; see, "Taṇhā – How we Attach via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance."

4. What we are concerned about is only getting rid of immoral habits and cultivating moral habits. This will make oneself a "better person" long before one even thinks about attaining Nibbāna. This can be done with simple process called "āna-pāna" or "taking in good habits" and "discarding bad habits".

- The Buddha said, *"bhāve thabbancha bhavithan, pahee thabbancha paheenan"* or "keep doing what is good, get rid of those that are not good". The meaning is a bit deeper than that because "bhāve" there refers to making "*bhava*". The more one does something, it becomes one's "*bhava*". And the less one willfully stops doing, that "*bhava*" tends to go away. This is what the neurologists are re-discovering today; see, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View."

5. The bad habits need to be stopped each time it surfaces, right there. The Buddha said, *"ette san uppajjamana uppajati, paheeyamana paheeyathi"* or "each time a "*san*" (a bad habit) resurfaces, it needs to be recognized and stopped right then."

- Therefore, one must do this not only in sitting meditation sessions, but as much as possible, whenever possible.
- This is what the Buddha also meant by "*asevitaya, bhavithaya, bahuleekathaya*," or "associate, use, and do as much as possible whenever possible" everything that helps with *Ānāpānasati*. These are described in the post, "Habits, Goals. and Character (Gathi)".

6. I cannot emphasize enough the importance of understanding what is truly involved in *ānāpānasati*. The recent findings on the workings of the brain really helps clarify and highlight some key points that the Buddha emphasized. I think it will help anyone understand the process much better. But first we will take a brief look at how these character qualities are inherited.

Next, "A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person"", …….

11.11.2 A Broad View of the "Person" Trying to be a "Better Person"

Revised November 28, 2018

1. Let us see how and why we act with greed, hate, and ignorance. Stated simply, all we do during a day does not happen by chance.

- **Our actions are based on our "character" (more correctly *gati*)** AND "our way of thinking about this world **based on our views about the world**"; "*gati*" is pronounced as "gati".
- For example, if one does not believe in a rebirth process, or the law of *kamma* (that each action has consequences), then it may be easier to seek enjoyment at the expense of other beings.

2. What our character or world view today is due to a complex combination of many things, but the main factors are: (i) *sansāric* habits (also called *gati* and *āsavas*), (ii) biological parents who provide parts of the physical body (this is also related to *kamma vipāka*), (iii) the environment that one grew up AND the current environment (i.e., physical environment and people one associates with).

- Even though the complexity of a "person" cannot be reduced to simple things, those are major ones. As the Buddha pointed out in the *Sabbasava sutta* (see, "Habits, Goals. and Character (Gathi)"), the main things that CAN BE changed NOW are "physical environment and people one associates with" which is a part of (iii) above. If we are talking about a child, then (iii) applies in its entirety.
- Once these "external influences" are taken care of, next is to purify the mind by "taking in" good things and "discarding" bad things or "*ānāpāna*"; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."

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3. When we are conceived in the mother's womb, a "blueprint" of the new life is in the form of a *manomaya kāya* (which is made of undetectably fine matter) descends to the womb and combines with the zygote formed by the combination of an egg from the mother and the sperm from the father.

- This *manomaya kāya* is the same as *gandhabba* or *paṭisandhi viññāṇa*.

4. The *manomaya kāya* comes with three *rūpa kalapas* called the *kaya dasaka* (blueprint for the physical body), *bhava dasaka* (whether male or female), and *vatthu dasaka* (mind element, which has the "*gati*" in it) that were determined by the *kamma vipāka* that led to the birth; we will discuss these later in the Abhidhamma section.

- Thus the physical body of the new life is now going to be affected by not only the *kaya dasaka*, but also the genetic material in the egg and the sperm (DNA of the parents). As the fetus grows, it will also be affected by the food intake by the mother as well as her mental state, home environment, etc. After the birth until death, the physical body (as well as the mind) will be affected by many other factors including the diet and the environment.
- This is discussed in detail at: "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception."

5. Thus there is no "unchanging self" either mentally or physically; everything is in constant flux. But one cannot say "there is no-self" either because the character qualities (*gati* and *āsava*) that comes in with the *manomaya kāya* will keep "evolving"; even though they change, there is a continuation of a particular lifestream.

- Each person or animal that born is unique with a complex set of mental and physical parameters that evolve moment-to-moment like a flowing river; see, "What Reincarnates? Concept of a Lifestream".
- We will discuss some of these factors in various sections, but the key point I wanted to get across is the fact that each person has a unique set of character qualities (*gati* and *āsava*) that have evolved over uncountable number of lives in the past. And those are the key to one's destiny. **One has the power to change those.**

6. What makes one person different from another is this set of "*gati* and *āsava*", which can be loosely translated as, "character qualities and deep-seated cravings". Some people are calm and quiet while others are rough and boisterous; some like music while other like to watch things or engage in physical activities; the possibilities are endless and there are innumerable combinations of them. That is why each person is different.

- Hidden in these apparently harmless "habits" and "cravings" are the defilements or the tendencies to engage in certain types of activities that are harmful to oneself or the others.
- The key is to focus on the glaring character flaws first: if one engaged in activities such as fishing or hunting, that means willfully taking the life of other beings for one's pleasure. Does that makes sense within the wider world view of any given being repeatedly born in any of the 31 realms? Within that broader view, we can see that any animal, how small or insignificant, has an attachment to its life; and we could have had that very life in the past.
- Take another example of a transaction between two people. The goal should be to make a decent profit for oneself making sure one covers the cost and make enough profit to "stay in business and provide for the family", but not to make the transaction too burdensome on the other party. As we discussed in the post, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation", one could get into deep debt to other people and beings by exploiting them in many different ways.

7. The easiest way to deal with this is to look at each action mindfully and decide whether that act is "fair" to everyone involved. Of course one could check to see any of the ten defilements (*dasa akusala*) are committed by that action; see, "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)."

- As I keep saying, one needs to focus on the more extreme violations first. There is no point in worrying about inadvertently killing some insects while gardening if one is engaged in lying and deceit or killing

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animals for pleasure. It is good to get an idea of the severity of different acts; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma".

8. **This is why it is important to learn Dhamma as much as possible, while engaging in meditation. The Path becomes clear as one learns the subtleties in key Dhamma concepts.**

- **I am amazed how much I learn each and every day; it is like a picture becoming clearer by the day. You start to see the even smallest detail, and instead of becoming distraught you get a sense of clarity and peacefulness by cleansing the mind. You realize that no one is perfect until the *Arahanthood* and the key is to make progress, no matter where you are. Each step in the right direction makes you feel better.**

Next, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View", …….

11.11.3 How Character (Gathi) Leads to Bhava and Jathi

1. One of the special knowledges that the Buddha gained at the Enlightenment was the āsavakkhaya ñāṇa. This is the key to stop the suffering FROM ARISING via getting rid of the deep-seated cravings (*āsava*) that we all have. *Āsavakkhaya ñāṇa* ("*āsava*" + "*khaya*," where "*khaya*" is the opposite of "*san*"; see, "What is "San"?) is the knowledge on how to remove those cravings (*āsava*).

2. Throughout the site, I keep emphasizing the importance of understanding (not memorizing) the meanings of the key Pāli words like *gathi, anusaya, āsava, bhava, jāti, saṃsāra,* and *dukkha*; they are intimately inter-connected in many ways including *paṭicca samuppāda*. The way to stop future suffering (*dukkha*) from arising and reach Nibbāna is to break the perpetual cycle that lead to a new *jāti* (birth) at each death.

- Our problems do not go away at death (committing suicide is a bad idea); they merely get started in a new phase with a new body, which could be worse than what we have now; see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream."
- The connections among *bhava* and *jāti* on one side and *āsava, anusaya,* and *gathi* on the other side are intimate, and need to be understood well; see, "Sansāric Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsava)," before reading the rest of this post.

3. **And this understanding is needed even if one is not seriously thinking about Nibbāna. The whole key to suffering in general is embedded in these intricate relationships.**

- *Bhava* and *jāti* also happen during this very life; *jāti* could mean birth of a new desire; see, "Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda" and "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."
- It may be a bit confusing at first for a new person to this site, but have patience and read the inter-connected posts; I have links everywhere to pertinent posts/material. Once you get an idea of the underlying connections, it will clarify everything, like a fog being lifted.
- I have set up links to open in new windows, so that you can go back forth between posts easily and try to "fill-in-the-gaps".

4. A perpetual cycle that is ever-present in the sansāric cycle of rebirths is described in the following verse:

"uppado pavattan, pavatta nimittan

nimitta paṭisandhi, paṭisandhi gathi"

- "*Uppada*" means arising. When *anusaya* (temptations) arise due to *āsava* (cravings), we need to stop that temptation and break the cycle at "*pavattan*" (which means keeping it or go with it).
- If we go along with the temptation ("*pavatta*"), then it becomes a *nimitta* (literally a "sign"). A *nimitta* is a characteristic that is associated with that particular act. For example, for an alcoholic a picture of an alcohol bottle or a bar (or where one normally drinks), or even seeing a friend with whom one drinks

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often, can be a *nimitta*; when any of such a "symbol" comes to the mind, it reminds of the drinking act and gets one in the "mood".

5. Most times, the *paṭisandhi* (linking of the next rebirth) takes place via a *nimitta*; this is what is meant by "*nimitta paṭisandhi*" above. At the dying moment, what comes to the mind is likely to be something that one does often, and that could become the link to the next life.

- A drug addict, if he/she is lucky to be born human again, will be attracted to a mother who is a drug addict.
- For a person with lot of hate, what comes to the mind at the dying moment could be a picture of an arch enemy; then the kammic power shows him a gun or a knife and he will be likely to attack the person with that weapon (in a dream-like state); the next moment he will be in an *apāya* (hell), which is the "matching place".

6. The worse thing is that the old habits continue and even strengthened in this new life; this is what is meant by "*paṭisandhi gathi*" above. Suppose that drug addict who was born to an addicted mother is adopted by another family and raised in a drug-free environment. Still, if that child becomes exposed to drugs later in his life, he could be tempted to use drugs because of his sansāric habit.

- This is the danger in the rebirth process or *saṃsāra*; one keeps going down the slippery slope unless one changes one's habits with effort. And reversing that trend can be done only in a human life.
- Sentient beings in most realms do not act willfully but according to their *sansāric* habits. We can see only the animal realm and clear that they do things mechanically **(almost like robots, but not quite only because they have FEELINGS)**. Only the beings in higher realms have genuine free-will and it is optimum for the humans.
- You can see that many animals have unique characteristics: such characteristics and habits are associated with that particular existence (*bhava*). For example, some types of birds have been building the same type of nests from beginningless time through countless world cycles; **but they are unable to make it any better.** Migrating birds know exactly where to fly. New born turtles head to the sea right after the eggs are hatched; see the video:

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: New Born, Baby Sea Turtles Race to the Ocean!

7. However, humans can change their destiny. They have free will and the ability to come up with "new ideas". We keep building new things, discovering new things, and making progress.

- We need to keep in mind that we can also purify our minds and become free of this unending and suffering-laden rebirth process. If we ever get a birth in one of the lower realms, we will be stuck there for a long time to come.
- The way to purify our minds is to get rid of bad habits. Excessive greed (this include addictions to anything including food, money, property, alcohol, drugs, etc) and anger are the first two things one needs to work on.
- This does not mean one has to give away one's wealth; just don't be too attached to them. One has "earned" that wealth from previous good deeds, so one does not need to feel bad about it. But those things last only about 100 years, and who knows what we will inherit in the next life.

8. And the key to be permanently free of the *apāyā* is to get rid of those bad character qualities (*gathi*) that can give us birth in those four realms.

- We can avoid the *niraya* (hell) by getting rid of hate; we can stay away from *peta* (hungry ghost) worlds by getting rid of greed, we can make sure to not get a birth in the *asura* realm by not getting "free rides", and making our own living honestly ("*a*"+"*sūra*" means "not able" or those who depend on others).

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- An animal birth results from *gathi* that have all three roots of greed, hate, and ignorance; animal realm is called "*thirisan*" in Pāli or Sinhala: "*thiri*" is three and "*san*" is greed, hate, and ignorance, thus an animal birth is caused by *gathi* that have all three immoral roots.
- In the same way, we can make it possible to be born a deva by being generous to others; we can make it possible to become a *brahma* by cultivating *metta, karuna, mudita, upekkha*; and we can optimize chances for a human birth by cultivating wisdom as well.

9. But no matter how well we live this life, we do not know what kind of "*kammic* baggage" that we carry from previous lives. Thus the only way to avoid the four lower realms (apāyā) with CERTAINTY is to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. And we can do this by comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the true nature of this world.

- When one truly comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* one's mind automatically rejects actions that are bound to maintain and cultivate bad *gathi*, and will encourage actions that will cultivate good *gathi*. If this is done to the level of getting rid of the four greedy citta with wrong vision and the citta with *vicikicchā*, then one becomes PERMANENTLY free of the *apāyā*; see, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta."

10. Finally, here is another interesting video from the animal world which shows how ants build sophisticated cities. But unlike humans, the ability to do that does not come from ingenious minds; ants have been doing the same from eternity. It is a "characteristic" that is naturally associated with the "ant *bhava*." Each ant "knows" what to do, just like the baby turtles who race to the sea just after being hatched. It is the same with how birds know where to fly in their long migrations.

- There is so much that the Buddha explained to the world, but the world is still unaware of.

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Giant Ant Hill Excavated

11. More details on the importance of *gathi* in the rebirth process are discussed in, "Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi."

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11.12 Karaniya Metta Sutta – Metta Bhāvanā

October 7, 2018; revised September 6, 2019

Karaniya Metta Sutta is one of the popular *suttā* in Buddhist countries. However, like many *suttā*, it has not been appropriately translated properly in most current English translations.

1. First of all, the actual name of the *sutta* is *Karaniyamattha Sutta*. It comes from "*karaniyama*" meaning "essential to do" (කල යුතුම (kalayutuma means "requires") in Sinhala) and "*attha*" meaning "oneself." That means this *sutta* summarizes what one must do (to make progress on the Path). But this is not a significant error since Metta *bhāvanā* is there too.

- Those "requirements" are stated in the first three verses.
- The actual ctual "Metta *bhāvanā*" part is in verses 4 through 8.
- Verse 9 says that one should do this *bhāvanā* in all four postures. This *bhāvanā* is the "*Brahma Vihāra*" or "living like a *Brahma*" or "living with the mindset of a *Brahma*."
- Verse 10: When one fulfills the "requirements" at the basic level, one will get to the *Sotāpanna* stage. With the cultivation of Metta *bhāvanā* one will get to be an *Anāgāmi* (not born in a womb again).

	Pali	English
1	*Karaṇīyamattha kusalena,* *Yantam santaṃ padaṃ* ***abhisamecca**;* *Sakko ujū ca suhujū ca,* *Sūvaco cassa mudu **anatimānī***	What *kusala* should be done by one who is **seeking cooling down (by seeing the unfruitful nature of this world)**: moral, upright and disciplined, with pleasing manners and **humble**.
2	*Santussako ca subharo ca,* *Appakicco ca **sallaukavutti**;* *Santindriyo ca nipako ca,* *Appagabbho **kulesuananugiddho***	Always happy, bearing only good (*gati*), with **few mundane duties and simple life**, with senses calmed and a cooled mind, with few burdens (possessions), and **treating everyone the same** (regardless of race, color, etc.).
3	*Na ca **khuddamsamācare** kiñci,* *Yena viññū pare upavadeyyuṃ;* *Sukhino va khemino hontu,* *Sabbe sattā **bhavantu sukhitattā***	**Not engaging in harmful/lowly actions** (and this thought that one always holds), may all beings **attain *Nibbāna* (and get to the ultimate happiness).**
4	***Ye keci pāṇabhūtatthi**,* *Tasā vā thāvarā vā anavasesā;* *Dīghā vā ye mahantā vā,* *Majjhimā rassakāṇukathūlā*	**Whoever there may be with a breath of life**, trapped by greed for so long in *saŋsāra*, may they be free of fear and greed without exception.
5	*Diṭṭhā vā ye va adiṭṭhā,* *Ye ca dūre vasanti avidūre;* *Bhūtā vā sambhavesī vā,* *Sabbe sattā **bhavantu sukhitattā***	Those who are seen or unseen, those dwelling far or near, those born as well as those seeking birth (*gandhabbā*), may all beings **attain *Nibbāna*.**
6	*Na paroparaṃ nikubbetha,* *Nātimaññetha katthacinam kañci;* *Byārosanā paṭighasaññā,* ***Nāññamaññassa dukkhamiccheyya***	May no one deceive another, treat everyone like close relatives. May they not wish each other harm, and **by seeing the unfruitful nature of this world, may they be free of suffering.**
7	*Mātā yathā niyaṃputtam* *āyusā ekaputtamanurakkhe;* *Evampi sabbabhūtesu,* ***Mānasaṃbhāva ye aparimāṇaṃ***	Just as a mother would protect her only child with her life, may this protection affect **all beings on an equal footing.**

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	Pali	English
8	*Mettañca sabbalokasmim,* ***Mānasaṃbhāva ye aparimāṇaṃ;*** *Uddhaṃ adho ca tiriyañca,* *Asambādhaṃ averam asapattaṃ*	May all cultivate *mettā* towards **all beings on an equal footing**, those who live above, below, or across. May all be unhindered and without enmity.
9	*Tiṭṭhaṃ caraṃ nisinno vā,* *Sayāno vā yāvatassa* *vighatamiddho;* *Etaṃ satiṃ adhiṭṭheyya,* ***Brahmametaṃ Vihāram** idhamāhu*	Whether standing, walking, sitting or lying down, may all sustain this *mettā* mindset (what the Buddha called ***Brahma Vihāra***).
10	*Diṭṭhiñca anupaggamma,* *Sīlavā **dassanena sampanno;*** *Kāmesu vinaya gedhaṃ,* ***Na hi jātugabbaseyyam** punaretī"ti*	Being **moral based on right vision (a *Sotāpanna*)**, and by removing *kāma rāga* with effort one will **never again be in a womb (*Sakadāgāmi* or higher).**

Note: The pdf file of the *sutta* itself can be downloaded here: "WebLink: PDF File: Karaniya Metta Sutta."

2. Deeper explanations are in some words like "*abhisamecca*" ("*abhi*" + "*san*" + "*avecca*"), and "*dukkhamicceyya*" ("*dukkham*" + "*avecceyya*").

- *Avecca* is the keyword in both cases, and I discussed the deep connection to "*icca*" and thus *Tilakkhaṇa* in the post, "Sotapatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna" (starting at #9 in the post).
- If anyone needs more explanations of other words, we can discuss it at the discussion forum, but we will look at one more next.

3. Another keyword is "*mānasaṃbhāva*," which comes from "*mānasan*" and "*bhava*," meaning one's mind (ideally) does not contaminate beyond the "*mānasaṃ*" stage.

- When thoughts (*citta*) arise, they get contaminated within a fraction of a second due to one's *gati.* That is discussed in the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- Therefore, the goal is to improve one's *gati*, so that one's *citta* will not contaminate beyond the "*mānasaṃ*" stage (reached the *Arahant* stage). **One should strive to approach that mindset right now, at least while meditating.**
- As one gets closer to that stage, one will have true *mettā* AUTOMATICALLY for increasingly more and more living beings. At *Arahanthood*, one will have boundless *mettā* to all: "*mānasaṃbhāva ye aparimāṇaṃ*."

4. The first three verses in the *sutta* state how one gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage by getting to the *Ariyakanta sīla* (unbreakable moral conduct). That is when one will have *aveccappasāda* (unbreakable faith in the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha). That is discussed in detail in the post, "Sotapatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna."

- Then by cultivating *mettā,* one can gradually get rid of *kāma rāga* and get to the *Sakadāgāmi* and *Anāgāmi* stages.
- However, this is an excellent *sutta* to listen to and to recite even before getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage. It is better **to recite Pāli verses with an understanding of the meaning of those verses.** The sound itself is beneficial, especially when pronounced correctly, as done by the *Thero* in the recording below.
- It is also good to play the recording in the background while doing other things or during meditation. In Asian countries, this is one of the *suttā* being played in the mornings, while everyone is getting ready to go to school or work.

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5. A recital of the *sutta* by Waharaka *Thero* is below:

WebLink: Karaniya Metta Sutta in mp3

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11.13 10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Diṭṭhāsava

The top 10 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects. They can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to gain *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

July 30, 2015: I have re-written the two posts #10 and #11 (previously titled, "10. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhaṅga" and "11. How to Select and "Grow" Meditation Procedures for Magga Phala") that were written some time back with different titles. Over the past two months, I have been able to clarify some subtle issues in both my own experience and in technical details. **Revised August 5, 2017; September 19, 2018 (updated links).**

- First, the order of things: *samādhi, magga phala*, and then *Ariya jhānā* in that order; see, "Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala."
- Thus *jhānā* (*Ariya or anāriya*) are not necessary to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage; see the posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section for details on this and many other aspects.

1. First, it would be challenging to get to even a state of *samādhi* if one is not keeping up at least the "conventional" five precepts: abstaining from killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and using drugs or getting intoxicated. Those things make the mind restless and makes it hard for the mind to focus attention (the five hindrances "cover the mind"). Just strictly obeying the five precepts may not be effective if one's mind is full of jealousy, extreme greed, hate, etc.; see, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them."

- Just like one cannot see the bottom of a well if it is highly contaminated, the mind (and the body) will not "feel anything" even in a formal meditation session if the mind is "highly contaminated." And there is no point in trying to take out the "small defilements" (such as abstaining from taking a glass of wine) if one is engaged in immoral activities.
- With the "big defilements" are removed, one starts seeing a little bit further down the well; similarly, one's mind will become lighter, with less stress, even when not in a formal meditation session. When one sits down in a quiet place, it will become easier to get to some state of "*samādhi*," or tranquility.
- The Buddha said that "*kusala sīla*" leads to tranquility of the body and mind, which in turn leads to *samādhi*. The "*kusala sīla*" accomplished via gaining *Sammā Diṭṭhi* (to some extent) is all that is needed to attain the *upacāra samādhi* needed for the *Sotāpanna magga/phala*. All three *saṃyojana* removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage (*sakkāya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata parāmāsa*) are associated with the wrong vision or *diṭṭhi*.

2. Many people have the idea that one needs to "get to *samādhi*" using a separate meditation technique such as the conventional breath meditation. Even though one could do that, it would be a waste of time. One can get to *samādhi* just by listening or reading attentively to CORRECT dhamma.

- There is not even a single reference in the *Tipiṭaka*, where the Buddha asked anyone to do a "*Samatha Bhāvanā*" first and then to "*vipassana bhāvanā*." When one comprehends Dhamma, one's mind get calm, and through that *Samatha* state, one can get to *magga phala*.
- After attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, one can get to *Ariya jhānā* by focusing on that "state of cooling down" that one has already achieved to some extent, to get to *jhānā*.
- One really needs formal meditation techniques to attain **higher** *magga phala*, i.e., above the *Sotāpanna* stage; the reason will become clear shortly. However, it is fine to do formal meditation even to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage. In the following, I will describe what I actually went through.

3. To get to *samādhi*, contemplating Dhamma concepts will make it easier and faster. Also, one will be able to stay in "meditation" for a longer time. Different names used are, insight meditation (*vipassana*), many forms of "*anupassanā*," and cultivating the "*dhamma vicaya*" *sabbojjanga*. Concomitantly, one needs to do the correct version of "*Ānāpānasati*" at all times.

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- **In principle, working towards the *Sotāpanna* stage does not require any formal meditation techniques even though meditation can help**; there have been countless people who attained the *Sotāpanna* or even higher stages of *Nibbāna* just by listening to a Dhamma discourse.
- It is quite essential to understand this point. Many people have one or more of the following misconceptions about reaching the Sotāpanna stage: (i) Giving up all worldly possessions, (ii) Become a *bhikkhu* or live in seclusion, (iii) One needs to do many types of meditation techniques.
- To clarify this issue, let us examine what is actually involved in attaining the Sotāpanna stage.

4. Removal of cravings for worldly pleasures or *āsavas* (*āsavakkhaya*) leads to *Nibbāna*; see, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

- Out of the four *āsavās* that we have, only one goes away at the *Sotāpanna* stage: ***dittasava* or the craving for wrong worldviews**. In the *Sabbasava Sutta*, this is referred to as removal by clear vision ("*dassanena pahātabbā*", where *dassanena* is vision and *pahātabba* is removal).
- The other three *āsavas* of *kamasava* (craving for sense pleasures), *bhavasava* (desire to live somewhere in the 31 realms of this world), and *avijjasava* (ignorance of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*) go away at the higher stages of *Nibbāna;* see the above post.

5. The critical point is that one does "*apāyagāmi apuññābhisaṅkhāra*" (or strong immoral deeds that makes one eligible to be born in the lower four realms) only when one has wrong worldviews. Contrary to most people's beliefs, one does not need to lose the craving for sense pleasures to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage. *Kāma āsava* is reduced in stages in the *Sotāpanna* and *Sakadāgāmī* stages and is removed only at the *Anāgāmī* stage.

- That is why learning dhamma concepts and getting rid of "*diṭṭhis*" or "wrong views" is key in attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, as I emphasized in several posts; if you enter "diṭṭhi" in the Search box on the top right, you will see many relevant posts.
- We all have many *diṭṭhis*. These can be removed only via learning the true nature of this world, i.e., by learning Dhamma.
- One meaning of *Sotāpanna* ("*sota*" + "*paññā*") is "one who has cultivated wisdom by listening to Dhamma"; in the days of the Buddha, that was how one learned Dhamma, by listening.

6. Even before meeting my teacher *Thero*, I had been thinking about dhamma concepts for 3-4 years and had been trying to get a consistent picture in my mind. Even at that time, I could quickly get to *samādhi* because my mind was focused.

- When I "got stuck" trying to figure out what a particular concept means concerning others, I would look through books and also listen to *desanās* (discourses) on the internet. It is at this stage that I realized that most of the explanations did not make sense, and of course, were not consistent with other key concepts.
- To give an example, I had a hard time explaining the rebirth stories by so many children. If "being born human" is so difficult as explained in many *suttā* (see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm"), then how can all those children remember their recent past lives? Furthermore, there were "gaps" from the time they died in the previous life to the time they were born in this life.
- Once I met my teacher *Thero*, I was able to clarify that issue along with numerous others: Birth is different from "human *bhava*"; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein." Also, when one dies and has energy left in the "human *bhava*," one becomes a *gandhabba* and has to wait until a suitable womb becomes available; see, "Mental Body – Gandhabba."
- Thus rebirth in the human realm does not happen instantaneously. One could in the *gandhabba* state for years before being directed to a suitable womb. And one can be born in the human realm many times before the *kammic* energy for that "human *bhava*" is exhausted.

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7. However, I was able to get to *samādhi* even before resolving many of these issues. I was making steady progress with the concepts I could quickly grasp. I would sit at the desk and contemplate and I could feel my body getting lighter and mind becoming calm. It was much better than just wasting time doing "breath meditation."

- If I sat in a quiet place and meditated (contemplated about a Dhamma concept), my mind would "latch on to it," and I could get to possibly an *anāriya jhānic* experience. That started about a year before I learned the true meanings of "*anicca, dukkha, anatta*."
- It started with "tingling sensations inside my brain"; I could feel things happening there. And then I could feel "needle pricks" all over the body and my body would start "freezing," mostly the upper body. These "symptoms" are not common to all.
- Learning Dhamma is a critical part of "*kusala sīla*," especially for the *Sotāpanna* stage. *Kusala sīla* automatically leads to *samādhi*, as discussed in the "Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta."

8. After I heard the "true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*," I made progress very quickly. When I look back now, I may have attained the *Sotāpanna* stage while listening to that very first *desana*. However, it took me some time to realize it and to convince myself. One needs to look back at the progress one has made, and see that one is now incapable of committing immoral deeds that would make one eligible for rebirth in the *apāyā*.

- I was over-joyed with being able to comprehend the "foundation of Buddha Dhamma." It does not make sense to struggle to seek more worldly pleasures and possessions. That is guaranteed to be a failure in the long run. One spends one's whole life making money to enjoy such "pleasures" and before one realizes, one come to old age. I would call or e-mail my friends and tell them that they needed to listen to *desanas* by those *Theros*.
- It took me a little while to realize that most of them could not figure out what I was excited about. Now, looking back, I realize that their minds were not ready. They were too busy making "more money." For me, who had been struggling seriously for a few years, it was a revelation. But most people who just spent a bit of their time reading, critical concepts do not "connect." Reading Dhamma should not be done the same way as reading a newspaper or a novel; one needs to be engaged.
- Anyway, after getting the true meaning of "*anicca, dukkha, anatta*," I spent the next few months scouring the internet for the *desanas* of those *Theros*. After five months, I made a trip to Sri Lanka and brought back more material to listen to. It was so fulfilling and exciting; I was learning at a very rapid pace. At that time I didn't even think about *jhānā*, but I could feel "*jhānic* effects," i.e., my *samādhi* was getting intense, even though I was not trying to cultivate them.
- **September 19, 2018 update:** For the past few years, I have been listening to only those desanas by Waharaka Thero. They are available only in the Sinhala language at "සදහම් දේශනා"; also see: "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thēro."

9. Even though I had an inkling about reaching the *Sotāpanna* stage soon after listening to that *desanā*, I developed the *jhānā* some months later. However, **those turned out not to be *Ariya jhānā* though, since they can be attained only by an *Anāgāmi*;** see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhaṅga."

- These and other aspects of *Ariya* and *anāriya jhāna* are discussed in the section: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."
- Once I finished investigating and "filling the gaps," the *jhānā* came almost automatically. The meditation experience that I described in #7 became much stronger; I could close my eyes and "feel the change in the head and the body" within minutes (and nowadays within seconds).

10. The above is what I mean when I say, "feel the results of meditation." **One can feel it in the body as well as in mind.** Let us first discuss the reasons for the "body effect" and then the "mind effect."

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- We have a very complex nervous system that the brain uses to control various body parts and also to communicate with the five physical senses. There is a "duplicate nervous system" associated with the *manomaya kāya*, and as we grow up, those two systems get somewhat displaced. The displacement becomes more prominent when we start enhancing all types of bad habits; they go "out of sync."
- When we start learning Dhamma and stay away from most egregious acts, the two nervous systems try to get to the ideal overlap positions, and one could feel that. That becomes noticeable during meditation. Some people may feel aches and pains, sweating, etc. That is why I had said in other posts that things MAY look worse before getting better. In a way, such "body signals" are a good sign; it means the body is starting to respond.

11. Now to the "mind effect." Many people tell me that they cannot keep the mind focused on even the breath for too long. That is a *sansāric* habit that we have; the mind does not like to stay in one place. It wants to "know" about everything that is happening not only in the vicinity, but it also randomly thinks about past events or future plans too.

- The only way to remove this "bad habit" is to get into the habit of thinking about Dhamma concepts slowly. And that cannot be forced either. Unless and until the mind sees the benefits of learning Dhamma, it can be a "chore" to some people. But once one gets some traction, one starts enjoying the "taste of Dhamma", and then it is easy to stay focused.
- The key here is that when one learns Dhamma, "*diṭṭhāsava*" (or craving for wrong worldviews) starts to dissolve, initially slowly, but picks up speed as one starts grasping concepts.
- The two critical components of *pancanivarana* (*kāmacchanda* and *vyāpāda*) are reduced as *diṭṭhāsava* is reduced. That in turn, lead to the reduction of the other three components of the *pancanivarana* as well. This process goes all the way to the *Sotāpanna* stage.

12. Of course, I did not realize until after meeting my teacher *Thero* (online) that what I had been doing all along was a crude version of the *Satta Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā*. The critical part of that is *dhamma vicaya* (contemplating on Dhamma concepts). [***vicaya*** :[m.] investigation.]

- That is how one cultivates the "*anicca saññā*" which is the key to removing defilements permanently. See, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?" and "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā."
- The formal *Satta Bojjhaṅga bhāvanā* is discussed in the next post, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhaṅga."
- It is also important to realize that even an *Arahant* will not lose the sense of taste; one increasingly will lose CRAVINGS for them; see, "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha."

13. **November 11, 2016:** I get many questions on this topic, i.e., how to verify one is making progress towards the *Sotāpanna* stage. The new section, "Living Dhamma," provides a systematic way to achieve that goal, in addition to providing guidelines on how to check one's progress.

- **January 23, 2020:** The new section on "Origin of Life" is an attempt to start "at the beginning" and to get to more in-depth concepts of anicca, dukkha, anatta. The deeper I get into the fundamental concepts, I realize that there is much more! **However, basic comprehension becomes more natural too.** I may need to go back and revise many of the old posts. So, I would encourage everyone to read the new series written with my deeper understanding.

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11.14

11. Magga Phala via Cultivation of Satta Bojjhaṅga

The top 11 posts in this section describe the fundamentals of Buddhist meditation. The rest of the posts in this section are on possible meditation subjects and can be used to clarify unresolved questions, and to gain *samādhi*. The first 11 posts should be followed in that order, at least initially.

Revised August 5, 2017; September 19, 2018; revised April 24, 2020

Introduction

1. There are many ways to get to *magga phala*. What I have followed is *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā* and *metta Bhāvanā*. As explained in the previous post, I first did a crude version of the *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā* for a few years without even realizing that it was effectively a *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā*.

- Now I practice *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā/Ariya Metta Bhāvanā* in sitting meditation and *ānāpānasati* (and *satipaṭṭhāna*) during other times, i.e., suppressing any thoughts/speech/actions that should be discarded and cultivating the opposite. Nowadays, It has become a habit and the moment something not appropriate comes to the mind, I become aware of it. As I keep saying, cultivating good habits (*gati*) is the key to progress.

Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā Comes First

2. *Ānāpānasati* (and *Satipaṭṭhāna*) helps one to get rid of bad habits/cultivate good habits, and thus change one's *gati* and *āsavā*; see, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)", and "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?".

- *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā* helps the mind to get to *samādhi* while also cultivating the *Bojjhaṅga dhamma*. *Satta Bojjhaṅga* (Seven Factors of Enlightenment) are listed in the "37 Factors of Enlightenment"; a brief description is given below.
- The other part of my sitting meditation is *Ariya Metta Bhāvanā*; see, "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)". This routine works well for me.
- Of course, there are many paths to *Nibbāna* (and to the *Sotāpanna* stage), and this is the one I took (almost inadvertently). **Still, it is critical to realize that attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage ONLY REQUIRES removing wrong world views or *diṭṭhi,* i.e., getting rid of *ditthāsava.*** But this may not be an easy step, because one needs to realize the *anicca* nature of this world.

What Are *Bojjhaṅga*?

3. The word *Bojjhaṅga* comes from "*Bodhi*" + "*aṅga*".) Of course, "*Bodhi*" means "*bhava uddha*" or "Enlightenment" and "*aṅga*" means "part."

- Thus, the seven factors in the *Satta Bojjhaṅga* are seven factors (*satta* means seven) conducive to attaining *Nibbāna*.

4. The key here is that during the *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā*, one only does "*āna*" or "taking in good things"; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?". However, "*pāna*" or "removing the bad" happens automatically via wisdom gained, i.e., via enhanced vision or *sammā diṭṭhi*. One's mind is automatically focused on thinking about a Dhamma concept, and once one gets some traction, the mind will get "latched on to it".

- In the early days, when I started contemplating a Dhamma concept I automatically got to *samādhi* (not *jhāna*), i.e., the mind became concentrated on that and the body and the mind both became lighter. I also experimented with breath meditation) at that time.
- This habit of contemplating on dhamma concepts naturally got established as cultivating *dhamma vicaya* in *Satta Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā* once I met my teacher *Thero*.

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The necessity to Comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*

5. I was able to make real progress only after learning the true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta;* see, "10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Diṭṭhāsava".

- Waharaka *Thero* has explained how to systematically cultivate the seven *Bojjhaṅga dhamma.* That involves first establishing *sati* (moral mindfulness) based on those correct interpretations of *anicca, dukkha, anatta.* See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta", and the follow-up posts.
- Of course, one must remove the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* before being able to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*. See, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

The Seven *Bojjhaṅga*

6. The seven *Bojjhaṅga Dhamma* are *sati* (mindfulness), *dhamma vicaya* (investigation of *dhamma* concepts; pronounced "dhamma vichaya"), *viriya* (effort), *pīti* (joy), *passaddhi* (tranquility), *samādhi* (one-pointedness), and *upekkhā* (equanimity). I will have a post on this later, but I have discussed most of these terms in other posts.

- It is important to again clarify what *sati* is. Many people think *sati* is "concentration" or just "paying attention". It is much more than that. It is "paying attention" WITH a frame of mind based on some understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*: One has contemplated on the "big picture" of the Buddha with 31 realms and a rebirth process that has led to much suffering in the long run.
- Even though one may be enjoying life right now, one knows that it will be of negligible duration compared to the *saṃsāric* (or *saṃsāric*) time scale. This is the theme of this website, and there are many posts that one can read.

Sati Comes First

7. During the whole time of the *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā*, sati must be there; that frame of mind must be there. *Dhamma vicaya* is a critical evaluation of a given dhamma concept. One can choose a topic or two for a given session and then contemplate on it. **One could do this not only in a formal way, but also just while reading a web post or a book on the subject.** Each individual is different, so one needs to figure out which is more suitable.

- One can compare the concept with one's own life experience, and also others' that one can see. For example, when contemplating on *anicca*, there are several video clips on various posts giving visuals on the inability of anyone to maintain anything, including one's own body, to one's satisfaction in the long run. Also, one can contemplate on the rebirth process and see whether it makes sense, one can contemplate on different applications of *Paṭicca samuppāda*, etc.
- When one comprehends a given concept, that leads to the cultivation of the *pīti* (pronounced "peethi" or "preethi" in Sinhala) *sabbojjhaṅga*. This is part of *nirāmisa sukha* that I have talked about; one starts feeling happiness or a "lightness" making the mind serene. I am sure at least some of you have experienced this while reading posts. This gives one confidence that one is on the right path, and thus one will be motivated to make more effort, i.e., it cultivates the *viriya sabbojjhaṅga*.

First Phase – Learning and Contemplation

8. Thus *dhamma vicaya, piti*, and *viriya sabbojjhaṅga* are cultivated together (of course *sati* must be there too). At some point though, the mind and especially the body (head) may get tired. If one is making a lot of progress, one may start to experience some pressures in the head or body; not headaches, but just pressure. Some feel like "ants crawling in the head"; the brain and the body (including the nervous system) are adjusting and there is nothing bad about this.

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- When this happens one is making progress; the body feeling the effective meditation. Not only our minds but our bodies have been contaminated too, and the nervous systems have been distorted with respect to that in the *manomaya kāya*. Some of the "pressures" that one feels are due to the "twisting back" of the nervous system to the proper place. **These effects may be minimal for some people; this is what I experienced.**
- And this burning of defilements leads to the generation of contaminants that need to be expelled and cleansed, via proper breathing (this is not "*ānāpāna*"). We should not focus on the breath like in the mundane "breath meditation". We are just getting rid of certain "*utuja rūpa*" that had been in the body due to defilements of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- At this point one should stop the contemplation process and start breathing in and out to cleanse the body; sometimes the body itself automatically gets rid of those things via a long out-breath. This will lead to *passaddhi* (tranquility) of both the body and the mind, and one gets to *samādhi* gradually. One needs to think about the lightness of the body and the mind (*passaddhi*) and the *nirāmisa sukha* (from *samādhi*) that results. One also should think about *upekkhā* (equanimity) too.
- When the body and the mind calm down enough and when one feels relaxed, one should go back to cultivating the previous three *sabbojjhaṅga*, i.e., start on the contemplation process of *dhamma vicaya*.

Second Phase – Relaxation

9. Thus one should go back and forth between the two routines with three *sabbojjhaṅga* each. The *sati sabbojjhaṅga* must be there all the time. This is called the two-step cultivation of *Bojjhaṅga dhamma*.

- The Buddha compared this process to the washing of dirty cloth by hand. One needs to apply soap and wring the cloth to release the contaminants. But then one needs to soak it in clean water and remove the dirt that came out. After that, if the cloth is still dirty, one applies soap again, and then again wash it. This process needs to be repeated until all the dirt is gone and the cloth becomes clean. And one needs to do it with mindfulness: if there is a stubborn stain left in one place, one may need to use a different chemical to get rid of that spot (i.e., use the appropriate *Bhāvanā: asubha Bhāvanā* to get rid of sense cravings, *metta Bhāvanā* to get rid of hateful thoughts, *dhamma* concepts to get rid of *micchā diṭṭhi*, etc) and wash in clean water again. Thus one needs to be mindful (*sati*) during the whole process.
- In the same way, one goes back and forth between the two routines with *sati*. Time takes to get to *magga phala* depends on the individual. *Ariya jhānās* can be attained only after getting to the *Anāgāmi* stage; see, "

Continuing With *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*

10. The *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā* is formal meditation. As we have seen, one needs to sit down comfortably in a quiet place and contemplate.

- However, *Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā* cannot be done in isolation. One needs to do the *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā* at all times to get rid of bad habits and to cultivate good habits, and to live a moral life.
- Once one gains some traction and sees some benefits, one will become motivated.

Alternating Between the Two Phases

11. Initially one should focus on *anicca, dukkha,* or *anatta* as the *dhamma vicaya* subject. Then once some understanding is gained, one's mind attains certain overall cleanliness. After that, like using different kinds of chemicals to get rid of coffee stains or a tar stain, one needs to choose different types of topics (or even meditation techniques) to broaden the understanding/to remove a certain obstacle. Buddha Dhamma is all about cleansing the mind via wisdom, via understanding the true nature of this world.

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- Also, it really helps to do the *metta Bhāvanā* as a part of daily routine. The Buddha stated that If done properly (i.e., with understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*), the *metta Bhāvanā* can lead to the *Anāgāmi* stage; see, "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)".
- If one has too many cravings, one could use the "*asubha anussati*"; if one tends to procrastinate, one could cultivate the "*maranānussati*". We will talk about these in the future.
- But first, it is important to focus on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. At the same time, it may be a good idea to get some idea of the "big picture", i.e., the rebirth process, the 31 realms, etc and then some idea about *kamma, saṅkhāra, Paṭicca samuppāda*, etc. All these are pieces of a puzzle; even though it may look daunting at the beginning when the big pieces are in place, one starts to get a better idea as for where small pieces may fit in. *Anicca, dukkha, anatta* are the biggest pieces.
- Thus contemplating *anicca, dukkha, anatta* is a key topic for *dhamma vicaya*. I still do it every day, at least for a short time. **It is said that one really understands *anicca* nature of this world only at the *Arahant* stage.**

Attainment of the *Phala* Moment

11. The *Sotāpanna* stage (*magga/phala*) is attained in two consecutive *citta*. However, it is not noticeable at that time. One realizes that with time, mainly by realizing that one's outlook on life has changed. In particular, the tendency to socialize is likely to be reduced, but there may be exceptions; one realizes how important it is to spend the remaining little time in this life on making spiritual progress and to enhance the "cooling down".

- In trying to attain the first *Ariya jhāna*, one could start with the *Satta Bojjhaṅga Bhāvanā* with the frame of mind of the unfruitfulness of anything in this world in the long run (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*); then all mundane thought objects (based on greed and hate) are suspended from the mind. Then one can think about the peacefulness of *Nibbāna* (the partial effect one experiences upon attaining the *Sotapanna* stage), i.e., the change in one's state of mind.
- I use the phrase, "*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti*. (WebLink: suttacentral: *Mahāmālukya Sutta* (MN 64). I emphasize that I have not yet attained the first *Ariya jhāna* yet, as of August 5, 2017. It is not possible to attain the first Ariya jhāna until one completely removes *kāma rāga*, as I have realized recently; see, "Dasa Saṃyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process". Whatever jhāna that I had must be *anāriya jhāna*.
- Here is a recording of the Pāli verse by the Venerable *Thero* (you need to set volume control at your computer):

  WebLink: Listen to verse on Ethan santhang ethan panithang
- One could say in English, "It is peaceful, it is serene, the expelling of all *saṅkhāra*, breaking of bonds, removing greed and hate; *Nibbāna*", OR "This is peaceful, this is excellent, that is achieved by calming all *saṅkhāra*, breaking all bonds leading to rebirth, *ceasing of all attachments*, *stopping of the saṃsāric journey*, *cessation of all causes*, which is *Nibbāna*".
- What matters in not the actual words, but the understanding one has in one's mind. **It is best to recite the Pāli verse and recall the meaning while chanting.**

Attainment of *Jhāna* Is a Possibility

12. It is important to realize that one could attain *anāriya jhāna* while working towards the *Sotāpanna* stage (or even higher stages of *Nibbāna*) by contemplating on the true version of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

- *Jhāna* are mental states corresponding to *rūpāvacara brahma* realms, which are realms in this world. They can be attained by either SUPPRESSING or REMOVING *kāma rāga*, which correspond to *anāriya* and *Ariya jhāna*. Either way, one will get to the SAME *jhānic* state.

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- Since even to get to the first *Ariya jhāna* by REMOVING *kāma rāga*, one would have to be an *Anāgāmi* to attain the first *Ariya jhāna*. **That is easy to verify for oneself, since one would lose the craving for any sense pleasures, including sex.**
- These and other aspects of *Ariya* and *anāriya jhāna* are discussed in the section: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala".
- It is also important to realize that even an *Arahant* will not lose the sense of taste; one increasingly will lose CRAVINGS for them; see, "Kāma Guṇa, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda."

13. **November 11, 2016:** I get many questions on this topic, i.e., how to verify one is making progress towards the *Sotāpanna* stage. The new section, "Living Dhamma", provides a systematic way to achieve that goal, in addition to providing guidelines on how to check one's progress.

- **April 24, 2020:** I recently finished a long discussion at a deeper level in the new "Origin of Life" section. This is a bit more advanced section.
- These are just different ways of trying to understand the Buddha Dhamma. It is a vast subject.

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11.15 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotapanna Stage

November 13, 2015

1. **First,** one needs to understand what is meant by the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. Many people start meditating without any idea of the goal: It is fine to do breath meditation, if one is only needing to calm down. There are others who are doing procedures that are needed to attain the *Arahant* stage, and those will not work either because one needs to understand the concept of *anicca* first, i.e., learning the key concepts comes first (*dassanena pahatabba*).

- If one's goal is to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, then one should first read the posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section to get an idea of what is meant by a *Sotāpanna* and what is involved to get there.
- There are many misconceptions about the *Sotāpanna* stage, and those posts could clarify them. I spent a lot of time doing unnecessary things, so I just wanted to make it easier for those who are just starting or who have been doing the wrong things to get there. Of course one should decide for oneself whether what I say is consistent with Buddha Dhamma.

2. I must also point out that there are many who have been "brainwashed" to think that the *Sotāpanna* stage is an impossibility to achieve at this time. It is disheartening to see even some "*mahā Theros*" in Sri Lanka have given up striving for even the *Sotāpanna* stage (presumably because they had used the wrong concepts for many years and could not make any progress). But the Buddha clearly stated that his *Buddha Sāsana* will be there for 5000 years, and we are only halfway through. There will be numerous *Arahants* also in the near future.

- There are many who have attained the *Sotāpanna* stage and beyond within the past few years, and that number is growing. Pure Buddha Dhamma that had been hidden, is out and is beginning to spread. Many who have reaped the benefits are trying their best to get the message out. Most of those efforts are taking place in Sri Lanka or in Sinhala language at this early stage.
- Even though it may not be possible for some (those with *dvihetuka* births) to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage in this lifetime, an all out effort will help at least in the future lives. Those who can make it (with *tihetuka* births) simply have done more in past lives. By the way, if you come across any unknown Pāli words, just enter that word in the Search box and there will be relevant posts listed.
- In any case, any efforts will have tangible outcomes in this life itself.
- The Buddha clearly stated that there were no language, race, cultural, caste barriers in attaining *magga phala,* or the four stages of *Nibbāna.* The critical thing is that one needs to follow the original, pure, Dhamma of the Buddha, and comprehend his message.
- The key message of the Buddha is that nothing in this material world (31 realms) can be maintained to our satisfaction in the long run (*anicca* nature), and thus through uncountable rebirths we mainly encounter suffering. Some of us may not be experiencing suffering in this life right now, but that does not mean it will be the same in future lives (or even at old age in this life).

3. **Secondly**, having a road map is NECESSARY to get to an unknown destination. Starting to meditate without having an idea of what to meditate on like just getting in the car and start driving without having a map showing where the destination is.

- Here again, the posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section will be useful.
- The "map" to reveal *Nibbāna* is the comprehension of the key concepts like *anicca*. When one reaches the *Sotāpanna* stage, it is like finding the correct map. Then only one can start driving (i.e., use *kammattana* or "meditation recitals") to reach the final destination. **Reciting things without understanding is fruitless.**

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- Please contemplate on this aspect; I cannot emphasize it enough. Finding the map is the hardest and most important part.
- I have started a new section where a step-by-step process is described to follow; see, "Living Dhamma." It can also help one figure out where one in the Path, and to clarify many fundamental issues.

4. **Third point** — related to the second point — is that we need to examine what is meant by "*bhāvanā*" (meditation) when striving for the *Sotāpanna* stage. **It is NOT a formal meditation technique (reciting a given *kammattana*) that is mainly needed here.**

- However, the Buddha said that even listening to a discourse is *bhāvanā*. One could attain the *Sotāpanna* stage just by listening to a discourse. When listening attentively, one's mind gets focused on it, comes to *samādhi*, and can get to *magga phala* via *upacara samādhi*.
- What it is needed to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage is contemplation on the key Dhamma concepts, in particular *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, but also to try to get an understanding of the Buddha's world view, with 31 realms of existence, beginningless rebirth process, infinite number of planetary systems (*chakkawata*), *paṭicca samuppāda*, etc. This is the way to "find the correct map" mentioned in #3 above.
- As explained in those posts in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section, this meditation (*bhāvanā*) involves mainly the contemplation (*citta*) and examination of dhamma concepts (*dhamma vicaya* and *vīmaṃsā*). In fact, the four bases of mental power (*chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṃsā*) are very helpful to be cultivated; see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipāda)."
- In the above, "*chanda*" is the liking to attain *Nibbāna* and that is cultivated by learning and forming a desire to learn more Dhamma. I can assure that there is no other pleasure like the "pleasure of knowing the truth, the pleasure of discovering true Dhamma". From the comments I receive, I know that many of you have found that to be true.
- Formal meditation techniques are needed mainly after the *Sotāpanna* stage, as described in the sub-section **Key Points from the Sabbasava Sutta** under the post, "The Sotāpanna Stage." However, it is good to do a few *kammattana* while striving for the *Sotāpanna* stage and I will discuss those in the next post.

5. **Fourth** is to have a clear idea of the priority items to get done regarding *sīla* (moral behavior). In one of the early posts on meditation I made the point that one needs to sort out the "big problems" to take care of, before tackling smaller problems. If a vessel is leaking due to multiple holes, one needs to seal the big leaks first. It is a waste of time to spend the precious time in trying plug smaller holes, when the water is pouring out through the big holes.

- In the following I will address the fact that many people have misconceptions about the relative weights of *kamma*. Please bear with me and read carefully, because some of these ideas go against some established and common wrong views. I have discussed some in, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."

6. For example, many people are afraid of even accidentally killing a mosquito, but do not have any problem making plans to hurt another human or spread rumors about another.

- Then there are other who think taking an occasional alcoholic beverage is immoral, but spend hours thinking about other sense pleasures. By the way, it is not the sense pleasures that is the problem, it is constantly thinking about them; this is a subtle but important point; see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana – Introduction."
- Of course, killing any living being should be avoided, and it is best to avoid drinking alcohol (especially if one tends to get drunk; the problem with drinking is, it makes the mind more exposed to the *panca nivarana*; one's ability to think clearly is diminished when drunk).

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- My point is that hurting another human will have much more potent *kamma vipāka* compared to killing many mosquitos or taking an occasional drink.

7. We can get some ideas on these issues by looking at the *vinaya* rules for the *bhikkhus*. These are the rules of conduct for the *bhikkhus*. There are 227 rules for fully ordained monks (*bhikkhus*) and 311 for nuns (*bhikkhunis*).

- These rules are called *patimokkha* ("*pati*" is getting bonded and "*mokkha*" or "*moksha*" in Sanskrit is "*Nibbāna*"), because they help staying out of trouble and stay on the path to *Nibbāna* for the *bhikkhus*. Remember that in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, "*mukha*" in "*mukha nimitta*" also means *Nibbāna*.

These rules are categorized according to their importance (or the severity of consequences for breaking them). The top four belong to the class called "*parajika*" meaning a *bhikkhu* who breaks any one of the four has been "defeated" and thus needs to leave the monastic order.

1. **Sexual intercourse**: any voluntary sexual interaction between a *bhikkhu* and a living being, except for mouth-to-mouth kissing which falls under the *sanghadisesa* (next level below the *parajika* level).
2. **Stealing**: the robbery of anything worth more than 1/24 troy ounce of gold (as determined by local law).
3. Intentionally bringing about the **death of a human being**, even if it is still an embryo — whether by killing the person, arranging for an assassin to kill the person, inciting the person to die, or describing the advantages of death.
4. **Deliberately lying to another person that one has attained a superior state**, such as claiming to be an *arahant* when one knows one is not, or claiming to have attained one of the *jhānā* when one knows one has not.

8. The next level is the *sanghadisesa.* The thirteen *sanghadisesa* rules requiring an initial and subsequent meeting of the *saṅgha* (communal meetings). If the monk breaks any rule here he has to undergo a period of probation or discipline after which, if he shows himself to be repentant, he may be reinstated by a *saṅgha* of not less than twenty monks.

- Like the *parajikas*, the *sanghadisesas* can only come about through the monk's own intention and cannot be accidentally invoked. However, if the *bhikkhu* does not go through this absolve him/herself, then the consequences will be even more harsh. These thirteen rules are not relevant to our discussion here, but you can read them at: WebLink: WIKI: Patimokkha
- There two more layers called *aniyata* and *Nissaggiya pacittiya* that pertain to *bhikkhus* and are again not relevant to our discussion. They are even less potent and can be overcome by just confessing to another *bhikkhu* and making a determination not to repeat.

9. The last set of rules are the "weakest", i.e., with the least consequences compared to all others. They are the 92 "*pacittiya*" rules, which are minor violations and can be overcome by just confessing to another *bhikkhu* and making a determination not to repeat. The ones relevant to our discussion are:

- *10. Should any bhikkhu dig soil or have it dug, it is to be confessed (to avoid killing small animals/insects).*
- *51. The drinking of alcohol or fermented liquor is to be confessed.*

10. Many people think "life is a life", but that is not so. Here digging soil is not allowed for *bhikkhus* because many lifeforms (insects, worms) are killed in that process. But this act is listed under the very last section of the *vinaya* rules (with least consequences).

- We know that killing an *Arahant* or one's parents is an "*anantariya kamma*," a very potent *kamma* that will send one to the *apāyā* in the very next birth.

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- And as we saw in #7 above, killing or giving advice to kill even a fetus is a *kamma* that makes a *bhikkhu* lose his/her ordination. Killing of small insects (inadvertently) by digging soil is a much less potent *kamma*, as listed in #9 above.
- Human life is precious because only a human can strive and attain *magga phala*, AND it is very difficult to get a "human *bhava*." But even among humans, there is great variation: an *Arahant* or one's parents are ranked way higher. The importance of parents is related to the fact that it is extremely hard for a *gandhabba* to find a suitable womb. I will discuss this in detail later.
- We also see that drinking alcohol is also a minor offense even for a *bhikkhu*, as it is listed in #9 above. *Bhikkhus* do not drink alcohol anyway, but this rule came about because of a particular incident at the time of Buddha.

11. It can be also deduced that stealing is a misdeed with harsh consequences, since it is included as a "*parajika*" for the *bhikkhus*.

- We need to realize that stealing has many subtle forms too, in addition to "taking something that belongs to another without permission". In a society, not doing one's own part is also a form of stealing, for example. One is benefitting from others' work, without contributing to it.
- We also become indebted automatically to our parents, teachers, friends, etc. Even though they may not expect a "payback", it is our duty to "respond in kind" whenever an opportunity arises.
- More can be found in the post, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."

12. Finally, I would like to point out that it is difficult to quantify the weight of a given *kamma* in a generic way. For example, "killing an animal" is a very generic statement and such an act has a very broad range of *kamma vipāka*.

- When you slap a mosquito that bit you while reading a book almost without realizing it, has very little *kammic* power associated with it. On the other hand, when one aims a gun at a deer and fires to kill, that will have much more *kammic* power.
- One way to easily figure out the difference between those two acts is to think in terms of "*javana* power" of a *citta*. This goes together with the "intention" and also "how bad one wants to get it done". You can almost visualize the difference in the mindsets of killing a mosquito verses deer in the above example. For more details, see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power," and "What is Intention in Kamma?."
- Hitting a person to cause minor pain is done with less *javana* in the *citta*. But hitting a person with an iron rod intending to kill has much more *javana* power, as you can imagine.

13. These are things one needs to contemplate on in order to truly understand the Buddha Dhamma; that is the real *vipassana* or insight meditation. Getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage requires learning about such basic things on one's own, by thinking about real life.

- Buddha Dhamma is not a "set rules and rituals" to be blindly followed. That is exactly the reason that many people have not been able to make any progress and have even given up.
- When one starts thinking critically and attentively one develops the *satara iddhipāda* that we discussed in #4 above. Once one gets traction by understanding a few basic things, Dhamma will be the guiding force to generate *chanda* (desire) to investigate more and to find more. It is boring and fruitless to blindly follow precepts and rituals that will not get one anywhere.

14. **November 11, 2016:** I get many questions on this topic, i.e., how to verify one is making progress towards the *Sotāpanna* stage. The new section, "Living Dhamma," provides a systematic way to achieve that goal, in addition to providing guidelines on how to check one's progress.

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11.16 13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage

December 5, 2015

1. There are two ways to look at the effectiveness of recitations. First, one could gain some benefit when LISTENING TO recitations (such as recorded chanting of *sutta*), even without understanding what is said in the *suttā*. However, that benefit will increase if one understood the content.

- The effectiveness of recitations in MEDITATION SESSIONS is somewhat similar. There are many people who have been practicing various types of recitations (*kammattana*) for 10, 20, 30, or more years without significant results (i.e., *magga phala*), even though they are likely to feel some calming effect.
- Reciting phrases (in any language) can be quite beneficial if the meanings of those phrases are understood in either of the above cases. Recitation in Pāli can be a bit more effective, since Pāli words tend to condense a lot of meaning. If one starts off with at least some understanding, recitation on a regular basis will help understand the concept at a deeper level.
- For example, the concept of *anicca* is understood gradually — with a glimpse of it grasped on the way to the *Sotāpanna* stage, getting a firm foothold at the *Sotāpanna* stage, strengthening at the *Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī* stages — and is fully comprehended at the *Arahant* stage.
- A systematic procedure to get to *sammā samādhi* to be able to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, is described in the "Living Dhamma" section. It can also help one figure out where one in the Path, and to clarify many fundamental issues. It is not possible to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa* until one's mind is purified to some extent. **Then one's mind can easily grasp concepts rather than just memorizing them.**

2. A mundane example is learning the multiplication table. Some get it easier than others. But with practice anyone can master it. All one needs is to spend some time reciting and memorizing the table, even though only memorization may not be helpful in the final objective, i.e., solving a bit more complex problems.

- We know that this "learning process" can be speeded up by using what one learned in solving some problems. Rather than just memorizing the multiplication table, if one applied it to solve some multiplication problems, the learning time can be drastically reduced and also it is easier to keep in the memory for longer time.
- This is what the Buddha meant by "*bhavanaya bahuleekathaya…..*" *Bhāvanā* (or meditation) is what one uses frequently: one needs to be thinking about it and examine it in many different situations as much as possible. Then the concept starts to "sink in". Formal recitations can be part of this process. [***bahulīkata***: [pp. of bahulīkaroti] took up seriously; increased. (adj.), practiced frequently.]
- Reciting a phrase repeatedly while contemplating on it (*kammattana*) is an excellent way to retain and comprehend a given concept, **once the concept is at least vaguely understood.**

3. Another important benefit of a good recitation session is in subsiding the five hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa*) that makes the mind agitated and not receptive; see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances." When one is focusing on Dhamma — even by just reciting verses — those greedy, hateful, and irrelevant thoughts are at least temporarily subsided and the mind will not be lethargic or agitated.

- In this respect, just listening to *Pāli suttā* could be beneficial too. In many Buddhist countries, many people start off the day with chanting of *suttā* (*pirith*) in the background. When I was little, I used to wake up to the chanting of *pirith* on the radio (my mother used to do turn it on the first thing in the morning).
- If the *suttā* are recited the right way, just listening to them can make the mind calm. I have posted audio files of several *suttā* by my teacher *Thero* including a 75 minute session in the post: "Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text)."

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4. Yet another critical benefit is to make the conditions conducive to attract previous "good *kamma*," and make the mind "tune into" receiving such merits. Each of us has done innumerable good and bad *kamma* in our previous lives, and they are waiting for "right conditions" to bring their results (*vipāka*).

- For example, there may be a good TV (or radio) program being broadcast. But if the television (or the radio) is not "tuned in" to the right station, one would not be able to watch (or listen to) the program.
- "Making the conditions right" can bring about both good and bad *kamma vipāka* too. If one associates with bad friends, that is making conditions for bad *kamma vipāka* to bring fruits. On the other hand associating with good friends and listening/reading Dhamma can make one's life better. This is discussed in detail in the posts, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya" and "Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How Does it Happen?."
- I have mentioned in many posts that the effectiveness of absorbing material at this website can be much improved by reading them at a quiet time. In the same way, a meditation session can be made more effective by calming the mind by doing some well-planned recitations. That itself can be a meditation session. What I do is, in the middle of recitations contemplate about relevant Dhamma concepts or my own daily experiences, i.e., do insight meditation in the middle of the recitation itself.

5. One should tailor the recitation session to match one's own personality and needs. For example, if one has a temper, one should spend more time doing *metta bhāvanā*; if one has excessive greed (for sense pleasures) one could spend more time doing *asubha bhāvanā* (unfruitful nature of things), which is basically to contemplate on the fact that ANY object that is providing sense pleasure is going to decay and destruct at the end.

6. I have thought a lot about how to present a "*kammattana* program". But it is difficult to decide what *kammattana* to discuss because each individual is different, and has own preferences and needs. I may still do that in pieces in the future, and I have discussed basic features of some in other posts.

- Here, I think it is better to just provide an audio of recitation session that I go through each day. This is just to give an example of how it can be done, and I know that it helps me in calming my mind and making it more receptive and alert.
- This is somewhat modified compared to what I actually do, because I do some parts in Sinhala which most of you will not understand, and I have also tailored this for those who are seeking the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.

7. It is best to do these recitations in a quiet room, sitting comfortably — but not too comfortably — so that one would not fall asleep initially. Once one gets used to it, one will never fall asleep. Also, it may be better to actually say the words initially to avoid the mind to wander around; one could just recite in the mind later on.

October 13, 2016: I have removed the audio file temporarily until I make a better one. After I started the "Living Dhamma" section, I realized a way to present material in a better way.

But I leave the pdf of the text file:

WebLink: PDF File: Kammattana Example

Notes:

1. I am assuming that anyone who is interested in these *kammattana* (i.e., those who have the desire to strive for the *Sotāpanna* stage) have already read the relevant key posts at Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna. Now, let us discuss different sections of the WebLink: PDF File: Kammattana Example.

- Also, the Search button on the top right is very useful for finding relevant posts for any given keyword or a phrase that is not clear.

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2. In reciting precepts, instead of the "*Pānātipātā Veramani Sikkāhāpadam Samādiyāmi*", which says "I promise not take another life of a living being", it is more truthful to say, "I promise not to take another life with any liking for it" (*Pānātipātā pativirato hoti)*, unless one is dedicating a day to strictly observe the precepts.

- For example, if one needs to apply a medication to a wound, that will kill many microscopic living beings; yet, one has to do that in order to heal the wound; **thus in day-to-day life, we may have to take actions like that we would not like to; this is what is meant by "*pativirato hoti", i.e.,* one would not do it unless necessary.** But if one is observing precepts, one could avoid applying the medication on that day.
- Same for the other four precepts.

3. Note the break in between "*itipi so bhagava*…". Many people recite it as "*itipiso bhagava*…", which has a very different and inappropriate meaning.

- I really need to discuss the meanings of these three phrases, and hope to get it done in the "Buddhist Chanting" section in the future.

4. The phrase, "*Natti me sanaran annan Buddho me saranan varan"* means, "I have no other refuge than that of the Buddha".

- *"etena sacca vajjena sotti me hotu sabbada"* means something to the effect of "may the truth in my refuge in Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha lead to my well being and success in my efforts".
- *"etena sacca vajjena sotti te hotu sabbada"* means something to the effect of "may this truth lead to the well being and success in others' efforts".

5. The next phrase (in Sinhala, I am unable to come up with a suitable English or Pāli phrase) means, "I will be truthful to myself, see things as they are, be pure in mind, and endeavor to generate only pure thoughts (*prabhasvara* or *pabasara citta*). I plan to write separate posts discussing some of these *kammattana*. Even a single phrase is so condensed that one could write many posts on each.

- For example, "*avanka*" comes from "*vanka*" or "bent" or "not straightforward". If someone is not truthful, then that is "*vanka*"; "*avanka*" is the opposite of "*vanka*."

6. The next three phrases are also very important. I recite it every day. The phrase, "*Kayena vaca cittena pamadena maya katan, accayam khama me Bhante bhuripanna Tathagata",* means: "If I have done any wrong inadvertently (or due to ignorance) by thoughts, speech, or mind to the Buddha, may I be forgiven for that".

- And then the same phrase directed to Dhamma and Saṅgha. For example, I always worry about inadvertently explaining some concept in a way which may not be quite right. Also, when dealing with people, we don't know whether we inadvertently hurt their feelings or do something that they see as inappropriate (and it is possible that such a person may be a Noble person).

7. The next set of phrases are for cultivating *anicca saññā* and related other factors. The phrase, "*Aniccanupassi viharati, nicca saññā pajahati"* means "I will live my life cultivating the *anicca saññā* and reject that things in this world can be kept to my satisfaction (i.e., reject the *nicca saññā*)". Similar meaning can be deduced for the following three phrases.

- In the phrase, *"Nibbidanupassi viharati, abhinandana pajahati", nibbida* means "stay away from valuing sense pleasures" and *viharati* means "live accordingly". A*bhinandana* means "valuing sense pleasures", and *pajahati* means "avoid".
- *"Nirodhanupassi viharati, samudayan pajahati",* means stop the wheeling process and reject generating more "*san*" ("*san*" + "*udaya*" combines to give "*samudaya*"); see, "What is 'San'?."
- *"Patinissagganupassi viharati, sambhavan pajahati"* means "I will endeavor to break all bonds to this world, and stop making new *bhava*."

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- The last three recitals in this section with *"Anissitoca viharati, na ca kinci loke upadiyati"* confirm one's conviction that "it is unfruitful to stay in this world of 31 realms, there is nothing in this world that worth craving for (*upādāna*)".

8. The set of three phrases that come next also help cultivate *anicca saññā*, and one could review or do insight meditation on *anicca, dukkha, anatta* right after that.

9. The next section is on *metta bhāvanā*. I normally recite this in Sinhala, but these English phrases give almost the same meaning. This is also discussed in the post, "5. Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)."

- The relevance to different types of *akusala citta* is discussed in the post, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." The 12 types of *akusala citta* are discussed in, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

10. The next phrase is the standard phrase to use when cultivating *jhāna*: see, "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga." Even though it is supposed to be fully effective only after attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, it can be used by anyone who has been exposed to the true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* and is pursuing the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- One could get into at least some kind of *samādhi* by this time, and do some insight meditation here. Actually, at any of the above *kammattana* sections, one could do insight meditation related to that section. I normally do this and my sessions sometimes last for much longer times.

11. In the subsequent sections, we start giving merits to all living beings. The phrase, "*Idam me nati nan hotu Sukhita hontu natayo", means* "May all my relatives (which does include all living beings in the through *saṃsāra*) attain peace and happiness due to these merits".

- The next phrase, "*Idam vo nati nan hotu Sukhita hontu natayo",* can have multiple meanings. If one is doing a group session, it could mean "relatives of others in the group". If one is by oneself, it could mean "distant relatives", who may even be in worlds far away from the Earth.
- Thus when one recites both phrases, it does include all living beings.

12. The next section gives merits to *devas* (which include *brahmā* as well), *bhūta*, and *preta*, and then to all beings (*sabbe satta*). It is another way of giving merits as in #11.

- Then the next phrase in English is straightforward. I specifically included this so that anyone can use this with full understanding. If one had (even inadvertently) done a bad deed to someone that day, one could be thinking about that person and ask for forgiveness. This is a very effective way to calm the mind and reduce tensions, and I hope to write a post on this. If done sincerely, one should be able to see the effects in real life. You may notice that the tensions with that person automatically reduced.
- What happens is that those strong *javana citta* that you generate can produce *cittaja rūpa* that can affect that person even over long distances. It is again related to what we discussed in #4 of the main section (above the current "Notes" section).

13. Then we end the session with the phrase "*Idam me puññan āsavakkhaya vahan hotu, sabba dukkha nirujjati"* that is recited three times. It means, "May the merits that I have acquired help remove my *āsava* (cravings), and lead to the end of all suffering".

- It is to be noted here that "*asavakkhaya vahan hotu"* is really, "*asavakkhaya **aham hotu**"* or "may (these merits) be ***hetu*** for cleansing of **my** *asava*." It just rhymes as, "*asavakkhaya vahan hotu".*

14. Of course the above is an example of what one could do. One could use all the *kammattana* (and add more), or use only the ones that one likes. I don't use them all in a given session, but do use some of them all the time. I just start the session with the first few and select phrases as I proceed. Sometimes, I get into insight meditation (contemplating relevant ideas, connecting with other concepts, etc) following a given phrase and just do that for the whole session.

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15. **November 11, 2016:** I get many questions on this topic, i.e., how to verify one is making progress towards the *Sotāpanna* stage. The new section, "Living Dhamma," provides a systematic way to achieve that goal, in addition to providing guidelines on how to check one's progress.

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11.17 New Approach to Meditation

This section has been moved to, "Living Dhamma." Please check there for the follow-up posts.

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11.18 Anussati and Anupassanā – Being Mindful and Removing Defilements

April 16, 2018

Anussati and Anupassanā

1. *Anussati* and *anupassanā* are two Pāli words that have related but different meanings. It helps to understand the difference, because many people today incorrectly use various types of *anussati* themselves as *kammatthāna* (meditation subjects).

- If one understands *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna*, these are basically another way of saying the same thing. They are all different angles of looking at the goal (*Nibbāna*) and how to get there, i.e., how to cultivate the Path.
- It is ALWAYS good to keep in mind that *Nibbāna* is attained via getting rid of greed, hate, ignorance (*lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*) **from one's mind**. The only other thing to remember is that, without comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* that process cannot be completed. Everything else is just more details to how to get there.
- "*Anu*" can have two different meanings. One is "according to" or "via this process". The other is "food" for bad *viññāṇa*, which are essentially "*keles*" or "*klesha*" or "defilements" (or *kilesa* in *Pāli*). But here it is the first meaning that is mainly relevant.

  [***kilesa*** :'defilements', are mind-defiling, unwholesome qualities. Vis. M. XXII, 49, 65: **There are 10 defilements**, thus called because they are themselves defiled, and because they defile the mental factors associated with them. They are: (1) greed (*lobha*), (2) hate (*dosa*), (3) delusion (*moha*), (4) conceit (*māna*), (5) speculative views (*diṭṭhi*), (6) skeptical doubt (*vicikicchā*), (7) mental torpor (*thīna*), (8) restlessness (*uddhacca*); (9) shamelessness (*ahirika*), (10) lack of moral dread (fearlessness) or unconscientiousness (*anottappa*). For 1-3, s. *mūla*; 4, s. *māna*; 5, s. *diṭṭhi*; 6-8, s. *nīvaraṇa*; 9 and 10, s. *ahirika - anottappa*.]

  [***upakkilesa*** : 'impurities', corruptions, imperfections (a frequent rendering by 'defilements' is better reserved for *kilesa*, q. v.). A list of **16 moral 'impurities of the mind'** (***cittassa upakkilesa***) is mentioned and explained in M. 7 & 8 (WHEEI. 61/62): 1. covetousness and unrighteous greed (*abhijjhā-visamalobha*), 2. ill will (*byāpāda*), 3. anger (*kodha*), 4. hostility (*upanāha*), 5. denigration (*makkha*), 6. domineering (*palāsa*), 7. envy (*issā*), 8. stinginess (*macchariya*), 9. hypocrisy (*māyā*), 10. fraud (*sāṭheyya*), 11. obstinacy (*thambha*), 12. presumption (*sārambha*), 13. conceit (*māna*), 14. arrogance (*atimāna*), 15. vanity (*mada*), 16. negligence (*pamāda*).]
- Now we can see the origins of those two words (*pada nirukti*).

Buddhānussati, mettānussati, asubhānussati, maranānussati

2. **First let us first discuss *anussati***, which comes from "*anu*" + "*sati*." Of course, *sati* is mindset (with the *Tilakkhaṇa* in the background); therefore, *anussati* means the mindset that is focused on attaining *Nibbāna*.

- There are several types of *anussati*, but four are lumped together as **"*caturarakkha*" or "Four Protections"** that one should try to keep with oneself all the time that will help one to stay out of trouble.
- This is expressed in the following verse (I have not found the source in the *Tipiṭaka*):

"*Buddhānussati metta ca, asubham maranānussati; iti ima **caturarakkha**, Bhikkhu bhaveyya silava*"

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Translated: "*Buddhānussati, mettānussati, asubhānussati, maranānussati*; these are the **Four Protections** for a *Bhikkhu* cultivating *sīla* (moral behavior)".

- These are basically four things that one should ALWAYS keep in mind, in order to protect one's mind from getting defiled.

3. We already know that "*Buddha*" comes from "*bhava*" + "*uddha*," or uprooting *bhava*, i.e, stopping the rebirth process in order to eliminate future suffering. So, *Buddhānussati* basically means keeping that key message in mind all the time.

- *Asubha* means "unfruitful" and even "harmful". Getting attached to sense pleasures is harmful in the long run, just like a fish biting on a tasty worm on a hook will be subjected to suffering. So, *asubhānussati* means always to be mindful of the bad consequences of material things that are appealing at the first sight.
- *Mettānussati* is to keep in mind always that all living beings are in the same boat, suffering in the long run, and thus to have compassionate thoughts about all of them. Of course, that can be implemented at various levels depending on one's progress (mundane *mettā* to *Ariya mettā*).
- Especially when one becomes aware of the true meanings of *Tilakkhaṇa*, one realizes not only the fruitlessness of seeking happiness in this world, but one becomes AFRAID of possible future suffering. When that realization comes, one will make an accelerated effort to cultivate the Path, because death can come at any time.

4. Therefore, essentially these four types of *anussati* are basically four types of "mindfulness" that one should always keep in mind. Not only when meditating, but even more importantly when interacting with the society.

- These Four Protections, with practice, will help enormously in maintaining *Satipaṭṭhāna* or *Ānāpāna* while interacting with others.
- For example, if someone says something nasty, instead of getting mad and retaliating, one should immediately recall that one's goal is "*bhava uddha*," and that requires seeing the *asubha* nature, cultivating *mettā*, and that one may not have much time left to get this done (*maranānussati*).

5. As is the case in many cases, those Four Protections have mundane meanings too. These could also be helpful. Following are the mundane meanings.

- *Buddhānussati* is to contemplate on the nine supreme qualities of the Buddha. This is of course a good thing to do.
- *Asubhānussati* as contemplating the "foulness for the body". That is a misinterpretation. One could do *asubha bhāvana* to contemplate on the real nature of the body. A given male or female body can be enticing when the body is young, but they will both degrade with time.
- *Mettānussati* as keep repeating " May all beings be happy and healthy". Again, not a bad thing to do.
- *Maranānussati* as reciting "*jeevitam aniyatan, marana niyatam*" or "this life is impermanent, death is a certainty". While the statement is true, that recitation by itself cannot do much to remove defilements and to purify the mind.

Aniccānupassanā, Dukkhānupassanā, Anattānupassanā, Asubhānupassanā

6. **Now let us discuss anupassanā.** In contrast to *anusssati*, *anupassanā* is more relevant to formal meditation.

- "*Passa*" means to "get rid of", as we mentioned while interpreting "*assa passa*," in discussing *anapāna bhāvana*.; see #3 of "7. What is Ānāpāna?."
- Therefore, *anupassanā* means getting rid of defilements according to whatever the prefix that is used in front.

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- While there are four types of *anupassanā* and three are associated directly with *Tilakkhaṇa: aniccānupassanā*, *dukkhānupassanā*, *anattānupassanā*, and the fourth is *asubhānupassanā*. [See; WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭisambhidāmagga Paññāvagga 3.9. Vipassanākathā for *aniccānupassanā*, *dukkhānupassanā*, *anattānupassanā* and WebLink: suttacentral: Itivuttaka 85 Asubhānupassīsutta for *asubhānupassanā*]
- Normal humans take this world to be of *nicca, sukha, atta,* and *subha* nature. The key to *Nibbāna* is to realize the true nature: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and *asubha*.

7. Thus, *aniccānupassanā* means, getting rid of defilements by contemplating on *anicca* nature.

- Similalrly, *dukkhānupassanā* and *anattānupassanā* mean getting rid of defilements by contemplating on *dukkha* and *anatta* nature.
- We have not discussed *asubhānupassanā* up to this point. This becomes more important for a *Sotāpanna* to get to the *Sakadāgāmi/Anāgāmi* stages by contemplating on the bad consequences of sense pleasures that appear so enticing.

8. Therefore, for one who is trying to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage, the first three *anupassanā* are more important. However, *asubhānupassanā* cannot hurt (and even could be beneficial) because that helps calm the mind.

- We need to remember that the *tāpa* (or burning or "excitedness of the mind") comes from *kāmacchanda* and *vyāpāda*: greed and hate. Both arise due excess greed or "blindness due to excess desire for sense pleasures"; see, "The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How Root Causes are Removed" and "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha".
- For anyone interested in meditation, such basics need to be understood: "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals." I can see from the discussion forum that many people worry too much about "deep concepts" WITHOUT having a proper understanding of fundamentals.

Understanding Dhamma: A Step-by-Step Process

9. We also need to keep in mind that one cannot just start doing formal meditations on these *anupassanā*. It is a step-by-step process. Obviously, one needs to have some understanding of *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*): "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- Even before that, one needs to get rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* by cultivating the mundane eightfold path: "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

The reason for that was discussed in the recent post, "Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind – Part I." **If one has either of the following two views, then it is NOT possible to comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*:**

- The next life is going to be forever, in the heaven or hell.
- This life is all one has. When one dies, it is over. No rebirth or hell or heaven.

10. There are many reasons why those two views will block the Path to *Nibbāna*. Following are a few key reasons:

- Neither of the above views can accommodate the laws of *kamma*: That one's actions WILL have consequences, and those consequences are much more complex than just leading to hell or heaven (and then getting stuck there forever).
- It is not possible to have a consistent picture (world view) without getting rid of wrong views like there is no rebirth process, or that *gandhabba* concept is wrong; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

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- If one has above views, then one cannot comprehend the *dukkha* nature. The fact that most future suffering is in the *apāyā*s, and that one needs to stay away from *dasa akusala* done with powerful and immoral *javana citta* that "power-up" such births in the *apāyā*.

Conclusions

11. I know that I keep repeating some things. But I can see that many people seem to skipping essentials because of their desire to get there quickly. I admire their enthusiasm, but do not want people to have false hopes. On the other hand, "just learning concepts" is not enough either, so one MUST put all this to practice, i.e., stay away from *dasa akusala* (and keep in mind that *micchā diṭṭhi* is the worst of them; see the post mentioned in #10 above).

- The bottom line is, if one can truly see the *anicca* nature, one will have the *anicca saññā* and will avoid *dasa akusala* with a high degree of fear of the *apāyā*: "*dukkham bhayattena*."
- Thus one will automatically have *Buddhānussati*, the desire to reach *Nibbāna*.
- Furthermore, it will sink into the mind that those enticing things in the world are in fact of *asubha* nature (*asubhānussati*). One will also realize that all living beings are in the same boat, and thus will have *mettānussati*.

12. Finally, one will also have *maranānussati* established in one's mind: that one needs to make haste and cultivate the path before death comes, the timing of which is totally unknown.

- If one reads the WebLink: dhammatalks.net: Maranasati Sutta (AN 6.19), it is clear that the Buddha advised *bhikkhus* to be keenly aware that death can come at any time and thus to CULTIVATE THE PATH without delay, and that *maranānussati* was not a specific *kammatthāna*.
- A fairly good English translation of the *sutta* is at: "WebLink: suttacentral: Mindfulness of Death."

Discussion of this post at, "WebLink: Anussati and Anupassanā – Being Mindful and Removing Defilements."

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11.19 Myths about Meditation

Early post; revised September 11, 2018; December 17, 2019

Nibbāna Is Not Possible With Rituals

1. Once I attended a meditation retreat. Everyone was sitting down on the floor with crossed legs, but after a while, many people "could not endure the pain" and were stretching their legs out or were fidgeting. It was apparent (to me) that many people could not think about anything else but their pain due to the uncomfortable posture. This went on for two days. Other than those who were long-time meditators, and were comfortable with the lotus position, I do not believe the others enjoyed the retreat that much.

- Such nonsensical "rituals" are part of the set of wrong views that one needs to remove before attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage. This particular practice is a "*silabbata paramasa*" or engaging in "set procedures." Such practices do not make sense if one does not understand the reasoning for doing it. Sitting in the lotus position is not a requirement for meditation.

We Need to Know What to Meditate On!

2. It is helpful to think about the goal of meditation. The ultimate goal is to remove greed, hate, and ignorance from our minds and to attain Nibbāna. One needs to understand the fundamental concepts of Buddha Dhamma first.

- But even for those who are just interested in achieving some "cooling down" from everyday stresses, it is the same fundamental idea that is at work: We need to keep greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts from arising in our minds. The more we do that, the more relaxed our minds will become. Many people automatically associate "breath meditation" with "Buddhist meditation" and spend years on it, and end up discouraged; see a person account, "WebLink: PDF-file: Meditation-Experience-of-Paññobhāsa-Bhikkhu."
- The correct *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā* is NOT breath mediation; see the posts at, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)."
- Purification of the mind is the way to achieve temporary relief to the mind as well as to attain the *Arahantship*. There is no one else monitoring one's progress; it is one's own mind that is keeping tabs on one's progress.
- When one does a "formal meditation", one should sit in a comfortable position. It could be the lotus position for those who have practised it. One could be in the lotus position for several hours when one gets good at it. For most people, it is just sitting in a chair; one that is not too comfortable that one may fall asleep!

Bad Idea to Remove ALL Thoughts

3. Getting rid of evil thoughts can be and should be done ALL THE TIME. The Buddha said, "*bhāvanāya bahuleekathāya*", or "meditate as much as possible, whenever possible." And it is done in all possible postures: sitting, standing, walking, and lying down.

- Ven. Ānanda is the only known person to attain the *Arahanthood* while not in any of those four postures. He was making an all-out effort to become an *Arahant* before the first *Dhamma Sangāyanā* (Buddhist Council.) Only *Arahants* were able to attend. But since Ven. Ānanda was the only one who had memorized the whole of the sutta piṭaka, it was essential that he attended the *Sangāyanā*. The night before the *Sangāyanā*, he had been exhausted by the effort, but he was still thinking about a dhamma concept while getting into the bed. He sat down on the bed and raised his legs, to lie down. Before his head touched the pillow, that particular point came clear to him, and the "*Arahant phala citta*" was realized.

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- Another story from the *Tipiṭaka* that is also relevant to #1 above is about a minister of King of Kosala, named Santati. He attained the *Arahanthood* while listening to a single verse by the Buddha: "WebLink: tipitaka.net: Dhammapada Verse 142."

Removing ALL Thoughts Lead to Births in the *Asaññā* Realm

4. I have seen many meditation programs that describe *Nibbāna* as removing perception or *saññā* from the mind.

- Many people wrongly advise that one needs to remove ALL THOUGHTS from one's mind to attain *Nibbāna*. One time a *Deva* expressed the same idea to the Buddha: "Isn't *Nibbāna* attained via removing all thoughts?". The Buddha said, "No. *Nibbāna* is realized by removing greedy, hateful, and ignorant thoughts." That account is in the *Manonīvaraṇa Sutta* (SN 1.24).
- Some others say that when a thought comes to the mind (about a loved one, a place, or anything material), to say "that does not exist," and to forget it. Just because the Buddha said everything changes at a rapid pace, he did not mean phenomena did not exist. Things do not exist for eternity either, because they are continually changing. This is the same argument that we discussed in the "Concept of a Life-stream": the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self". *Paṭicca Samuppāda* explains all phenomena. They arise due to causes and would not occur if such reasons are absent.
- If one cultivates *asaññā* meditation (by removing all thought that come to the mind), may be born in the realm of *asaññā brahmā.* In that realm, no thoughts arise in mind. One would stay there for a very long time, only to come back to the human plane and start the rebirth process all over.
- **All the above meditation techniques are dangerous.** As one develops them, one may become forgetful; *saññā* or perception is a critical mental factor associated with recognition of external objects. If one starts losing memory, that will be a sign that one is on the wrong path.

Nibbāna is the Removal of Greed, Anger, and Ignorance

5. An *Arahant* has not removed the capacity to generate thoughts OR perceptions. **An *Arahant* has removed greed, hate, and ignorance from the thoughts that arise.** Thoughts arise in him/her with *saññā*, i.e., he/she can identify people or things. They can experience the whole world just as any other human: they can see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or think about any place.

- The only difference is that they will not generate any greedy, hateful, or ignorant thoughts about anything that is experienced.
- The concept of Nibbāna is very simple: "*ragakkhayo Nibbanaṃ, dosakkhayo Nibbanaṃ, mohakkhayo Nibbanaṃ*". (Extinction of greed (or desire), hatred (or aversion, anger), ignorance (or delusion) gives rise to *Nibbāna.*)

Nibbāna Is Approached With the Removal of Greedy, Angry, and Unwise Thoughts

6. And one CAN experience the "cooling down" as one makes progress on removing greed, hate, and ignorance, even before the *Sotāpanna* stage. Instead of becoming forgetful, one's mind will actually become more sharp and alert. One will be able to remember things BETTER, not less. One will become happier, not gloomy or depressed. **It is hard for normal people to fathom how much stress is associated with a mind that is contiminated with greed, hate, and ignorance.**

- The constant stress in an average human mind arises due to greed, anger, and ignorance. That is why people seek sense pleasure, basically to get some relief. But the problem is that any such relief is temporary. Furthermore, many people do immoral things to get such pleasures. So it can make things much worse: not only that one does not get permanent relief, but one will have to pay for the bad kamma that were accumulated by such immoral acts (lying, stealing, sexual misconduct, etc.).

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- This is why one can feel the relief right away when one starts living a "clean, simple life". That should be the "base" for begining meditation. It is not possible to make any progress, no matter how much time one allocated to "meditation", if one is engaged in immoral behavior; one needs to start reducing the BIG EIGHT.
- What the Buddha prescribed was simple yet profound. As one clears the mind of the five hindrances (*pañcanīvaraṇa*) via living a clean life AND start doing the proper *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā*, the progress will accelerate with time, because one's mind start being able to see more clearly. One will be able easily grasp the real meaning of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*.

Do All Things "Appear, Destruct in a Moment, and Re-Appear"?

7. Another series of "*desanā*" that I listened to described how an advanced meditator can actually "see" the "formation/breakup" of the material world. That person says that one could see the "impermanence" described in the "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" post. He explained how he got so afraid when the "world disappeared" momentarily before re-formation!

- A *citta* never arises as a single unit. It appears in a *citta vīthi* (series of *cittā*) which normally have 17 *citta* if the *citta vīthi* occur due to an external sensory input coming through one of the five physical sense inputs (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and body). And that there are many billions of thought moments per second. **However, only a Buddha can actually "see" such a fast time scale.**
- The Buddha described to Ven. Sariputta such minute details in summary form, and it took Ven. Sariputta and his immediate followers hundreds of years to finalize a detailed description of mental/physical phenomena based on such information provided by the Buddha. They were able to complete the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* only by the third *Dhamma Sangāyanā.*
- Even in many textbooks on *Abhidhamma*, sometimes it is said that **".. *rūpa* is very short lived – it endures only for 17 conscious moments.** What is formed is almost instantly gone". This is wrong! That is the lifetime of a "*hadaya rūpa*." A *hadaya rūpa* is generated in the *hadaya vatthu* by a sense event through one of the five physical senses. The lifetime of a *hadaya rūpa* is the time taken to experience that external sense event, i.e., 17 thought moments. (During that short time, the mind grasps an impression of the external *rūpa*); see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."

Fake Teachings Are Not Restricted to *Mahāyāna*

8. The problems with Mahayana teachings have become apparent due to the advances made in science and technology. See, "Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings" and "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis."

- However, some of the "fake teachings" that I mention in this post originated in *Theravāda* countries, in particular in Sri Lanka. That is why it is critically important to learn pure *Dhamma* before or, at least, while one is doing meditation.
- How can one follow the path of the Buddha without knowing the actual path? "*Bhāvanāya pahāthabbā*" (or removal of defilements via meditation) comes AFTER "*dassanena pahāthabbā*" (or removal of defilements due to wrong views via understanding the true Dhamma.) This is also why *Sammā Diṭṭhi* is first and *Sammā Samādhi* is last in the Noble Eightfold Path.
- I highly encourage everyone to read as many posts as possible to learn Dhamma. Regardless of one's familiarity with Buddha Dhamma, one should read those posts in the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section at least once, because they provide the foundation. I know from experience the following. It is harder to comprehend the related advanced material if one does not get the basics right.

"Feeling Better" Does Not Necessarily Indicate That One Is on the Correct Path

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9. In "weeding out" the bad approaches, a key point to understand is that there are many ways to "feel better". A drug user can instantly get into a "relaxed state of mind" by taking a drug. We don't do that because, (i) we know it is a temporary solution, AND (ii) it has terrible consequences.

- Getting "addicted to" *anāriya* (non-Buddhist) meditations like breath or *kasina* meditation is only somewhat better. Many get addicted to them because they not seem to have any adverse consequences in this life. Even though that may be true, they do have harmful implications for the long term because one is wasting one's precious time in this human life on something that does not help in avoiding rebirth in the *apāyā*.
- Just because one starts feeling better using a particular technique does not mean it is the THE solution. This is why one needs to look at the UNDERLYING BASIS of that approach. I have come across several groups where they are convinced of their "technique" because they "feel better" with what they do. As we just discussed, a " good experience" does not rule out a "better experience" with the correct approach.
- **The only way to make a sound judgement of "any theory" or "approach" is to critically examine it and see whether it can explain the realities that we see around us.** Can it explain why people are born different? Similarly, why some live relatively better compared to others, why do only some people get horrible diseases, why do animals experience pain but still cannot do anything about it (i.e., why they have limited minds)? Only pure Buddha Dhamma can explain all these and more.

Formal and Informal Meditations

10. Finally, once one looks at the evidence and decides on the Path, meditation can be "formal" or "informal". In formal meditation, one allocates a time and place, and it could be any of the following:

- Conventional sitting or walking meditation session. But this is not the only formal way to meditate.
- Listening to a Dhamma discourse delivered by an *Ariya* (one who has grasped *anicca, dukkha, anatta*) is an excellent formal meditation session.
- Reading (and contemplating) on a Dhamma concept, say *anicca*, is also formal meditation. If one reads/listens when the mind is calm, one will grasp more.

11. Informal meditation is possible at any time, anywhere.

- Merely thinking about a Dhamma concept or trying to clarify a Dhamma concept is meditation. That can happen at any time. While lying in bed trying to fall asleep, waiting at the doctor's office, riding a bus or subway, etc. Instead of day dreaming or generating greedy, hateful, or useless thoughts, one could spend that time contemplating Dhamma.

Suppression or Removal of Five Hindrances Lead to *Samādhi*

12. In all these cases, one can experience a calming effect due to the suppression of the five hindrances. That can lead to even depper *samādhi* if one's mind becomes focused on the Dhamma concept. One could develop a habit of doing informal meditations. **But avoid doing that while driving or even when concentrating on a task at work! That WILL have terrible consequences. One needs to use wisdom (being mindful of consequences) while cultivating understanding.**

- Five hindrances discussed at, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

Next, "Is Suffering the same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering?", ……..

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11.20 A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)

Revised February 28, 2019; revised May 17, 2019

1. This is an important post that should be read carefully. Grasping the basic concept here can prevent many akusala kamma (unmeritorious deed) and also boost the power of a *kusala/puñña kamma* (meritorious deed). In addition, it shows the consistency and universality of Buddha Dhamma.

2. The potency of a kamma (good or bad) depends on two key factors. First we need to clarify some basic ideas.

- Any action or speech originates as a "thought". As described in the Abhidhamma section, a citta is of duration much less than a BILLIONTH of a second. Such fast thoughts do not even register in our minds. Once in a while a burst of cittā on a given object gets latched on and stays long enough to register in our minds. Then we consciously think about it and make a decision.
- For example, when I walked to the kitchen to make a tea this afternoon, it started as what seemed to be a thought of "having a tea". In reality that "thought" itself was due to billions of citta going through my mind; the initial "vague idea of having a tea" very quickly got built-up by numerous follow-up cittā until I had to get up and walk to the kitchen.

3. Most such "initial thoughts" just do not cascade into strong enough thoughts to make us to move physically or even to speak out. If the "impulse of the thought" (or '*javana*") is not strong enough, we just disregard it.

- If you think about it, you will realize that there are thousands, millions of stray thoughts that pass our minds each day. When we ride a bus just staring out of the window, we see zillion things go by and each thing seen is a thought. We do not remember most of it afterwards.
- On the other hand, some impactful thoughts prompt us to instantaneous action or speech. Sometimes, we just stay on that stream of thoughts: some people laugh out loud just thinking about a happy event. Other times, if a thought about a hated person comes to the mind, one's face getting dark and muscles get tightened.
- A mother hearing her child cry out is literally lifted out of her seat instantaneously: But what happens there is, she hears the cry in a series of "*citta vīthi*" of "thought streams" coming through the ear-door. Subsequently millions of "mind-door" *citta vīthi* run within a fraction of second identifying that it is a crying sound, and it is coming from her child. Subsequently, millions more *citta vīthi* start running trying to analyze what could be the problem, and then more *citta vīthi* will prompt her to get out of the seat and move towards the source of that sound. All this happens within a fraction of second, without her consciously aware of it.

4. Not all thoughts on the same subject have the same *kammic* power.

- If some insects get killed while someone is walking on the ground or while cleaning the house, that will have no *kammic* consequences; because the intention associated with those actions was not to kill any living being.
- As we will see below, several key things contribute to the *kammic* power: the intention, what kind of knowledge is behind that intention, and whether one does the act enthusiastically are all key factors.

5. Now let us take an example to see how these different factors contribute to the strength of a kamma. Suppose a person who does not know that stealing is a bad thing to do and that it will have bad consequences, steals something from a shop. Since **he does it with wrong vision (*micchā diṭṭhi*) he does not have any remorse for it**. Thus the *kammic* strength is very high.

- But if he does it on the urging or prompting by another, then it will have less strong *kammic* consequences, since he did not think about doing it on his own, and thus the "*javana*" or the "impulse power" of the citta is less strong.

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- Now, if he comes up with the idea of stealing by himself, AND enjoys doing it, that is the worst.

6. So, now we can see different levels of *kammic* strengths associated with the SAME ACT of stealing:

- 01 If done with wrong vision, with pleasure, and without prompting will have the highest strength (of course this will be highest BAD strength).
- 02 If done with wrong vision, with pleasure, and with prompting will have the next lower strength.
- 05 If done with wrong vision, with neutral feeling, and without prompting will have the next lower strength.
- 06 If done with wrong vision, with neutral feeling, and with prompting will have the next lower strength.
- 01 *Somanassasahagataṃ diṭṭhigatasampayuttaṃ asaṅkhārikam ekaṃ.*
- 02 *Somanassasahagataṃ diṭṭhigatasampayuttaṃ sasaṅkhārikam ekaṃ.*
- 05 *Upekkhāsahagataṃ diṭṭhigatasampayuttaṃ asaṅkhārikam ekaṃ.*
- 06 *Upekkhāsahagataṃ diṭṭhigatasampayuttaṃ sasaṅkhārikam ekaṃ.*

Now in the next four cases, the same act was **done by person who did know that it was a bad act** and it will have bad consequences would do it with at least some hesitation, and thus the "*javana*" or the "impulse of the thought" would be less, and consequently the *kammic* power will be less. So, now we have the last four cases:

- 03 If done WITHOUT wrong vision, with pleasure, and without prompting will have the next highest (GOOD) strength.
- 04 If done WITHOUT wrong vision, with pleasure, and with prompting will have the next highest strength.
- 07 If done WITHOUT wrong vision, with neutral feeling, and without prompting will have the next highest strength.
- 08 If done WITHOUT wrong vision, with neutral feeling, and with prompting will have the least strength.
- 03 *Somanassasahagataṃ diṭṭhigatavippayuttaṃ asaṅkhārikam ekaṃ.*
- 04 *Somanassasahagataṃ diṭṭhigatavippayuttaṃ sasaṅkhārikam ekaṃ.*
- 07 *Upekkhāsahagataṃ diṭṭhigatavippayuttaṃ asaṅkhārikam ekaṃ.*
- 08 *Upekkhāsahagataṃ diṭṭhigatavippayuttaṃ sasaṅkhārikam ekaṃ.*

7. Thus it is clear that just having an understanding of Dhamma (that it is unfruitful to gain anything at the expense of other beings) will automatically make the *kammic* power less potent; but this "knowledge" is not the "book knowledge"; it is not effective if one has read about it but the mind has not really grasped it. Wisdom and "book knowledge" are two different things.

- If you think about it deeply, it should become clear that **it is the comprehension of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* that leads to true knowledge (*paññā*)** and **helps get rid of *avijjā* (ignorance)**. It is understanding the true nature of this world, and that one's actions are bound to have consequences.
- It works in the other way too. Good actions will lead to good results.

8. Thus the same kind of reasoning is true for meritorious acts (*kusala/puñña kamma*). There are eight levels depending on whether one does meritorious act with/without knowledge, with joy/with neutral feeling, and without/with prompting just like in the case of the greed-based akusala citta. Let us take the case of someone making a donation to build a shelter for homeless people.

- This *kusala kamma* (meritorious deed) done with knowledge, with joy, and without prompting has the highest merit.

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- And THE SAME *puñña kamma* done WITHOUT knowledge, with neutral feeling, and with prompting has the LEAST effectiveness.
- Thus the same deed done without comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* is a *puñña kamma.* The same deed done with comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* is a *kusala kamma.*
- The intermediate six are just analogous to the ones for the greed-based *akusala kamma*.

9. Let us examine how these categories play out in the real world for the above mentioned meritorious act of building a shelter for the homeless:

- If someone understands the value of giving, does it out of the kindness felt for those homeless people, does it without wishing for anything in return, will be doing it with knowledge. And thus it will be done without prompting and with natural joy in the heart realizing that one is making a difference for many people's lives. This is the highest merit.
- If a person did the same deed, but initially it took some prompting from others or even him/herself, it was not spontaneous and thus will have somewhat less "*javana*" in the thought process.
- Those two scenarios without joy would have even less "*javana*" in the thought process. Here one may write a check and may not think much about it afterwards. But in the above two cases, the person may stay engaged with the act of building the shelter and gains joyful feeling everytime he/she thinks about it.
- Now, those four cases can be repeated for a person who does not understand the true impact of that act. The *kammic* power will be reduced accordingly. Thus a person who does not have an understanding of *kammic* consequences, the true nature of this world (i.e., that we all may go through such hard times or worse in other lives, etc), just writes a check out of necessity, may be even with the intention of getting some votes (i.e., prompting by oneself after seeing the benefits for one's political career) will have the least benefits.
- Thus understanding Dhamma (true nature of the world) leads to spontaneous meritorious actions done with a joyful heart; this leads to *saddhā* (true faith) , *citta pasada* (joy), and *adhimokkha* (resolve) to get the maximum impact of the impulse *kammic* power (*javana*). *Adhimokkha* (resolve) is a key factor in the *kusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda*, see, "Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."

Notes:

1. There are two *akusala kamma* rooted in hate and two rooted in ignorance. The way to sort those are different. I will write another post on them.
2. This above description is a simpler version of a post that I did recently: "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power." It may be a good idea to read that too.
3. The eight types of *akusala citta* are also discussed in "Akusal Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."

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11.21 Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala – Five Faculties and Five Powers

1. These are included in the 37 factors of Enlightenment; see, "37 Factors of Enlightenment".

2. "*Indriya*" means leader; a leader has power or "*Bala*". Thus these two sets of five factors each are very important in following the Noble Eightfold Path.

- The five mental faculties (*indriya*) are *saddhā* (faith), *viriya* (effort), *sati* (mindfulness), *samādhi* (concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom), and there are five corresponding powers (*Bala*).
- Eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body are the five physical faculties (*indriya*). They are leaders in providing access to seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching. The *pañca indriya* are the "mental" leaders helping with comprehending Dhamma.

3. Let us first discuss the five faculties.

- ***Saddhā*** is foremost; without faith (*saddhā*), one does not have the conviction to follow the Path. However, faith has to be based on wisdom (***paññā***), i.e., one's faith is built upon seeing the truth of Buddha Dhamma, at least partially.
- *Saddhā* comes from "*sath*" or truth and "*dhā*" meaning "*dhāranaya*" or "grasp". Thus one will have *saddhā* when one grasps the true nature of this world (*tilakkhana*) at least to some extent.
- Blind faith is actually a hindrance to progress, since one will be following the wrong path. Furthermore, blind faith will not last long, since it is on a shaky foundation. *Saddhā* of a *Sotāpanna* is unshakeable, and will never be lost or even reduced.

Thus we can see the *saddhā* and *paññā* need to progress together.

4. When *saddhā* and paññā is developed to a certain extent (before the *Sotāpanna* stage), one realizes the fruitlessness and the dangers of the *sansāric* journey. Thus one is motivated to make an effort (***viriya***).

Furthermore, one realizes that one needs to be mindful in one's actions, and thus **sati** (mindfulness) starts to build. One realizes that one has to act with *yoniso manasikara*.

At the same time, one realizes that when the mind is not calm, one can make bad decisions; thus one starts working on calming the mind and to attain a level of concentration (***samādhi***). Concentration is not really a good translation for *samādhi*; one does not need to force concentration; rather *samādhi* comes about when one takes precautions to not to get into "bad situations"; see, "What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness".

5. Different people have the five faculties developed to different degrees (developed in this life AND also carried from previous lives), and normally one could stand out. The Buddha has shown the following way to identify the predominance of different faculties in a person.

- If someone has a relatively more developed *saddhā*, that person is likely to be peaceful and helpful to others with a kind heart. He/she will have no trouble in following the first precept of not harming any other being.
- Then there are people who can easily bear hardships and are very determined; they have a developed *viriya* (effort) *indriya*. They can easily keep the second precept (not taking what is not given), and be satisfied with one earns by one's hard work.
- Those who do not pursue sense fulfilment aggressively have less *kāmachanda* and are not likely to have any problems with the third precept. They are likely to have a developed mindfulness (*sati*) faculty.
- When the *samādhi* indriya is strong, that person is likely to be quiet and does not like to engage in idle chatter; thus keeping the fourth precept on right speech will be easy for them.
- Someone with paññā (wisdom) will be able to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta* easily and thus to realize the fruitlessness and the dangers of the *sansāric* journey. Such a person will be able to keep the

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hardest fifth precept on controlling the mind; see, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them".

6. Once one identifies the strong faculty, one should try to exploit that to move forward; the other faculties always pitch in to help, so they will grow too. It is important to cultivate all five faculties until they become powers (*bala*), but one needs to exploit the predominant one.

- If someone tells a child, "this is not your actual Mom; she is somewhere else", the child will not only refuse to believe that but will run to the mother and give a hug just to show how confident he is. In the same way, *saddhā* based on paññā can only make one's resolve be strengthened by obstacles.
- For example, when one does not have *saddhā*, one can be influenced to change the course by an outside influence. But if *saddhā*, built on *paññā*, is strong no matter how strong the influence is one's faith will not be shaken.
- The Buddha gave a simile to understand the how *indriya* can become *bala* to overcome difficulties: When a river runs into an obstacle like a large boulder, it splits and goes around it, and merge together after the obstacle. But the *indriya* needs to be strong enough to do that.
- When *indriya* (faculties) are strengthened, they become *bala* (powers).

7. When the faculties are being cultivated, it is important to try to balance them, while utilizing the predominant faculty's power.

- Some people have *paññā* and may say, "it is useless to take precepts or chant "*Tisarana*" or chant/listen to *suttā*; it is better to learn Dhamma". But those activities do help in getting the mind to be receptive to Dhamma; see, "Buddhist Chanting."
- On the other hand, just reciting those verses is not enough. In order to recite them with understanding, one needs to learn Dhamma and cultivate *paññā*.
- Normally, *saddhā* and *paññā* go together and needs to be balanced. Similarly, *viriya* (effort) and *samādhi* (concentration) need to be balanced. For example, when doing formal meditation, too much of an effort can be a drawback for samādhi. As the Buddha told Sona the musician, the strings on a violin need to be just right, not too tight and not too loose.
- *Sati* (mindfulness) must be leading and must always be there.
- *Sati* can be compared to the steering wheel of a car; *saddhā* and *paññā* can be compared to one set wheels, and *viriya* and *samādhi* can be compared to the other set of wheels. The wheels must be in balance and the steering wheel must be kept at correct position all the time for the car to go forward. If the wheels are not balanced, the car will just go in circles; if the steering wheel is not managed, the car will go off the road.

8. These five (*saddhā, viriya, sati, samādhi, paññā*) are *cetasika* (mental factors). They help define one's character (*gati*) for the better, and these five are important ones to "take in" or "*āna*" in *ānāpāna sati*.

9. The five faculties exercise control in their respective domains: *saddhā* in the domain of *adhimokkha* (decision or resolve), *viriya* in *paggaha* (exertion), sati in *upatthāna* (awareness), *samādhi* in *avikkhepa* (non-distraction), and *paññā* in *dassana* (view or vision). When they become *bala* (powers) , they become unshakable by their opposites – indecision, laziness, negligence, agitation, and delusion or ignorance.

- It is important to realize the value of *citta pasāda* (joy) and *adhimokkha* (resolve) that results from *saddhā* based on true understanding: *adhimokkha* is an intermediate step in *Kusala-mūla paṭicca samuppāda* on the way to Nibbāna, see, "Kusala-Mūla Paticca Samuppāda."
- Also, *citta pasada* and *adhimokkha* that arise in doing meritorious acts with joy in the heart are key to optimizing the merits; see, "A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)," and "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."

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10. The five *indriya* become five *bala* and are well balanced only for an *Arahant*. We can reap many benefits even before reaching that ultimate goal by cultivating them, making sure to try to keep them balanced.

- Even for an *Arahant*, there are some leftover "imperfections" even though they are not defilements; these are some "hard-to-get-rid-of" quirks in personal behavior. For example, there is this story about a very young *Arahant* who had the habit of jumping over puddles instead of going around them; he had been born a monkey for many lives in the recent past and had carried that habit over to this life.
- Only a *Sammā Sambuddha* (like Buddha Gotama) is perfect in every respect. This is why he is called "*tatagatha*" ("*thatha*" for "what should be" or the "real nature"; pronounced "*thathagatha*").

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11.22 Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala

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Introduction

1. As we discuss in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section, meditation is of two types.

- One is done at all times, being "morally mindful." Then the other type is the formal meditation where one contemplates on a given "procedure" while sitting down or walking.
- In Buddhist meditation, the first is more important than the second.

2. Then there are three possible outcomes of meditation: *Samādhi, jhāna,* and *magga phala*.

- One gets to *samādhi* by focusing the mind on one thing. Frequently a mind jumps incessantly from one thing to another. A sound pulls the mind one way, a sight another way, smell, etc., and the mind itself likes to jump around.
- When one is thinking about a greedy or angry thought, the "scatteredness" of the mind is intensified.
- Regardless of the cause, this makes the mind tired.

What is *Samādhi*?

3. *Samādhi* ("*sama*"+"*adhi*" where "*sama*" means "equilibrium" and "*adhi*" means "dominance") means turning the mind towards an equilibrium state away from distractions (especially greedy, angry, or foolish thoughts.)

- The opposite of the Pāli word "*sama*" is "*visama*." When either the body or the mind gets "away from equilibrium," that is "*visama*" and we become uncomfortable. [***sama*** :[adj.] even; equal; level; similar. (m.), calmness; tranquillity. ***visama*** : [adj.] uneven; unequal; disharmonious.]
- A good analogy is the following. We become restless if our environment becomes too hot. Then we try to find a way to cool ourselves. We get very uncomfortable if we are in a "too cold" environment also. Then we try to be warm by turning on a heater or wrapping ourselves with blankets.
- However, if the room temperature is moderate and away from both those extremes, then we feel comfortable. We feel contended.
- A similar effect takes place when the mind stops going to the extremes. A greedy or angry mind is in a "*visama*" state and is away from *samādhi*.
- However, if the focus is a *dhamma* concept, then the mind moves toward "equilibrium."

Getting to *Samādhi*

4. Unless one has experienced *Samādhi*, or especially *jhāna*, one may not even realize that one's mind is always under stress. Of course, when a deadline approaches and the mind goes to overdrive, we notice that. One can truly appreciate this only after experiencing the tranquility of a focused mind. The mind gets "sensitized" as one gets to *Samādhi*.

- Most people do not realize how "inherently stressed" our minds are. We get used to things and do not feel even hardships. Only when we get to a "better state," we feel the difference, and then it is hard to go back to the "lower state".
- For example, one who has lived a life of poverty has gotten used to it. However, if one is able to upgrade the lifestyle to a higher level, then one can FEEL the difference and now it will be very tough to go back. One becomes "sensitized". We will encounter this word "sensitized" in many cases when we discuss the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*.

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5. There are three kinds of *Samādhi* when categorized according to morality, i.e., what the focus is on. There is *micchā Samādhi* and two types of *Sammā Samādhi*, one mundane (for living a better life) and one supermundane (focusing on *Nibbāna*).

- A suicide bomber who is assembling a bomb must focus on his task. Otherwise, he will blow himself up. He gets into a *micchā samādhi.*
- Most people meditate to get some "peace of mind", to get some relief from the pressures of hectic life by focusing on the breath. That is a form of *samādhi*. When one focuses on a neutral object, like breath, one gets to such a "neutral kind of *samādhi*".
- The best kind of *samādhi* is attained when one focuses on a *dhamma* concept, which takes the mind off *pañcanīvaraṇa*. See, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."
- There is a post on different types of *samādhi*: "What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness."

Jhāna Is a Deeper Level of *Samādhi*

6. *Jhāna* is a deeper level of *samādhi*, where the mind really gets absorbed in the object (*ārammaṇa*). Then the tranquility is optimized, and there are eight levels of *jhānā*. The first four are the ones experienced by beings in the 16 realms of the *rūpa loka*, and the last four in the 4 realms of the *arūpa loka*.

- *Jhānā* CANNOT be attained via *micchā samādhi.*
- The *jhānā* attained via *Sammā Samādhi* are two types, corresponding to *Ariya jhānā* and *anāriya jhānā*; see, "Power of the Human Mind – Anariya or Mundane Jhānā" and "Power of the Human Mind – Ariya Jhānā."
- Even though one can get to *anāriya jhānā* by just focusing on the breath, it does require one to live a moral life. One who is not at least following the conventional five precepts will not be able to cultivate them; see,"Jhānic Experience in Detail – Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."
- Of course, the uniqueness of Buddhist meditation is the supermundane *Sammā Samādhi*, leading to *Ariya jhānā*, and the four stages of *Nibbāna*.
- **However, one could be distracted from attaining a *magga phala* if one starts enjoying *anāriya jhānā.*** Therefore, it is best NOT to attain *anāriya jhānā.* However, some people can easily get to *anāriya jhānā* if they had cultivated *jhānā* in recent previous lives.

Permanent Removal of Suffering Attained Only With *Magga Phala*

7. Thus the highest levels of "peace of mind" are at the four stages of *Nibbāna* or *magga phala*: *Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī*, and *Arahant*. However, it is not necessary to PRACTICE *Ariya jhānā* to attain *magga phala.*

- For example, one could attain the *Sotāpanna* stage without practicing *jhānā*. What is needed for achieving the *Sotāpanna* stage is *upacāra/anuloma samādhi*; see, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."
- Furthermore, unless one has practiced it before, a *Sotāpanna* cannot automatically get into a *jhāna*. However, it will be easy for a *Sotāpanna* to attain *jhānā* with practice.
- We need to remember that *jhānā* are mental states of higher-lying *Brahma* realms. They still belong to the 31 realms of "this world." One needs to lose cravings for *jhanic* pleasures to attain the *Arahanthood.*

Jhāna Not Necessary to Attain *Magga Phala*

8. What is required to attain *magga phala* is *samādhi*. *Jhānā* are NOT necessary to achieve *magga phala*.

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- We know that there are *jāti Sotāpannas* born in the human realm. But if a *jhāna* were REQUIRED to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, then that person WOULD NOT be born in the human realm, but in a *Brahma*-realm corresponding that *jhāna*. Waharaka Thero emphasizes that in the following *desanā*:

  WebLink: PureDhamma: Are Jhāna Required for Magga Phala

- Furthermore, just by listening to correct Buddha Dhamma and/or attaining *jhāna* does not make one become a *Sotāpanna*. The *Thero* points out that Devadatta ended up in an *apāya*, even though he had not only cultivated *jhāna* but had supernormal powers (*iddhi*) too. Devadatta listened to many discourses from the Buddha but was not able to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna.*

Getting to *Ariya jhānā* – Only After *Anāgāmi* Stage

9. One gets to *anāriya jhāna* by SUPPRESSING *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*. One gets to *Ariya jhāna* by REMOVING *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha.* See, "Power of the Human Mind – Ariya Jhānā." **But before one can use this technique to attain *Ariya jhānā*, one needs to attain the *Anāgāmi* stage.**

- One sits down in a quiet place and first contemplates on *anicca, dukkha, anatta nature. One t*hen keeps repeating the following (or the English translation; what matters is one has to have the understanding.) "*Etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ, yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti.*" That means, "It is the only peace, the only happiness: prevent *saṅkhāra* from arising (via) eliminating *taṇhā* and excess greed and thus stopping the arising of defilements, which is *Nibbāna.*" ['*etaṃ santaṃ etaṃ paṇītaṃ yadidaṃ sabbasaṅkhārasamatho sabbūpadhipaṭinissaggo taṇhākkhayo virāgo nirodho nibbānan'ti*, which means, "It is peaceful (*santaṃ*), it is supreme (*paṇītaṃ*), which is the calming of *saṅkhāra* and breaking of bond (*upadhi*) via eliminating *taṇhā* and excess greed (*rāga*), and thus stopping the arising (*nirodho*) of defilements (*saṅkhāra*, *upadhi*, *taṇhā*, and *rāga*), which is *Nibbāna.*" AN 9.36 *Jhāna Sutta* ***upadhi*** : 'substratum of existence' or bond. In the Com. there are enumerated 4 kinds : the 5 groups (*khandha*), sensuous desire (*kāma*), mental defilements (*kilesa*), *kamma*.]
- The reciting of a certain phrase (meaningfully, with understanding) is called a "*kammatthāna.*" A given meditation technique is also called a *kammatthāna.*
- Two important points. (1). One can either say it out quietly or say it in one's mind, (2) This is not chanting; just saying the words will be just a waste of time. One needs to comprehend, to some extent, what is meant by *anicca, dukkha, anatta, i.e.,* some idea of what *Nibbāna* (or "cooling down" is).
- If one has experienced any kind of "cooling down," it is best to recall that while saying the above phrase. For example, if one does not flare up like one used to, or if one has less attachment to things, that is the best to recall.
- Unlike the *Sotāpanna* stage, it is relatively easy to confirm the attainment of *Ariya jhāna.* One must have REMOVED *kāma rāga* (craving for sensual pleasures, including the urge for sex) even to attain the first *Ariya jhāna.*

Summary

10. Thus reaching *magga phala* and *Ariya jhānā* REQUIRE the understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the Three Characteristics of existence. Without the "correct vision" or *Sammā Diṭṭhi* at some level, the mind does not see the unfruitful nature of sense pleasures or the "superiority" of *nirāmisa sukha*.

Next, "Are you not getting expected results from meditation?", ……..

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11.23 What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness

Revised May 16, 2019

1. *Samādhi* ("*sama*" + "*adhi*" where "*sama*" means "same" and "*adhi*" means "dominance") means the object becomes the priority. Then the mind gets focused on it. As we discussed in many posts, when the mind becomes focused on one object (*ārammaṇa*), the *ekaggatā cetasika* takes over and make the mind latched "on to it."

- This is how one gets to not only *samādhi* but also *anāriya jhāna* using breath meditation, just by focusing the mind on the breath.
- One gets to *samādhi* on whatever the activity one gets absorbed.
- Being mindful depends on the situation. The kind of mindfulness needed while driving a car is different from the mindfulness required to design something (or read a book). And the mindfulness required to attain a *jhāna* needs to be different from those two.

2. There can be numerous kinds of *samādhi*. Here we distinguish three types of *samādhi* or mindfulness:

- Momentary mindfulness (*khaṇika samādhi*)
- Access mindfulness (*upacāra*, pronounced "*upachāra*," *samādhi*)
- Absorption mindfulness (*appanā samādhi*)

Let us discuss each type separately.

3. We should always have the **momentary mindfulness or *khaṇika samādhi***. Here we frequently change the focus from one object to another based on the need.

- We can use momentary mindfulness during the day when we are active. When we talk to someone, we should be mindful about what we say. The more one practices, one will be able to control one's speech by being mindful. It is the same with any physical activity too. When we are about to cross the street, we should be mindful of the traffic, etc.
- Many people take this the wrong way, and use it as a formal meditation. It is kind of silly to do the wrong "walking meditation" by saying "lifting the foot," "putting it down," etc. like a robot. This is what happens when Buddha's teachings get distorted.
- For example, when driving, we need to pay attention to the road and then to apply brakes if the car in front gets too close. We need to keep an eye on the traffic and be prepared to take quick action. Focusing the mind on the job at hand here translates to shifting the focus to different tasks in an optimum way to drive the car safely.

4. **Access concentration (*upacāra samādhi*)** is more focused. While reading an exciting book, one gets absorbed in it. One cannot be thinking about other things while readind.

- On the supermundane (*lokuttara*) side, when listening to a Dhamma discourse or reading about a Dhamma concept, one can get into access concentration or *upacāra samādhi*. Reading a web post on a Dhamma concept, if done at a quiet time, can calm one down. If read with understanding and focused mind, it is possible to get into a somewhat deeper *samādhi*.
- All following activities involve access concentration. A programmer writing computer code, a surgeon doing surgery, an architect designing a building, a scientist thinking about a new theory, etc. These are all mundane *Samādhi*. But one can still feel a kind of in a trance if one gets absorbed in any task.

5. ***Appanā Samādhi* or absorption in mindfulness** can lead to a *jhānic* state with practice. Here one needs to find a quiet place and need to close one's eyes and concentrate on just one object.

- In *Ariya* meditations, the focus is something related to *Nibbāna*. It could be a Dhamma concept or *Nibbāna* itself. *Ariya Metta bhāvanā* is another.

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- In *anāriya* meditations, this object is usually either a *kasina* object or the breath or the falling/rising of the stomach.

6. Now let us look at some general features of the three types.

- It is possible, for someone with practice, to get into *appanā samādhi* (*jhāna*) very quickly. Thus the difference between the three types of *samādhi* is not in the time scale. Instead, it is on the goal or the situation at hand.
- Workplace or home accidents happen when one loses momentary mindfulness. If one loses attention on the task at hand, one can pull the wrong switch, cut oneself while chopping vegetables, or even tripping while walking.
- One can be reading something for hours and not get anything in, if the mind wanders off. One can be sitting in meditation for hours and not get into *samādhi* if the mind wanders off.

7. In all these three types, achieving mindfulness comes naturally if the five hindrances are not covering the mind; see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances."

- If one has greedy or hateful thoughts (*kāmachanda* and *vyāpāda*), it is challenging to do any of the three.
- Even a simple task can become aggravating and frustrating under the following conditions. One's mind is lethargic (*thina middha*), one is agitated by being high-minded or low-minded (*uddhacca kukkucca*), or does not have a clear idea of the task (*vicikicchā*).

8. Thus it helps to live a moral life, i.e., avoid the ten immoral acts as much as possible. And it pays off to make preparations ahead of the time.

- Especially for the *upacāra* and *appanā samādhi*, one could make sure to get other tasks out of the way beforehand. Then meditation does not have to be interrupted in the middle. Simple things like going to the bathroom and making sure one does not have full stomach before sitting down to meditate, can make a difference.
- Preliminary procedures such a reciting precepts or offering flowers or incense to the Buddha before a formal meditation session is also a part of "getting the mind ready". As we will discuss later, attaining "*citta pasāda*" or a "joyful mind" has a valid reason behind it.

9. *Samādhi* is the endpoint of being mindful (*sati*).

- *Samādhi* is a synonym for the *cetasika* (mental factor) of *ekaggatā*, i.e., having a focus. One can cultivate it by being mindful the correct way, i.e., via *sammā sati*.

10. Finally, it is also possible to get into *micchā samādhi*, the opposite of *sammā samādhi*. A master thief plotting a grand robbery can get focused and be absorbed in that immoral activity. The same is true for a serial killer planning a killing.

- Thus there are three kinds of *samādhi* when categorized according to morality. One is *micchā samādhi*. The other two are *sammā samādhi*: one mundane (for living a better life) and one supermundane (focusing on *Nibbāna*).

11. One could get into *upacāra samādhi* by reading this post paying attention to the material. One may need to read related posts or other material to absorb the material. When the minds gets "absorbed in the issue," it is in a state of *samādhi*. Of course, that is possible only if the material is interesting for oneself.

- If correctly done, one will have a lower heartbeat, and a calmer and peaceful mind, by the time the reading session. People have attained even *magga phala* by attentively listening to Dhamma discourses.

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11.24 Getting to Samādhi via Formal Mediation Sessions

March 25, 2016; revised December 1, 2017

1. It does make sense to do formal meditation even at the very beginning when one decides to follow the Path of the Buddha, but AFTER one has at least read about the correct interpretation of "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta." In the following I will discuss the importance of a daily (or few days a week) formal meditation session.

- When one starts seeing the dangers of staying "in this world" (*anicca* nature), one needs to reassure the mind that there is an alternative, i.e., *Nibbāna* or *Niveema.* Thus, simultaneously with contemplating *anicca* nature, one needs to encourage the mind to taste the *nirāmisa sukha* that results from it by cultivating *samādhi*. A formal meditation session provides that.
- The Buddha gave a simile to explain this effect. In the old days, when people took to the oceans to look for new lands, they took caged birds with them. When they were lost and wanted to find whether they were close to land, they released a bird and shooed it away frightening it. The bird would fly around looking for safety (i.e., land) but will be forced to come back to the ship if no land is found; but if it can see land, it will not come back to the ship. When the mind starts seeing the dangers of *amisa sukha* or "worldly pleasures", we need to encourage it to enjoy the *nirāmisa sukha,* i.e., that there is a better alternative.

2. Even before one gets to *jhānā*, one can experience "cooling down" when one engages in regular formal meditation. Looking back to my early days, I remember getting to some sort of *samādhi* while sitting at the desk and contemplating on a Dhamma concept. The body became light and breathing became slow due to the calmness of the mind.

- It is hard to feel "*samatha*" or "*samādhi*" if one is not sitting down or lying down.
- Furthermore, it gives one confidence that one is making progress if one can see the "improvement" in being able to stay in "*samādhi*" for longer times with practice. To emphasize, this *samādhi* does not need be a *jhāna*. It is just being able to stay in one place with a focused mind and with palpable lightness in the body and the mind.

3. Many people who do breath meditation say that it is a *samatha bhāvanā* to calm the mind BEFORE doing *vidassana* (insight) meditation. But that is a waste of time. One can get to *samatha* by doing *vidassana (vipassana)* or insight meditation.

- As I have discussed in other posts, one should find a quiet place and sit comfortably. One could start the session with *Tiratana vandana* to calm the mind; see, "Buddhist Chanting." One could make the room dark and light a candle and/or incense to "set the background". Those activities help some people to get into the proper mindset.
- Then one could just start contemplating on a Dhamma concept. One could either listen to part of a *desanā* or read part of an essay and then start contemplating on that. This is insight meditation.
- Some people who do breath meditation have difficulty in maintaining their focus on the breath; other random thoughts start creeping in. However, if one starts seeing the value of Dhamma and becomes truly interested in learning Dhamma, it will become easier to concentrate on a Dhamma concept. Thus one initially should pick a topic of interest to oneself.

4. With time, it becomes easier to get to *samādhi* by gradually purifying the mind. But it is important to figure out which areas to focus on in order to gain maximum benefits.

- First, it is important to realize that there are two main categories of "bad deeds" that can have negative consequences; see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā" for details.

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- Those done with *lobha* (excess greed), *dosa* (hate), and *moha* (covered mind) can lead to birth in the *apāyā* (four lowest realms). Permanent reduction of *lobha, dosa, moha* to *rāga, paṭigha, avijjā* happens when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Those done with *rāga* (craving for sense pleasures), *paṭigha* (friction), and *avijjā* (ignorance) can only lead to rebirth in the higher realms in the *kāma loka* (human and *deva* realms), and in *rupi* and *arupi brahma loka*. Thus one can concentrate on those after getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage, but one can start thinking about them too in order to help comprehend the *anicca* nature as discussed further below.

5. Therefore, our main goal should be to avoid those actions that can lead to rebirth in the *apāyā*, i.e., avoid those actions done with *lobha, dosa, moha.*

- In simplest terms, this means getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi* and comprehending *anicca* nature. One of the strongest kind of *micchā diṭṭhi* prevalent today is materialism: One believes that at death one ceases to exist, i.e., one believes that the mind is a byproduct of the body (brain), and thus when the body dies, that is the end of story. This is also called *vibhava taṇhā*.
- It is a good idea to review the relevant posts on *micchā diṭṭhi* to make sure one understands them. The ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are discussed in "Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi." There are also many posts on "anicca, dukkha, anatta."
- Starting on the Eightfold Path for a *Sotāpanna Anugami* begins with getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi*, comprehending *anicca*, and thereby comprehending first stage of *sammā diṭṭhi*; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and the post in there.

6. By sorting out priorities (the order of things to be done), we can save a lot of time in getting to the *Sotāpanna* stage.

- One has the potential to be born in the *apāyā* if one has remnants of *gathi* suitable for those four realms; there are many posts on *gathi, bhava*, and *jathi* at the site to read and contemplate on.
- It is imperative to be mindful and avoid actions compatible with "*apāya gathi*." In the meditation sessions, one could think back to the previous few days and see whether there were any such instances and make a determination to not to repeat such acts. Once it becomes a habit, one can even catch oneself doing it and stop right then.
- For example, if someone does something bad to you, and if you start thinking about "how to get back" in retaliation, that is done with hate and need to be stopped. However, it is OK if one "gets mad" momentarily at such an unprovoked, harsh act by someone. It is only at the *Anāgāmī* stage that one will automatically stop "getting mad". Even then there may be some annoyance at that person. Only an *Arahant* has perfect *upekkha* and will not be bothered to the slightest by ANY provocation.
- Another example is extreme greed (*lobha*) where one tends to do "whatever it takes" to get what one wants, and also wishing that others should not get those things. Enjoying sense pleasures (*kāma rāga*) that are acquired through legitimate means is not a hindrance to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage. Thus engaging in sex with a spouse is done with *kāma rāga*, but that with another's spouse or a child, for example, is done with *lobha*.
- A successful meditation program goes hand in hand with a moral lifestyle. They feed on each other.

7. It is also very important to be aware of the *dasa kusala, dasa akusala,* and also *puñña kriya*; see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma," "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)" and "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā."

- *Puñña kriya* help one attain the right mindset for meditation. Also, *puñña kriya* increasingly become stronger *kusala kriya* as one's understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* grows.
- A *Sotāpanna* has COMPLETELY removed only *micchā diṭṭhi* from the *dasa akusala.* Only an *Arahant* is completely free from *dasa akusala*; see, "What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?."

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- Of course, the tendency to do *dasa akusala* start decreasing from the time one starts on the mundane eightfold path, even before the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."
- In terms of Abhidhamma, the *apāyagāmī* strength of all *dasa akusala* will be removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage due to the removal of the 4 *diṭṭhi sampayutta lobha citta* and the *vicikicchā sampyutta moha citta*; see, "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta." Thus if a *Sotāpanna* commits any of the remaining 9 *akusala kamma* their strength would be much reduced, because one has removed *gathi* suitable to be born in the *apāyā,* mainly by getting rid of *micchā diṭṭhi.*

8. Many people worry about sense pleasures way too early. It is not necessary to forcefully suppress normal sense desires before the *Sotāpanna* stage, even though it may happen to some extent automatically. *Kāma rāga* (and *paṭigha*) are removed via the *Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī* stages.

- If a vessel is leaking due to multiple holes, one needs to fix the bigger holes first. Trying to plug small holes which are leaking slowly, while water is draining rapidly through gaping big holes, is a waste of time.

9. On the other hand, contemplating on the bad consequences of sense pleasures can lead to a better understanding of *anicca* (unfruitfulness of worldy things) and the First Noble Truth. In addition to the suffering due to obvious causes such as an ailment or a headache, we are not even aware of most of the suffering that we endure.

- In fact, in a twisted way, we perceive most of our sufferings as enjoyments. It is a "made-up" enjoyment and is called "*assāda*" **(*āsvāda* in Sinhala)**.
- This is also a good "meditation topic", and could help one to get to *samādhi*. However, this should be done when one can come to a stage where one starts to comprehend such concepts. Each person is different, so one should keep trying different options.

10. For example, we enjoy eating, especially if the food is tasty. But why do we have to eat? This seems like a foolish question, but there are beings (*brahmā*) who do not need to eat anything. They are sustained by their *kammic* power (previous good *kamma*). *Devas* have to consume *amurtha* to sustain themselves, but that is a very fine food and there is no residue (i.e., they do not defecate or even sweat).

- On the other hand, we have to work hard to make money to buy food, spend time and energy to cook, and then "enjoy a meal" that lasts may be half an hour.
- But all that suffering (working to make money, going to grocery store, cooking, etc) is masked by "made-up mind pleasures" or *assāda*: We look forward to that meal and forget about all that suffering!
- On the way back from work we may start getting hungry, but that will be masked because we will be thinking only about the meal that is waiting for us.
- Is this any different from a cow who pulls a heavy cart, but forgets about all that suffering because it is focusing on a bundle of hay dangling in front of it?

11. Let us consider another type of hidden suffering that is associated with cleaning ourselves. In the morning, we brush our teeth, take a shower, shave, apply all kinds of fragrances and go to work very happily. We don't even notice the hidden suffering associated with all that work!

- One could experience another facet of that suffering if one can skip a day or two of doing those things. It will be very uncomfortable even for ourselves let alone for the others.

12. In fact, most of the things that we do in a given day are done to just maintain our bodies, our houses, our environment in a presentable condition. Yet, we do not see the suffering associated with all those activities. That is another way to comprehend *anicca* nature.

- One may think that thinking about such things could make one depressed. That is certainly possible if one did not know about the *anicca* nature, and also that by following the 37 Factors of Enlightenment one can be released from that suffering.

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- The comprehension of the true (*anicca*) nature of this world, and the hidden sufferings associated with it gives one "*anuloma shanthi*." This is the joy that comes from grasping the true nature of this world.
- Then by realizing that there is a way to REMOVE future suffering (by following the 37 Factors of Enlightenment), provides one with "*sammatta niyama*."
- Thus as one makes progress, it is a good idea to think about specific cases where one has gained a "peace of mind". That itself can lead to *samādhi*. One needs to realize BOTH the dangers of the rebirths process (*anicca* nature) AND the benefits of following the Path (*Niveema* or cooling down).
- When one starts experiencing BOTH *anuloma shanthi* and *sammatta niyama,* one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugami,* which inevitably leads to the *Sotāpanna* stage; see, "Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna."

13. Finally, I want to emphasize the importance of trying to extend the duration of the formal meditation session gradually.

- At some point one will start feeling body sensations. And then the mind will "switch over" to a different state. When that first happened to me a few years ago, I was startled. At that point one could let the mind "take over", i.e., stop contemplating and let the *samādhi* "grow" and possibly lead to *jhānā* (it is easier for those who have the *sansāric* habit; but *jhānā* are not necessary for *magga phala*). Now one has attained a higher level of *samādhi*. One could of course continue with insight meditation.
- This is when one starts feeling enhanced *nirāmisa sukha*. It is not really a "pleasurable feeling" in the sense of what you experience in eating a nice meal, listening to a favorite song, etc. It is rather a calmness of an unburdened mind. Until one experiences it, one is not aware of the real stress that our minds are normally under. One comes out of the meditation session refreshed and alert.
- I would say it is possible that one could start experiencing some kind of benefit when the session is naturally lengthened to half an hour or may be an hour. I am just basing this on my own experience. If people are willing to share their experiences, I can update this post in the future (or even present someone's experience in a separate post). That could help motivate others.

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11.25 Are you not getting expected results from meditation?

Revised December 1, 2017

Some people try to attain Nibbānic bliss by trying to "give up all attachment to this world" in their minds during meditation. However, until the mind truly realizes the dangers of this world (the rebirth process), it is unable to give up those attachments.

- One has to attain at least the *Sotāpanna* stage by "seeing the true nature of this world" before one's mindset becomes amenable to "giving up". This is the hardest part to understand.
- Even before that one needs to get rid the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* as discussed below.

1. During the time of the Buddha there was a *bhikkhu* named Potila, who was well-versed with deep Dhamma concepts and was a well known teacher; he had developed *abhiññā* powers as well, but had not attained even the *Sotāpanna* stage. His *desanās* (discourses) were deep and only those at the *Anāgāmī* stage (at least *Sotāpanna* stage) could follow them and get to *Arahanthood*. One day he went to see the Buddha, paid respects, and told the Buddha that he had been a Dhamma teacher during the times of several earlier Buddhas too, and helped many to attain *Nibbāna* (*Arahantship*). [**Bhikkhu Potila** - see, **Poṭṭhilatthera Vatthu - Dhammapda verse 282**]

- The Buddha asked him whether he has attained any *magga phala* and Bhikkhu Potila admitted that he had not. The Buddha just commented: "*Thucca* Potila" and turned his attention to other matters; *thucca* (pronounced "thuchcha") in Pāli means despicable or "lowly".

2. So, *bhikkhu* Potila, who had expected praise from the Buddha for helping others, realized that he needs to work on his own salvation before helping others. He strived by himself and could not make any progress; he was trying very hard to "give up all attachments", following the same instructions he was giving others. But no matter how hard he tried, he could not succeed.

- When he sought help from other *bhikkhus*, they were reluctant to become his teacher because everyone knew he was very knowledgeable in Dhamma. Eventually, he went to this very young *Arahant*, who was well-known for his teaching abilities, and sought help. The young *Arahant* agreed to help, only if *bhikkhu* Potila agreed to carry out everything as instructed, and Potila agreed.
- The young *Arahant* decided to use an unusual *kammatthana* (instructions). He took Potila to a large area covered by mud, and asked him to wade into the mud and keep going until told to stop. Potila started wading in mud and kept going until he was told to stop when the mud was all the way up to his chin; he was barely able to move at this point because mud was heavy.

3. The *Arahant* told him that, "if someone is stuck in mud like that any knowledge about cleaning oneself by taking a bath is not going to help. One needs to get out of the mud first".

- Then he asked Potila to come back. Potila had great difficulty in moving forward initially, since he was all the way up to the chin in thick and heavy mud. While dragging himself out of the mud with great difficulty, Potila realized what the young *Arahant* was talking about. It is not possible to get out of mud until one realizes that one is stuck there, and getting out of mud required sheer will power. Similarly, he had not realized that he was stuck at a much lower moral level; he needed to cleanse his mind first.
- The "giving up" part comes with a mind that has removed the wrong visions (*micchā diṭṭhi*) and also excessive greed for sensual pleasures. These cannot be removed **just by** reading or listening about that.

4. Of course one can remove some of it by reading, listening, **and contemplating** on the validity of the reasons that the Buddha has given, especially on *micchā diṭṭhi.* One has to realize that *kamma* (or one's actions) are likely to have their results either in this life or the next, and thus the rebirth process must be valid. Remaining types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are also related to *kamma* and rebirth. The 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are discussed in "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage".

- The second level of removal of *micchā diṭṭhi* comes via comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; ; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage".

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5. The simile can be made even better by looking at what happens to ants who get stuck in honey. Here unlike mud, the sense pleasures are appealing and there is no incentive to get out either. Those ants who get stuck in honey, would not even try to get out because they are too busy enjoying the honey. **Even when they are barely stuck, and can move out of honey, they would not because they like the taste of honey.** Just like that, any living being, whether a human or even the lowly worm, likes to indulge in the sense pleasures, and thus gets stuck.

- **And even when one realizes that one needs to get out of "the honey pot" it is hard, at least initially.**
- For that one needs to see the perils of staying in this rebirth process, where birth in lower four realms will lead to unimaginable suffering. Even if one can strive to be born in higher realms, that will not last long. **This is "*anicca*": no matter how hard we try to find refuge in the 31 realms it is not possible to do so in the long run.**

6. With much effort, Potila slowly made his way up to the waist level, and started feeling the lightness of being free of mud. He could now move faster too. He felt the relief when he was out of the mud, and was asked to go and take a shower. Now, cleaning up with soap could be done; but while stuck in mud, there was no use of soap and water. Just like that the deep Dhamma that he had memorized was of no use to him while he was still stuck in mud.

- Eventually, when one comes out of the mud that is like the *Sotāpanna level*. One is still covered with mud, i.e., one still likes to enjoy sense pleasure. But now one KNOWS that one needs to take a shower, use soap and shampoo, and remove all that mud.

7. What Potila was doing was to give discourses on deep Dhamma that could help an *Anāgāmī* attain the *Arahanthood*. Most of those who benefited from *bhikkhu* Potila's discourses were, ironically, *Anāgāmīs*. Potila was just reciting the Dhamma without real comprehension but those who benefited were capable of comprehending the true meanings. After that *kammatthana*, Potila was able to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage and soon became an *Arahant*.

(By the way, one cannot attain the *Sotāpanna* stage by taking instructions from an *Anariya*, i.e., one who had not attained at least the *Sotāpanna* stage. But once one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one can learn by himself or from anyone else and get to the higher stages. This is why it was only *Sotāpannas* or above (mostly *Anāgāmīs*) who could benefit from *bhikkhu* Potila's discourses).

- I believe this actual incident involving *bhikkhu* Potila highlights a very important point. No matter how much one reads on deep concepts of Dhamma, it is hard to get the idea to sink in unless one's mind is purified to a certain extent. It is critical first to break through the heavy fog of being covered by many wrong concepts and strong attachments. When one breaks through that initial "wall of resistance", then it is easier to comprehend deeper concepts; see "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."

8. One needs to make progress in a systematic way. Just like it is not possible to learn high school math without learning basic addition/subtraction, one MUST understand the basic concepts first. If one is engaged in killing, stealing, sexual misbehavior, lying, gossiping, getting "drunk" with alcohol, drugs, power, beauty, money, etc, it is not possible to calm the mind to a basic level. **And this is the hard part.** One is stuck in mud (more like honey, because it feels good to be stuck there).

- And while stuck in mud (or honey), no matter how much meditation one does, it is not possible to get LONG TERM relief. One may be able to go to a meditation retreat and be away from all those "honey-filled" attractions and enjoy some sense of calmness; but that goes away soon after coming back to "real life" with all those temptations.
- One needs to slowly work one's way through the mud (or honey, because that is how it seems initially first). This is the HARDEST part. No matter how much one READS, that is not going to make much difference until one sets up the stage for the mind to see the reality.

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- By the way, this is also why those who meditate on "there is no self" (there is no 'me') cannot make any progress either. One needs to comprehend the "pointlessness in striving to accumulate material things for oneself" first. If one could tell a full blown lie, hurt someone else, sexually misbehave, etc, then isn't that done to gain something for "me"?

9. **Here is a rough step-by-step I would recommend (this is of course not for everyone; just for those who know they are stuck in honey):**

A. If one is hurting others to get sense pleasure, that should be stopped first. It is double jeopardy; one is not only "getting stuck" due to excess greed, but also going to suffer consequences of harming others. One is not only getting attached to "pleasurable things" but also accumulating bad *kamma* by hurting others.

- For example, if one is killing animals for fun (sport), stealing valuables from others, having sexual relationships with other married people or young children, planning to hurt someone (even for retaliation), or spreading rumors about someone just to get some pleasure out of it, getting drunk and verbally/physically abusing others, all those would be included here.
- **Such immoral activities are the worst, and are called "*pāpa kamma*". Both *lobha* and *dosa* (*dvesha*) are involved here and one's mind is said to totally covered with ignorance (*moha*);** see, "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."
- Thus someone in this stage is deeply in mud all the way up to the chin.

B. One notch lower is being capable to do things (of course not always) with EXTREME greed, even if it does not hurt others directly; here one is only up to waist to shoulder level in mud. These are normally the things one does to seek "perceived happiness" by going to extremes.

- When one cannot get "high enough" with alcohol one tends to try drugs, because one has been "de-sensitized". We all know of many movies stars etc. who get into this trend and end up committing suicide because nothing at the end can bring more pleasure to a highly "de-sensitized" mind.
- Another indication of extreme behavior is living beyond one's means. This is of course relative. If one is living a small (but comfortable) house and wants to move in to a bigger house just for the sake of that **by stretching one's resources**, that is a sign of extreme greed. If one is already living in a mansion that one has inherited or earned, and there is no financial burden, then there is nothing wrong with that since that will not burden the mind. However, in general, the more fancier the item is, whether a house or a car or anything else, it normally takes more time and effort to "maintain", and inevitably there is a degree of attachment because of the perceived value.
- Such extreme greed could also lead to actions of hate, when someone else gets in the way. Then one may do "*pāpa kamma*" here as well; it is possible that actions of hate gets one to the higher level.

It is not possible to discuss all possibilities, but one should be able to figure out many such cases. No one else can decide these for anyone. Only each person knows about one's own status of mind. However, any sensible person can make some kind of a judgement for oneself, but not for others.

C. If one is at stage A or B above, one should read those posts in the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" section. It could be helpful to go back and read those as one makes progress, and see that one understands more things than previously. This is hard to explain, but is true. A clear mind sees things much more easily.

- For those who are in stage A or B should read posts #1 through #3 below first.

D. Once one gets to the B stage, one should start reading the posts on the "Key Dhamma Concepts" and in particular learn and comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

This is the real key step, to get started on the next stage. Once one gets some traction, there is nothing there to hold back someone from attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage. It had been hard for hundreds of years only because the correct concepts were hidden. Once one gets some traction, one can start doing any of the *bhāvanā*.

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- As Carl Sagan said, "..think about all those emperors and kings who committed unmentionable atrocities just to have a sense of superiority and power for maybe 50 years. They are all gone"; see, "The Pale Blue Dot……." Even though Dr. Sagan did not know, that is another way to state what *anicca* is.
- All those emperors and kings will be stuck in the animal or lower realms for billions of years to come. On the other hand, a peasant who lived within his/her means and led a moral life could be living in a *deva/brahma* realm for billions of years.
- The main point here is that there is no point in trying to seek sense pleasures or accumulate wealth for 80-100 years maximum, because at the end we will not be able to KEEP ANYTHING to our satisfaction. We may have a billion dollars, but if our bodies are worn out, will we be able to get ANY sense pleasures? Will we be able to keep any part of our bodies to our satisfaction? Many people try to "beat the aging process" by using temporary fixes such as botox, but any such effect will also will be temporary.
- It is not possible to really grasp the meaning of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, if one is stuck in mud or honey.

E. When one comes out of the mud and start walking (with mud on the body), that is like the *Sotāpanna* stage. Now one does not even need anyone's help, even though that can help expedite the process; one can figure things out by oneself.

- There are many who know many *suttā* by heart or abhidhamma concepts, but nowhere close to the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- We need to understand that Buddha Dhamma is not about JUST LEARNING concepts (even though learning plays a big part), it is all about using what is learned for purifying the mind. As the mind becomes clear, one will start seeing the reality better. In the Buddha's days, illiterate people were able learn Dhamma just by listening, and even attained Arahanthood.

E. The final stage is to realize that even birth in such *deva/brahma* worlds will be temporary. At some point in the future, they are all going to commit some bad deed and end up in the four lower realms for long times; that is just the nature of this world, where sense pleasures can lure anyone to commit bad actions. But there is no point in talking about that stage, until one gets above the A and B stages, and become a *Sotāpanna*.

F. The series of posts that I am writing on the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* goes through this process too, from stage A. Therefore, it may be a good idea to read those posts from the beginning as well. The first introductory posts are full of Pāli words, but just go through them briefly even if you do not fully understand. They WILL become clear later, if not now.

- When one starts following the Path, one is bound to break the trend once in a while. A child learning to walk will fall many times. Many people get discouraged when they do an immoral act occasionally; but just to realize that one did a mistake, and that it bothers one's mind, means one HAS MADE PROGRESS. That is why one needs to have the perseverance to get back up with a renewed determination. Just like a child WILL learn to walk, one WILL get better with time.

G. Of course I do not know the level of each person coming to the website. Only each person knows where he/she is relative to the above steps.

- If one truly can purify one's mind and comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, that is all it takes to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- There is material ranging from the basic level to very advanced levels and even more will be posted in the future. This is for the sake of completeness, and also to make sure that any scholar or interested person can gauge the depth of Buddha's true teachings.
- There are also people who really start comprehending Dhamma and start enjoying finding about further details; no other type of "pleasure activity" can match the "enjoyment of Dhamma". Buddha Dhamma is the ultimate "book of nature".

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- Furthermore, reading widely on different topics will help build *saddhā* (faith), which is NOT blind faith but faith built on understanding. When one sees how little modern science knows in comparison to the Buddha, it helps build faith. **And *paññā* (wisdom) and *saddhā* grow together.**

Next, "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation", …….

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11.26 How to Attain Samādhi via "Vipassana Pubbanga Samatha" Bhavana

1. *Anariya bhāvanā* methods (which include breath, stomach rising/falling, or just repeated recitation of a passage, such as "May all beings be happy and healthy") can suppress the five hindrances and can lead to mundane samādhi. But the effects are temporary, as anyone participated in meditation retreats knows; it feels really good at the retreat, but after coming back and getting into the normal hectic life, that feeling of calmness fades away with time.

2. The Buddha compared such meditation techniques to riding a mule. His most recommended method was "*vipassana pubbanga samatha*", which he compared to riding a race horse.

- *Vipassana* means "sort out and get rid of undesired thoughts that come to the mind", *pubbangama* means precedes, and *samatha* is calming the mind or attain *samādhi*.
- Thus in "*vipassana pubbanga samatha*" meditation, when one does the *vipassana bhāvanā*, it automatically leads to *samatha* or *samādhi* and (*Ariya*) *jhānā*.

3. In the *Ariya bhāvanā* or the "*vipassana pubbanga samatha*", one's mind is constantly working to GET RID OF the defiled thoughts, not merely to suppress them as in the *Anariya* version. As one cultivates this *Ariya bhāvanā* over time, the five hindrances are slowly REMOVED from the mind and the mind gradually shifts towards a permanently calm state. Thus, it becomes easier and easier to attain *samādhi*, since the five hindrances are gradually removed.

- We talked about a contaminated water well in "The Basics in Meditation" post above. In *Anariya bhāvanā* what is done is basically let the dirt to settle to the bottom of the well by not further stirring the water. The water eventually becomes relatively clear, but in a new session one needs to do it all over.
- In contrast, in the *Ariya* version, one is constantly REMOVING dirt from the well. Therefore, session after session dirt is removed, and eventually there will be very little dirt to remove and thus the mind will get to *samādhi* very quickly.

4. In the beginning, it is better to do formal meditation sessions. As one gains practice, one could do it while waiting in the doctor's office or riding a bus.

- First, sit in a quiet place as described in the "The Basic Formal *Ānāpānasati* Meditation" post. Close your eyes and let the mind relax. Thoughts will invariably start popping up. Disregard any neutral thoughts and immediately get rid of any greedy or hateful thoughts as they start coming up.
- It will be helpful to contemplate the negative consequences of such thoughts.
- For example, if thoughts about an unkindly deed someone did to you comes to the mind, think about the bad consequences of "doing tit for tat": that will only enhance and cultivate defilements in YOUR mind. We do not have control over what others do; but we can control our minds. The more your mind becomes free of any hateful thoughts, the chances of having to face such adversary situations will diminish. You may be surprised, but that is true. Just have perseverance for a few weeks.
- In another example, if you start thinking a greedy thought, say for a tasty, high calorie snack, think about the bad consequences (gaining weight, getting addicted to such impulsive thoughts, etc), and also think about being able to have the confidence of self-control.

5. Do not try to remove all thoughts that come to the mind. This is very dangerous advice that some meditation teachers give. We need to remove ONLY those thoughts that have greed, hate, or ignorance associated with them.

- If any good, meritorious thoughts come to the mind, cultivate them; think further along those good thoughts. It could be a good deed that you did like helping someone, or an alms giving that you participated in, etc.
- If neutral thoughts come to the mind, let them just pass by. Do not cultivate them, but do not try to suppress them either.

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6. It could be hard to do this in the beginning. But if you really want to make progress (*chanda*), can have the determination (*citta*), make the effort (*viriya*), and actively engage in looking at the bad consequences of bad thoughts and the possible benefits of good thoughts (*vīmaṃsā*), you WILL make progress, AND it will get easier with time. These four *iddhipāda* will also be cultivated on the way; see the post on "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipāda)".

7. When you actively suppress *kāmachanda* (excess greed) and *vyāpāda* (hate) by this procedure, the other three hindrances (*thina middha, uddhacca kukkucca*, and *vicikicchā*) will automatically reduce. Thus all five hindrances will be gradually removed and your mind will become "free of gunk". See the post on "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances".

8. As you make progress, your mind will gain a calmness, a relief, that is permanent. It will get easier and easier to "get to *samādhi*". The Buddha compared the relief gained by this *bhāvanā* as follows: paying off a big loan that had been a burden to the mind, being released from jail, recovering from a major disease, gaining freedom from slavery, and reaching safety after crossing a dangerous desert. If someone has all those five experiences at the same time, the Buddha said, that is the kind of relief one gets by removing the five hindrances.

- This is the *nirāmisa sukha* that one gains, when one approaches *Nibbāna* or *Nivana*; see the post, "How to Taste Nibbāna". Nibbāna is "cooling down", it cannot matched by any sense pleasure, and it is permanent. One can experience it in varying degrees as one cultivates this *Ariya* meditation.

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XII Abhidhamma

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12.1 Abhidhamma – Introduction

Revised January 9, 2019; August 4, 2019; September 8, 2019

1. "*Abhi*" means "higher" or "deeper." Thus *Abhidhamma* is a more in-depth, fundamental description of Buddha Dhamma.

- The result is the same when compared with the material in the *suttā*, but *Abhidhamma* provides a "bottom up" description of the existence, starting with 82 "most basic units" within the four ultimate entities of *citta, cetasika, rūpa*, and *Nibbāna*. This was a monumental task, and that is why it took almost 250 years to finalize it at the third Buddhist Council.
- The 81 "basic units" that make up this world are one **pure *citta***, 52 *cetasika*, and 28 types of *rūpa*. Depending on the combinations of *cetasika* that arise with *citta*, there will be 89 (or 121) types **contaminated *citta*** (or *viññāṇa*) that can occur. That will become clear as we discuss further.

2. In the *suttā*, the Buddha explained the Dhamma concepts using everyday language. **And most people can attain *Nibbāna* without knowing anything about *Abhidhamma*.**

- However, one could study Abhidhamma and see for oneself WHY Buddha Dhamma is not a religion but is the ultimate explanation of nature, the Grand Unified Theory. That can lead to a "faith-based understanding" of Buddha Dhamma. It has a thousand-fold more explanatory power than modern science. And for those who like to "get to the bottom of understanding something," Abhidhamma will bring joy to the heart.

Let us take the example of making a cake:

- All one needs to know are the ingredients and how to mix them and proper procedures to bake it. That is analogous to *suttā*.
- *Abhidhamma* approach is comparable to starting at the atomic level of the ingredients. Then one can describe how those fundamental entities combine to make flour, oil, eggs, etc. Furthermore, one would know the choice of those ingredients, and WHY the cake needs to be baking at a specific temperature.
- It is mind boggling what *Abhidhamma* can accomplish.
- **However, instead of being a boring "recipe book," learning *Abhidhamma* can be a delightful experience if one starts with an understanding of the basics. Furthermore, one can get a much deeper understanding of the Dhamma concepts.**

3. *Abhidhamma* provides the complete, consistent description of the whole existence (encompassing the 31 realms). With this description, there can be no unexplained phenomena at any level. A logician like the late Dr. Kurt Gödel could have a great time with it; see, "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem."

- The scope of *Abhidhamma* is somewhat comparable to what the scientists are trying to do with a Grand Unified Theory to describe the behavior of inert matter. Einstein devoted the latter part of his life to developing one and failed, and the scientists are still far from achieving it. And even if accomplished, it will be able to describe ONLY the behavior of inert matter, not of living beings.

4. *Abhidhamma* is the Grand Unified Theory of the Buddha. I gave an introduction to it in the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." In this *Abhidhamma* section, I will try to provide further details. My goal to is to describe it in an easy-to-grasp simple manner.

- When I taught physics to undergraduate students, I told them not to memorize anything, but to grasp the essence of the material. Many students (and adults) try to memorize descriptions of a concept but have no idea how to apply the concept. I used to give them all the complex equations and any other hard-to-memorize material in the tests; what they needed to do was to apply them in solving problems.
- My approach is the same here. For example, in the "Tables and Summaries" post, different types of *cittā* (loosely-speaking "thoughts") are listed. There is no need to memorize them. One should understand a

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given Dhamma concept starting from the basics: for example, which *cittā* are immoral and can lead one to rebirth in the *apāyā* and WHY.

5. For example, a key concept in Buddha Dhamma is *saññā* (translated to English as "perception"). But it is much more complicated than "knowing and identifying an object"; see, "Saññā – What It Really Means."

- One of my first goals in the Abhidhamma section is to describe *saññā*, and the critical role played by the brain. For that we first need to understand the connection between the brain and the mind (they are NOT the same).
- Abhidhamma can make one addicted to it, as I have become addicted to it. When one starts to grasp how this complex world really works, understanding even a bit more of it can bring joy to the heart.

6. However, I must say that even if one can understand the whole of the *Abhidhamma* theory, one MAY NOT understand the Buddha's message. **One must understands the true meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.**

- I had so many unresolved questions on parts of *Abhidhamma* until I listened to the first *desanā* from one of my two teacher *Theros* almost a year ago, on July 30, 2013, on *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. It was like lifting a fog, and by the end of that *desanā,* I knew I will be able to 'fill-in-the-blanks" to make my understanding much better.
- *Abhidhamma* can solidify and "fill-in-the-blanks" of Buddha Dhamma from the *suttā*, which can be exhilarating.

7. Following is a brief background on how the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* of the *Tipiṭaka* was developed over roughly 250 years by the lineage of *bhikkhus* started with Ven. Sariputta. Of course, Ven. Sariputta was one of the two chief disciples of the Buddha: While Ven. Moggallana excelled in supernatural powers, Ven. Sariputta excelled in Dhamma. He was only second to the Buddha in Dhamma knowledge.

- The minute details on the structure of a *citta vīthi* (a series of *citta*) of 17 thought moments, with each *citta* lasting sub-billionth of a second, can be seen only by a Buddha. The Buddha described such minute details to Ven. Sariputta. Then Ven. Sariputta and his group of *bhikkhus* (and their subsequent lineage) completed the monumental task of making a complete description of Dhamma theory starting with the fundamental entities.
- As I mentioned earlier, that is a million times more complicated task than putting together a Grand Unified Theory to explain the behavior of inert matter, (as scientists are attempting to do today). Because a living being has an inert body, but a complex mind which makes that inert body "alive".

8. At the First Buddhist Council just three months after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, only a framework of the theory was recited. More was added at the second Council, and the task was completed only at the third Council. It was this completed *Tipiṭaka* that was written down in 29 BCE at the Fourth Buddhist Council.

- A false statement in many books is the following statement. *Abhidhamma* was "invented" by *bhikkhus* after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. The minute details of the very fast *citta vīthi* are discernible only to the mind of a Buddha.
- Those who make such statements have not either studied *Abhidhamma*, or have not been able to understand the in-depth analyses in *Abhidhamma.* The minute details of the very fast *citta vīthi* are discernible only to the mind of a Buddha.
- It is essential to realize that hundreds of *Arahants* at the Fourth Council wrote the whole *Tipiṭaka*. That included the complete *Abhidhamma Piṭaka.*

9. The absence of *Arahants* (in significant numbers) started around the second century CE, and coincided with the rise of Mahāyāna and the "contamination" of *Theravāda* which culminated in the *Visuddhimagga* of Buddhaghosa; see, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze."

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- As we discuss more topics, it will become clear that only *Arahants* with superior mental power can accomplish a complex of completing the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*. It was compiled in the absence of an easy way of recording, let alone having access to computers.
- I have given a breakdown of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* in the post, "Preservation of Dhamma."

10. **August 12, 2015:** I have brought the subsections on "Mind and Consciousness" and "Manomaya Kāya" from "Dhamma Concepts" to the "Abhidhamma" section since it is imperative to understand those basic concepts first. It is a good idea to read those subsections (and "Citta and Cetasika") before reading further in the *Abhidhamma* section.

- It is not necessary to understand the material in all those essays. But the more of those basic concepts one understands, it becomes easier to grasp the content in subsequent articles.
- Also, we all keep increasing our understanding as we learn Dhamma. I learn new things every day and try to update the posts as much as possible. The more one learns, the more one can "see the inconsistencies" in other versions of "Buddhism," and possibly in my essays; some of these posts date back to 2014. Please don't hesitate to point out any inconsistencies on this website. I would be grateful. There is a "Comments" tab under each post.

11. **September 8, 2019:** I have written a series of posts in a new subsection to introduce fundamental concepts in Abhidhamma at "Essential Abhidhamma – The Basics."

REFERENCES

1. "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000); this is a revised and updated version of Ref. 2 below.

2. "A Manual of Abhidhamma," by Narada Thero (1979).

3. "Buddha Abhidhamma – Ultimate Science," by Dr. Mehm Tin Mon; this is a very good FREE publication (click the link to open the e-book).

Unfortunately, some concepts in all three references are not correct. In particular, almost all existing *Theravāda* texts (except the *Pāli Tipiṭaka* of course) have the incorrect interpretations of *anicca, dukkha, anatta.* **Also, in all three references, *kasinas* and breath meditation are presented as Buddhist meditation.** I will try to point out such problems in relevant posts.

Next, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises", ……

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12.2 Essential Abhidhamma – The Basics

September 23, 2018

Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)
The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)
Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises
State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vīthi – Bhavaṅga
Bhava and Bhavaṅga – Simply Explained!
Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs
Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power
Cetasika – Connection to Gati

12.2.1 Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)

August 23, 2018; revised (#18 added) September 12, 2018; January 6, 2019; May 16, 2020

Introduction

1. Even though only one word in the English language ("thought") is used to describe "a unit of cognition" or "a thought," the Buddha explained that such a "thought" arises as a *citta*, and goes through nine stages of "contamination" to become *viññāṇakkhandha.* What we actually experience is this *viññāṇakkhandha* of the "aggregate of *viññāṇa*." See, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- However, even a contaminated *citta* is still called a *citta* for convenience even in the *suttā*. So, one needs to determine what is meant depending on the context. One needs to have an idea of those nine stages.
- Some of these terms in the nine stages are used interchangeably to as "a thought" in many textbooks and internet sites on Buddhism (e.g., *citta*, *mano*, *viññāṇa*), and that is NOT correct.

2. I will make this a post simple because everyone must get the basic idea of how a thought is "contaminated" within a split second.

- It is not possible to stop the contamination of a *citta* within such a short time. I have seen even some well-known and respected Dhamma teachers say that **one can willfully** keep a "*pabhassara citta*" (uncontaminated *citta*) from being contaminated.
- I hope this post will make it clear that such a thing is not possible. **One's *cittā* are contaminated depending on one's *gati* and the sensory input (*ārammaṇa*) in question.** The key to STOPPING *cittā* from getting contaminated is to change one's *gati* over time.
- That is done by following the Noble Path, and specifically by practicing the correct *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā*. **Not by the "fake breath meditation."** That will become clear be the end of the post.

Nine Stages of a Thought (*Citta*)

3. Those nine stages of contamination during the lifetime of the fundamental unit of cognition (within a billionth of a second) are: ***citta, mano, mānasan, hadayan, pandaran, mano manāyatanam, mana indriyam* (or *manindriyam*), *viññāṇa, viññānakkhandha.*** [*Yaṃ cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ hadayaṃ paṇḍaraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññāṇaṃ viññāṇakkhandho*...] A *Tipiṭaka* reference is given in the post, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga."

- Amazingly, these nine steps occur within a split second, and the Buddha said there are billions of *citta* arising within the blink of an eye. Each *citta* has three stages: *uppāda, ṭhiti, bhaṅga* (rising, stability, dissolution), and these nine steps occur before it comes to the *bhaṅga* or the termination stage.

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- It may be hard to believe, but we can prove this to be true with the following example.

4. Suppose three people A, B, C are sitting in a small coffee shop. They are all facing the door, and person X walks in. Suppose that person X is a close friend of A, worst enemy of B, and that C does not know X at all. We will also assume that all are males.

- So, let us see what happens within a split second. A recognizes X as his friend, and a smile comes to his face. B recognizes X as his enemy and his face gets darkened.
- On the other hand, C's mind does not register anything about X, and X is just another person to him. He immediately goes back to whatever he was doing.

5. **That is an example of a "*cakkhu viññāṇa*," a "seeing event."** It is over within a split second, just like taking a photo with a camera takes only a split second, where the image in captured on the screen instantaneously.

- However, something very complicated happens in a human mind when a "seeing event" occurs.
- It is critically important to go slow and analyze what happens so that we can see how complicated this process is (for a human mind) to capture that "seeing event." It is much more complicated than just recording "a picture" in a camera.

6. Within that split second, A recognizes X as his good friend, and pleasant emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes happy. B recognizes X as his worse enemy, and bad emotions arise in his mind, and he becomes angry. On the other hand, C identifies X as a man or a woman, and no feelings occur in him.

- We don't think twice about these observations usually. But if one carefully analyzes what happens, one can easily see that this is an amazingly complex process.
- How does the SAME "seeing event" (seeing X) lead to all these very different changes in the minds of three different people? (and the emotions even show up on their faces!)
- No one but a Buddha can see this fast time evolution of a *citta*.
- The Buddha has analyzed this process in minute detail. We will discuss only the critical basic features here.

Nothing Faster in the World Than the Arising of a *Citta*

7. Buddha said it is hard to find any phenomena in this world that change faster than the mind: "WebLink: suttacentral: Aṅguttara Nikāya (1.48)."

The short *sutta* says: "*Nāhaṃ, bhikkhave, aññaṃ ekadhammampi samanupassāmi yaṃ evaṃ lahuparivattaṃ yathayidaṃ cittaṃ. Yāvañcidaṃ, bhikkhave, upamāpi na sukarā yāva lahuparivattaṃ cittan*"ti."

Translated: "I consider, *bhikkhus*, that there is no phenomenon that comes and goes so quickly as *citta*. It is not easy to find an analogy (a simile) to show how quickly *citta* can change."

Three Features of a Seeing Event (Cakkhu Viññāṇa)

8. **The "seeing event" has three essential features:**

- One definitely gets into an emotional state (pleasant, unpleasant, or neutral, which is called *sukha, dukha*, and *upekkha* in Pāli), and that is called ***vedanā***.
- One recognizes the object, and that is called ***saññā.***
- Based on *vedanā and saññā*, one also generates other mental characteristics such as anger, joy. Those are none other than ***saṅkhāra.***

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- Of course, this holds for all six types of *vipāka viññāṇa.*

9. ***Viññāṇa* is the overall sense experience encompassing all those three:** *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra.*

- **But *viññāṇa* can be more than the sum of those three.** See, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."
- We can safely say that *viññāṇa* (or more correctly *viññāṇakkhandha*) is the overall sensory experience, INCLUDING one's expectations based on that sensory experience. That is why one's facial expressions may change too, according to such expectations.

10. So, we can see that those three people, A, B, and C will have three different "states of mind" upon that seeing event.

- **That "mindset" with a set of *vedanā*, *saññā*, and *saṅkhāra* is called a *viññāṇa*.**
- *Viññāṇa* is the overall sensory experience that includes all those. And that takes place within a split second.
- There are six types of *viññāṇa* corresponding to the six sense faculties. See, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

11. Several key important basic features come out from this simple example.

- **There is no single entity called "*viññāṇa*."** When we hear something a "*sota viññāṇa*" arises, when we taste something a *jivhā viññāṇa* occurs, etc. Altogether there are six types of *vipāka viññāṇa* that are associated with the six sense faculties we have. Those are *cakkhu* (see), *sota* (hear), *ghāṇa* (smell), *jivhā* (taste), *kāya* (touch), and *mano* (mind).
- **Any of those will lead to the following outcomes:** *Sukha, dukha,* or *upekkhā* ***vedanā*** arise. One recognizes what type of picture, sound, etc., and that is (***saññā***.) Then other types of *cetasika* arising (called ***saṅkhāra***) depending on the *ārammaṇa* (sound heard etc.) AND the "nature" of the person (**character/habits or *gati***).
- This last one, the "nature" of a person, is called that person's *gati* (sometimes written as *gathi*). Each person has a unique (but changing) set of good and bad *gati.* I am not going to discuss this here, but there are many posts on the website on *gati.*

Dependence on the "Thought Object" (*Ārammaṇa*)

12. Let us take a different scenario: Let us assume that X is B's girlfriend — who is not in good terms with A — and that C is a young male who has never seen X.

- Now, we see that the moods of A and B will reversed. A will be instantaneously unhappy to see X, and B will be happy to X.
- Regarding C, the situation could be different than before. If X appears attractive to him, C may instantaneously form a lustful state of mind.

13. So, we see that the type of *cakkhu viññāṇa* depends on primarily two things. It depends on the particular person experiencing it, and the sense object in question (it is called an *ārammaṇa* in Pāli).

- In the above two cases, A and B experienced different types of vipāka *viññāṇa* (seeing something "good" or "bad".) But their experiences reversed when the sense object changed (situation in #4 versus that in #12.)
- In the case of C seeing an attractive woman, even though he had no prior contact with her, lustful *viññāṇa* arose in C, due to his "lustful" *gati.*
- If C were an *Arahant*, C would only generate an *upekkha viññāṇa* when seeing the X. An *Arahant* has removed all *gati*; one needs to learn about *gati* to fully understand this point.

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14. **Now we see that for a given person, there is no permanently set good or bad *viññāṇa*.** What kind of *viññāṇa* arises depends on the *gati* of the person and the sense object.

- We usually call someone a "good person" based on his/her overall character, i.e., if that person displays more "good character" than "bad character" over time. But only an *Arahant* can be called a "definitely a moral person," acting 100% morally all the time.
- Even though this is a complex subject, the basic features are those mentioned above. One needs to analyze different situations in one's mind to get these ideas firmly grasped. That is real *vipassanā* meditation!
- One needs to understand how the mind works to make progress on the Path. The Buddha said that his Dhamma has never been known to the world. And it has the MIND in the forefront. Furthermore, the mind is the most complex entity in the world.

Simple Explanation of the Nine Steps

15. The first stage, *citta*, is just awareness that comes with the "uncontaminated" *vedanā* and *saññā* and five other universal mental factors (*cetasika*): *phassa, cetanā, manasikara, ekaggatā, and jivitindriya*. One is just aware that one is alive and is experiencing something.

- At the "*mano*" stage, the mind has "measured" what the object is (මැනීම [*mænīma* or Measurement] in Sinhala). For example, whether it is a tree or a human or a bird.
- In the next "*mānasaṃ*" stage, the mind is can distinguish among different species. For example, whether it is just a woman or one's own mother or whether it is a parrot or a humming bird. That is the "pure and complete awareness": one sees the external world as it is. An *Arahant*'s mind will not be contaminated beyond this stage.

16. At the next "*hadayan*" (හෘදය වීම [*hāda vīma* or Trouble shooting] in Sinhala) phase, the mind gets attached to the object (or repulsed by it) based on one's prior experiences and *gati*.

- This attachment gets stronger in the next several stages and by the time reaches the *viññāṇa* stage, it can be fully "corrupted."
- Finally, that *viññāṇa* or the *viññāṇakkhandha* gets incorporated to the aggregate of *viññāṇa* or the *viññāṇakkhandha*. With each thought, the *viññāṇakkhandha* grows.

17. One crucial observation is that C's mind stopped at the "*mānasaṃ*" stage in the first example above. (That is only partially correct, but we don't need to get to details here). However, in the second example, it got contaminated.

- Of course, an *Arahant*'s mind will never get contaminated beyond the "*mānasan*" stage for ANY sense object.
- Specifically: no *lobha*, *dosa*, or *moha* will arise in an *Arahant* regardless of what the sense input is.

18. Hopefully, the above basic description will clarify how a *citta* gets contaminated automatically according to one's personality (*gati*) and the sense object.

- The critical point is that we do not have control over those initial *citta* that arises automatically at the first exposure to the sense object.
- **However, when we become aware of this initial response, we CAN control our subsequent *citta* by being mindful.** That is the key to *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditations and is a different topic. For details, see "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" and "Living Dhamma" and "Paṭicca Samuppada" sections.

19. Finally, another critical point is that the six types of *viññāṇa* that we just discussed are all *vipāka viññāṇa*. These arise due to past *kamma*, i.e., as *kamma vipāka*.

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- Then there are *kamma viññāṇa* that we create ourselves; see, "Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter."
- When the Buddha said that we need to stop defiled *kamma viññāṇa* from arising, he was referring to the *kamma viññāṇa*. We have control over them. We have control over *kamma viññāṇa*. But we do not have control *vipāka viññāṇa*, which are due to past *kamma*.
- Details on *kamma viññāṇa* in the post "Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"?". One's state of mind at a given moment depends on one's own *gati* (character and habits) AND the external sense object.

12.2.2 The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)

September 6, 2018; revised September 7, 2018; October 7, 2019; March 10, 2020

Nāmagotta Are Memories

1. Here we will discuss the critical importance of *nāmagotta* (our memory records). Even though I had written it as "*nāma gotta*" previously, I noticed that in some *suttā* it is written as "*nāmagotta*," one word.

- Let us take person X. If someone shows X an apple, he will say, "that is an apple, and I know how it smells and tastes." Suppose X loses all memory right after that. Now, will X be able to identify that as an apple? Of course not.
- This is another amazing thing about the mind. It can search one's previous experiences with a given object (in this case, an apple) and remember what an apple looks like, tastes like, etc., i.e., all the distinctive properties of an apple. And it can do that in a billionth of a second!
- We discussed this in detail at: "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

Without Memories There Would Be a Zombie (or Like a Robot)

2. **Think carefully about the following:** If X loses all memories, he will not know what to do with a plate of food put in front of him; he would not identify that as a pizza, a sandwich, etc.

- If he is at work when the memory loss happens, X will not know how to go home. X would not know even what is meant by "home" and that he is supposed to go home at a particular time.
- If he gets the urge to go to the bathroom, X will not know what he is supposed to do in the bathroom or where the bathroom is.
- You can think about the zillions of things that we take for granted every day, that X will not be able to do. X will not be able to function at all!

3. This is why a baby of a few months of age does not recognize anything and does not have any control over "bathroom functions".

- A baby's brain is not developed and thus cannot make contact with the *mano loka*, where memories are; see, "Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)" and "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- Thus a baby is TOTALLY dependent on parents until about a year old until the brain is developed to some extent.
- It is the *manasikāra cetasika* that helps put together memories based on the "*rūpa*" received from the brain.

Perception or Identification (*Saññā*) Requires Memories

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4. Now, suppose that person X, who has lost all his memories, takes a bite of the apple. Of course, he will taste the sweetness, but he will not be able to IDENTIFY that as "apple taste."

- Furthermore, X may not even generate a liking or the desire to take another bite unless he is hungry.
- **This also proves that the CRAVING for the taste of apple was not in the apple.** Cravings are associated with one's ***āsava***. **And those *āsava* cannot come to the surface as *anusaya* unless one's memories are intact.**

5. With his memories lost, X's *vedanā* and *saññā* will be pretty close to "uncontaminated" *pabhassara citta*. He will experience a taste (without identifying it as a taste of apple). But he will not generate any *sobhana* or *asobhana cetasika* based on any type of attractive or repulsive sense input.

- But of course, he has not attained the *Arahant* stage. His *āsava* will be with him, just as newborn baby will have all its *āsava* with it.
- If X lost his memory due to brain damage, his *āsava* would not resurface until the next birth if the brain is permanently damaged.
- Details at, "Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)."

The Real Story of Patient H.M.

6. That has happened to a person, and his story is in the book, "Patient H.M. : A Story of Memory, Madness, and Family Secrets" by Luke Dittrich.

- Here we must remember that our memories that in the *nāma loka* can be recalled only by the *mana indriya* in the brain. See, "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)," "Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka", "Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body," and "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body." One needs to spend some time to clarify this key concept.
- The surgeons had inadvertently removed part of the brain of "patient H.M." that contained the *mana indirya* (surgeons were trying to stop regular seizures that the patient was experiencing by removing tiny parts of his brain).
- With more studies in the future, we may be able to identify the location of the *mana indirya* in the brain.

The brain is Required to Capture the External Sensory Object

7. That is why a new-born baby (within a year or so from birth) has a minimal capability for perceptions. The brain has not developed to be able to process all the information that comes through the sense faculties.

- Therefore, a new-born baby's brain cannot transfer anything useful to the *hadaya vatthu* for it to identify objects or match each with the set of *āsava*/*anusaya* and to generate cravings or dislikes for that sensory input.
- A baby's hidden *āsava* will not show up until its brain develops. The brain function attains the full capacity around seven years of age, according to the Buddha: One can even attain *Arahanthood* if one is over seven years of age.
- The role of the brain is discussed at: "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."

The Difference Between an Arahant and Patient H.M.

8. We can get a good idea of how the mind of an *Arahant* works by considering a person X discussed in #1 through #5 above (or patient H.M. IN #6) who has lost all his memories. The only difference is that in the case of X or H.M., all *anusaya* are intact, but they cannot be "triggered."

- For an *Arahant*, all *gati* and *āsava*/*anusaya* have gone away via cultivating *paññā*.

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- But an *Arahant* will have all his memories intact. If he has developed *abhiññā* powers, he will be able to recall memories not only from this life but many, many lives in the past.

Habits/Cravings (and Thus *Gati* and *Āsava*/*Anusaya*) Change With Time

9. Most of our cravings are associated with our past habits and desires. Each person has a set that is unique to him/her, AND that set of habits/cravings will change over time.

- All *gati* and *āsava/anusaya* arise or — are with oneself — because of the inability to get rid of evils due to ignorance of the real nature of this world: *anicca, dukkha, anatta, asubha*, etc.
- When one is on the Path, one will gradually get rid of "bad *gati*" and cultivate "good *gati*." Then, at some point, one will be able to comprehend *the anicca* nature, and one's *paññā* will grow, and one's *anusaya* will be PERMANENTLY removed in four stages of *Nibbāna*.
- One should read up on those Pāli terms if one does not understand them. **It does not make sense to translate those terms to English, because no single English word will convey the same meaning as a Pāli word.**
- That is NOT memorization. One should comprehend what is MEANT by a Pāli word, not memorize it.

10. Suppose X is a young male. When X — if he has lost his memories — sees an attractive woman, he will see her as an attractive person. But he will not generate any lust for her, no matter how beautiful she is. It is just "seeing" for him.

- That "picture," which comes to mind, cannot match it with X's past experiences with women. His *kāma rāga anusaya* is still there, but not awakened.
- Similarly, X will not generate any angry thoughts when seeing "an enemy"; he just does not have any recollection of the past encounters with the person.
- In the same way, X may touch a red-hot iron, because he has no idea that it can burn.
- That is also why little babies touch or even try to eat anything and everything. They have no prior experience that some of those could be harmful.

"Live in Just the Present Moment"?

11. These days, there are many "philosopher-types" (such as Ekhart Tolle or even Buddhist teachers), who say "forget the past and live in the moment".

- That is utter nonsense.
- One CANNOT forget the past AND live in the present. What the Buddha said is **to live the present moment mindfully**, making sure not to make bad decisions.
- The Buddha had a perfect memory. He could remember things as far back as he wished. Often he would give accounts of what had happened in past lives and teach people how to learn lessons from the past.

An Example from the *Tipiṭaka*

12. Finally, in the beginning of the "WebLink: suttacentra: Mahāmālukya Sutta (MN 64)," the Buddha points out this fact that *sakkāya diṭṭhi* cannot arise in a new-born baby. That is exactly because what we discussed above. There is no way to trigger the hidden *anusaya* in that baby.

- To quote the above translation: "**For a young tender infant lying prone does not even have the notion 'identity,' so how could identity view (*sakkāya diṭṭhi*) arise in him?** "
- The Pāli verse is: "*Daharassa hi, mālukyaputta, kumārassa mandassa uttānaseyyakassa sakkāyotipi na hoti, kuto panassa uppajjissati sakkāyadiṭṭhi?* ."

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- I had forgotten the name of the *sutta*. Thanks to reader Siebe for pointing this out at the discussion forum.

12.2.3 Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises

Revised February 17, 2020

Necessary Background

1. It is a good idea to read the posts, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Viññāna – What It Really Means" first.

- It may be a good idea to read at least the introductory post on the *manomaya kāya* before reading this post: "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction."
- When one learns *Abhidhamma*, one can see why the Buddha rejected both "self" and "no-self" concepts. A "living being" is a momentarily changing entity. It is not possible to say "it does not exist," because it does exist. It is just that it continuously evolves ON ITS OWN PATH determined by "*gati*" at each stage. There is a "dynamic self," which has its own identity or personality or "*gati*" (which also evolve.)

Citta and *Cetasika* Arise Together

2. The name *citta* came from "*chitra*," the name for a painting in Pāli or *Sinhala*. A pure *citta* has only seven mental factors (*cetasika*). *Cetasika* provide "colors for the picture," so to speak.

- But the seven *cetasika* that are in every *citta* (universal *cetasika* or "*sabba citta sadharana cetasika*") may be considered "colorless." A pure *citta* is like a blank sheet of paper on which these "snapshots" painted.
- There are a set of 14 "bad *cetasika*" and a set of 25 "good *cetasika*." For a rough visual, we may think of the "bad *cetasika*" as dark colors (black, brown, etc.), and the "good *cetasika*" as pleasant colors such as green or yellow. Then there are six other "occasionals" (i.e., appear only in some *cittā*) that are also "colorless," and those can arise with either good or bad *cetasika*; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."
- *Cetasika* arise with a *citta*, decay with a *citta*, and take the same thought object (*arammana*) as the *citta*. But a given *citta* has either good OR bad *cetasika*; they do not mix.
- And a citta is of very short duration; it lasts much less than a billionth of a second; see, "What is a Thought?" in the next post.

Sensory Experience Comes in "Snapshots"

3. A living being experiences the "world out there" in a series of very fast "snapshots"; it grasps the "world" in a snapshot called a *citta* (pronounced "chiththa") that lasts much less than a billionth of a second. As soon as the mind sees that "snapshot", it is gone. But the mind gives us an illusory sense of a permanent "world." **It does that by making that "snapshot" meaningful. That requires incorporating our memories as well as our hopes for the future.** Let us see how this process as described in *Abhidhamma*.

- The mind does this with the help of a *cetasika* (pronounced "chethasika") in that *citta* called *manasikara*. We will discuss this later, but I am just trying to get across the basic idea.
- Pāli words are spelled differently compared to "Standard English" spelling. See, ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."

4. **Therefore, we can visualize each "moment of awareness" of the outside world by the mind like a snapshot.** As soon as it comes, it is gone.

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Then how does our mind see the outside world as "permanent?" Also, how does it decide a given situation as 'good' or 'bad?' Often, two people look at the same thing and perceive it differently (one may perceive it as as "good" and the other as "bad.")

- Two of the universal *cetasika* (*manasikāra* and *cetanā*,) are responsible for such variations.
- As we discussed in other posts, a record of the "snapshot" that decays is permanently recorded in the mental plane, and these records are called *nāma gotta*; see, "Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra (Saṅkhata)."
- In the same way, our hopes and visions for the future are also in the mental plane. Of course, the past *nāma gotta* are permanent while the imprints for the future keep changing. The *manasikāra cetasika* brings in memories from the past and hopes for the future into the current *citta*, thus a "permanent like" view of the world is composed of the *cetanā cetasika*, which is responsible for "putting together a *citta*."
- Furthermore, in one person, "good" *cetasika* may arise due to a sensory input, but if the "*gati*" of the other person is opposite, a set of "bad" *cetasika* may arise in the other person. The *cetanā cetasika* combines them to form a "good" or a "bad" awareness.

How Do We See?

5. It is basically the same kind of process happens when we see, hear, taste, smell, touch, or think. Let us explain the concept of vision.

- The basic sequence of events in capturing any "input" via the five physical senses was described in "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) - Introduction."
- If we keep looking at a picture on the wall, nothing changes because it is a static picture.
- Now let us think about what happens when we look at a water fountain. The water fountain looks like a sort of a solid object. But in reality, there are trillions of water particles rising and falling each second. We do not "see" individual water particles but just the appearance of a "sort of solid object with a certain shape."
- In a "thought" (*citta*), the *manasikāra* and *cetanā cetasika* help the mind put together a "composite" of what is happening to give a more or less "solid appearance."
- Same thing happens in seeing a continuous "ring of fire" when one swirls a light in a circular motion. At a given moment, the light is at a fixed position, but if we move the light fast enough, only see a "composite picture" in the shape of a continuous ring of light.

The Movie Analogy

6. Another example is a motion picture. When making a movie, many many static pictures are taken and then play them back at fast enough speed. If the playback speed is too slow, we can see individual pictures, but above a certain "projection rate," it looks like real motion. Here is a video that illustrates this well:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Animation basics: The optical illusion of motion

Our Sensory Experience Is Very Similar to the "Movie Analogy"

7. When we see the outside world, what happens is very similar to the above. At the end of the video it is stated that the "movie" we see is an illusion. **As the Buddha explained, that holds for real life as well.** In real life when we see someone coming towards us, what we actually see is a series of "static pictures" or *citta* projected at a very fast rate in our minds. That gives us the illusion of a "movie like experience."

- In the above video, it is suggested that all the information from the "previous static frames" were put together by the brain. However, that is true only to a certain extent.

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- The brain does put together the individual frames. But it is the mind that incorporates past memories and IDENTIFIES who is in the picture.
- We not only "see" the video, but we also RECOGNIZE what is seen. We identify a given actor, we can even remember previous movies with that actor, we KNOW all about the scenes in the background, etc. **It is not possible for the brain to have access to all those memories. This is a point that needs a lot of thought.**
- What happens according to *Abhidhamma* is the following. The brain periodically sends packets of acquired data put together by the cortex in the brain to the *hadaya vatthu*, which is basically the seat of the mind. *Citta vīthi* arise in accepting that information from the brain, and it is the mind that does all the compiling (with the help of the *manasikāra* and *cetanā cetasika*) and that is how we EXPERIENCE it.
- I will go into more details later, but those are the key points.

8. We need to keep in mind that all animals have this capability too. A dog basically sees its environment just like we do and instantly recognizes the objects in the picture. Even an ant does too, even though its "world" is much more limited.

- Think about how a tiny ant can process all that information that allows it to move in a reasonable fast pace in hunting for food. It knows its territory, certain smells, and also remembers how to get back to its nest. All that information is NOT in that tiny body of an ant. More things to think about!

Brain Is Very Fast Computer

9. In the above video, it is shown that the slowest projection rate where the brain seems to process data is about 20 frames per second; this correspond to a data packet of about 50 millisecond duration. This is consistent with a recent findings from MIT that says the *minimum* time needed is about 20 milliseconds: WebLink: Detecting Meaning in Rapid Pictures-Potter-2014.

- This is consistent with the *Abhidhammic* picture of the brain capturing segments of visual data and transmitting that information to the *hadaya vatthu*, which is the "mind door." That takes place via the *cakkhu pasāda* that is located on the *manomaya kāya* close to the *hadaya vatthu*.
- *Abhidhamma*, of course, does not mention how long the brain captures visual data for a "seeing event" before sending it to the *hadaya vatthu*. But it does say that this information is now converted by the brain to a format suitable for transmission to the *hadaya vatthu*, and is sent there via a "ray system" (*kiraṇa*.) I assume that this encoded information is sent at the speed of light. Thus, the information gets to the *hadaya vatthu* almost instantaneously. Note that the *hadaya vatthu* is located on the *manomaya kāya*, but is close to the heart

But The Mind Is Faster

10. Of course we not only see things, but we also hear, smell, taste, touch, and think other thoughts all at the SAME TIME, it seems.

- The mind processes the information sent by the brain in a billionth of a second, much faster than the brain can process. So, the mind is mostly idle, "waiting for data from the brain."
- Therefore, the "sensing rate" is limited by the relatively slow processing speed of the brain. According to current scientific studies mentioned above, brain processing happens at the millisecond time scale, a thousand-times slower than the mind. However, it is still more than fast enough for us to experience simultaneity in all sensory inputs.

Science Helping to "Fill-in-the-Blanks"

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11. The scientific studies on the "minimum duration of a detectable event" are still at early stages (see #9 above.) We may be able to put together a more precise sequence of events in the future. Yet we have enough data to put together a qualitative picture of what happens.

- This is an excellent example of how science can help us "fill in the blanks" of the overall picture that the Buddha provided. Of course, such a scientific background was not there 2500 years ago.
- Once the Buddha was in a *Simpāsa* forest near *Kosambi*, and he took a few leaves into his hand and told the *bhikkhus*, "what I have taught you compared to what I know is like these few leaves compared to the leaves in this forest. But what I have taught you is more than enough for you to attain *Nibbāna*."
- Thus modern science can provide us with details about the "big picture" of the Buddha, and we should be grateful to all those scientists for that knowledge. However, we should use that knowledge wisely and should not get carried away in spending too much time on such details.

Next, "What is a Thought?", ...

12.2.4 State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vithi – Bhavanga

September 23, 2018; revised January 18, 2021

1. We have what we can call "**an active mind**" in the following two cases:

- When we are experiencing sense inputs (seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and touching), especially when those are of sufficient interest. In these cases *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* with 17 *citta* results, as we discussed in the post, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."
- We also generate "active thoughts" when we are remembering a past event, contemplating on a *Dhamma* concept or learning some subject like mathematics. Here we have *manodvāra citta vīthi* which can have 10-12 *citta* normally, but in some special cases may have large numbers of *manodvāra citta* running continuously.

Bhavaṅga – State of Mind

2. On the other hand, there are many times where we just have some kind of "**mindset**" (joyful, sad, angry, etc.), without even generating thoughts (*citta*).

- For example, many people get into a "state of sorrow" after hearing about the sudden death of a parent, spouse, etc. Even when they are not thinking about that person, they may be just sitting somewhere with very clear features of sadness on their faces.
- Sometimes people get very scared and it shows in their faces, but they cannot even think. They are too scared to think or to speak: "frozen in fear".
- The same thing happens when one gets very angry: They may not say anything but we can see the anger in their faces. They themselves may not know what to do.

3. So, there are many such cases where we just get into a certain state of mind, which can be called "**a temporary existence or *bhava***": the above three examples correspond to "sad *bhava*," "scared *bhava*," and "angry *bhava*" respectively.

- Such a "temporary *bhava*" or "temporary state of mind" can last many minutes or even days. **These may be denoted by B_T, compared to one's natural *bhavaṅga* state, which we can denote by B.** After some time the B_T state will slowly fade away to fall back to the natural B state.
- Active *citta vithi* run during such a temporary B_T state would be influenced by that B_T state. **For example, if one becomes temporarily angry, his following actions could be influenced by that anger.**
- The natural *bhavaṅga* state (B) is the mindset grasped at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment; see below.

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Connection of "*Bhava*" to *Gati*

4. We can see right away that "angry *bhava*" comes easily to those who are easy to get angry. Such people can be "triggered" easily. Just saying some wrong words can make them angry.

- The same is true for other types of "temporary *bhava*." Some can be easily frightened. Some can be easily tempted with sense pleasures.
- The tendency to easily get into such "temporary *bhava* (BT)" will be reduced when one makes progress on the Path. I know that by experience.
- When one finally gets to the *Arahant* stage, one will not get into any "temporary *bhava*"; one has lost all such *gati*. One will have what is called "an unshakable calm state of mind".
- Thus, for an *Arahant*, only the natural *bhavaṅga* state (B) will be there until death. **Of course, any *anusaya* that was there initially will be gone too.**

5. An important extension of the idea discussed above is that the *bhavaṅga* that we have for "the current human *bhava*" was grasped at the last *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment: When we exhausted the *kammic* energy for the last *bhava* that we were in, and grasped this human *bhava*.

- Since a human *bhava* is grasped with a "good *nimitta*" that was associated with a "good *gati*" we had AT THE MOMENT that we did that good deed (or the "good *kamma*"), our current *bhavaṅga* reflects that *gati*.
- **However, that "natural *bhavaṅga*" (unlike any "temporary *bhava*") is hard to see, especially by oneself.** It is like we cannot see our own eyes (we can only see a reflection of it by a mirror).

6. But the fact that it is easier for some to grasp concepts than others comes from whether one's *bhavaṅga* is "better" than that other person's. In other words, one with a *tihetuka* birth will have a better natural *bhavaṅga* (B) compared to one with a *dvihetuka* birth.

- Furthermore, even if one has a "not so good *bhavaṅga*" (which may not be possible to verify anyway), one is better off as a human than uncountable beings in lower realms. We really need to make use of this rare human *bhava*.
- I had written a post about *bhavaṅga* sometime back (which describes it from another angle), which you may want to read now to "seal in" your understanding: "Bhava and Bhavaṅga – Simply Explained!."

An Analogy for Switching from *Bhavaṅga* to Active Mind

7. Now we are in a position to see how the mind switches back and forth between *bhavaṅga* states (B or B_T) and active states (with *citta vīthi*).

- However, it is important to note that NO ONE will be actually "see" or "discern for oneself" how this switching happens. Such fast processes can be seen only by the mind of a Buddha.
- But we can see for ourselves that these minute descriptions are indeed consistent with our experiences. That is what builds confidence in Buddha Dhamma.
- Before proceeding further, we need to remember that *citta* arise in the base of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) which is located in the mental body (*gandhabba*).
- The *gandhabba* is totally shielded from the outside by the dense physical body. All sense inputs come through the six "doors" in the body (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the *mana indriya* in the brain).
- If you need top refresh memory, this is discussed in "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba" and other posts.

Coming Out of the *Bhavaṅga* State With 3 *Cittā*

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8. When a mind is not occupied with any specific *ārammaṇa*, it is in the *bhavaṅga* state. This is the "state of the mind" acquired at the beginning of a new *bhava*. For example, if an animal runs out of a lifetime in that realm and grasps a "human *bhava*" that happens due to a previous "good *kamma*". At that moment, that "past good *kamma*" comes to the mind and becomes the "state of mind" for the new human *bhava*.

- **For a human, that "state of mind" or "the *bhavaṅga*" is good.** One does not really feel it as good or bad. If you see someone just staring into space (and if that person is not in deep thought) that mind is in the *bhavaṅga* state. If you talk to him, he would be startled into "wakefulness". If you ask him what he was thinking about, he cannot answer, because his mind was not on a particular *ārammaṇa*. It was in the *bhavaṅga* state.
- That *bhavaṅga* state does not have *cittā* (plural of *citta*.) As we mentioned in the previous post, *cittā* arise in *citta vīthi*. A *citta vīthi* is based on an *ārammaṇa* coming through one of the five physical senses always have 17 *cittā*. Those arise directly in the mind (*manodvāra*) have 12 or more *cittā*.
- When an *ārammaṇa* comes to the mind, the mind "comes out of the *bhavaṅga* state". That takes 3 *cittā* labeled as "*atīta bhavaṅga* (AB)" "*bhavaṅga calana* (BC), and "*bhavaṅga ucceda* (BU)."
- I simple terms, that means it takes three thought-moments (*cittā*) for the mind to "get out of the *bhavaṅga* state" and start paying attention to the *ārammaṇa*.

9. I have read the following nice analogy somewhere, but have forgotten where it was. In this analogy, a man is sitting in the middle of a totally enclosed small hut with six windows. He is sitting at a desk in the middle of the hut, but can easily look up and see any of the six windows.

- The mental body (*gandhabba*) trapped inside the physical human body is like the man sitting at the table in the hut.
- When the mind is totally focused on the *bhavaṅga* state, that is comparable to the man totally absorbed in reading a book sitting at that table. He is not aware of what is happening outside the hut at all.
- In the same way, the *gandhabba* in the *bhavaṅga* state has no awareness of what is going on outside the human body. It is focused on the *bhavaṅga* (the *nimitta* grasped at the beginning of this *bhava*).

10. The man in the hut could be distracted from the book if a disturbance happens at one of the windows. For example, suppose someone outside comes to a window and knocks on it. Then the man would look up from the book at the window where the disturbance was.

- This is like a sense signal from one of five physical sense doors coming to one of the five *pasāda rūpa* around the *hadaya vatthu*. The *hadaya vatthu* — surrounded by the five *pasāda rūpa* — is like the man sitting in the hut with six windows.
- The only difference is that signals for the *mana indriya* come directly to the *hadaya vatthu*, instead of coming through a sixth *pasāda rūpa*.

Components of a *Citta Vīthi*

11. When a signal comes to one of the five *pasāda rūpa*, the *hadaya vatthu*'s attention to the *bhavaṅga* state will be disturbed. Then three *citta* will rise to break away from the *bhavaṅga* state.

- Those three *citta* are called *atita bhavaṅga* (*atita* means "old" or "past" in Pali or Sinhala), *bhavaṅga calana* (calana — pronounced "chalana" — means move or vibrate), and *bhavaṅga ucceda* (*ucceda* means to "cut-off").
- Just like it would take the man in the hut a few moments to becomes aware of the disturbance at the window and to look up, it will take those three *cittā* to pass before the *hadaya vatthu* "breaks away" from the *bhavaṅga* state. Then it will investigate what the disturbance is.

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12. Now, *hadaya vatthu* will look to see which of the five *pasāda rūpa* is disturbed, with another *citta*. That *citta* is called the "*pancadvāravajjana citta*," where *panaca dvara* means "five doors" referring to the five physical senses.

- If it turns out that the signal is coming through the *ghāṇa pasāda rūpa* (i.e., a smell), then the mind will turn to that door. Then a *ghānadvara citta* arises. That will be the fifth *citta* in the *citta vīthi*.
- Now the mind will "accept" that signal; this is called a "*sampaticcana citta*."
- Then it will fully realize what that signal is with another *citta*: "*santirana citta*."
- Up to this point, there have been three *bhavaṅga citta*, a *pancadvāravajjana citta*, a *ghānadvara citta* (or any one of the five *pañcadvāra citta*), a *sampaticcana citta*, and a *santirana citta*; seven *cittā* in all. All these are *vipāka citta*.

13. The eighth *citta* in the *citta vīthi* is called a "*vottapana citta*." This is a very important *citta*, where one's mind decides to take action based on the sense input that it received.

- How to respond to a given sense input is automatically decided by the mind, based on one's *gati* (*gathi*). We have discussed this before: see, for example, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)," "How Are Gati and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts?," "Cetasika – Connection to Gathi," and "Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava."
- Depending on the sensory input and one's *gati*, the mind may decide to ignore the sensory input or to take action if gets gets attracted to the sensory input.
- Possible actions will include one or more of the following: Thinking along the same lines to oneself/ talking out about it (with *vacī saṅkhāra*), and possibly taking bodily actions (with *kāya saṅkhāra*).

14. Then, such actions are implemented with 7 *javana cittā*; see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."

- Any and all *kamma* are generated in those 7 *javana cittā*. This is where *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kāya saṅkhāra* are generated. Then those are implemented by the brain, as needed.
- After 7 *javana cittā*, the *citta vīthi* ends with two *tadārammana* (T) or *bhavaṅga* (B) *citta*, as we discuss next.

15. Now we can represent a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* as follows:

"AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J T T"

- This is discussed in detail in the post, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

Two *Tadārammana* or *Bhavaṅga Citta*?

16. If the sense input was a particularly strong one (like a death in the family), that is a special case. Then those last two *cittā* will be *tadārammana* (T) as shown in #15 above. The sense input is registered in the mind temporarily and "that state of mind" can linger for some time. That time duration can range from a few minutes to several days.

- Such a very strong *citta vīthi* is called an ***atimahantārammana* (very strong) *citta vīthi*.** The sensory event "sinks into the mind" and the mind stays in that state for a while before settling back to the natural *bhavaṅga* state.
- For example, if one gets frightened by a chasing dog, that agitated and frightened state may last for a many minutes. If a parent or a child dies, the resulting sadness may last for several days.

17. However, if the impact of the sensory input is not that strong, but enough for one to think about it, say something, or to take some action, then the 7 *javana* will still flow. However, it will not register in the mind as a *tadārammana* (which basically means "a strong thought object").

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- In that case, the last two *citta* will fall back to the natural *bhavaṅga* state, B, so now the *citta vīthi* is: "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J B B".
- Such a *citta vīthi* is called a ***mahantārammana* (strong) *citta vīthi***.

18. If the sense input is not strong enough to generate interest in the mind, no *javana citta* will be generated.

- Such *citta vīthi* are called ***parittārammana* (weak)** or ***atiparittārammna* (very weak) *citta vīthi*.** *Parittārammana citta vīthi* are involved in dreaming. *Atiparittārammna citta vīthi* are involved in breathing. Obviously, we don't even notice such *citta vīthi* of the last and weakest type.
- For more details, see; "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."

12.2.5 Bhava and Bhavanga – Simply Explained!

January 19, 2018; revised February 5, 2018; January 19, 2021

1. There is much confusion about these two key Pāli words: *bhava* and *bhavaṅga*. By clarifying what is meant by them, it would be much easier to comprehend many concepts in Buddha Dhamma, for example, how laws of *kamma* are enforced by nature via *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.

- Even in current Theravada texts, there is confusion about the difference between *bhava* and *jāti*. If you have not read the post, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein," I recommend reading that first.
- Please do not be discouraged by the Pāli terms. There are no suitable English terms for some of them, and it is better to learn them. Read through first, even if you don't get the full meaning. It will become clear. I will make it simple in this post.
- I will make one or two more posts on this subject to include references from the *Tipiṭaka*.

2. Basically, *bhava* means "the potential for existence" in EITHER **one of the 31 realms of possible existence** (we can see just the human and animal realms) OR as **some specific state of mind within the current life**.

- **In the first category**, there is human *bhava*, animal *bhava*, *Tusita deva bhava*, *peta bhava*, *Ābhassarā Brahma bhava*, etc.: existence in one of the 31 possible realms. As we will see below, many such "potential *bhava*" exists for each living being. At the end of the current *bhava,* a new *bhava* will be grasped based on the relative energies for various *bhava* (*kamma bīja*) that one has cultivated in one's past.
- Even during this lifetime, we "live under different existences" based on significant life events. **This is the second category**. For example, a normally "good person" may become violent for a short time upon seeing his wife in bed with another man, or one will live in a "state of sorrow" for many days upon the death of a loved one.
- Both those are "*bhava*," states of existence.

3. *Bhavaṅga* ("*bhava*" + "*aṅga*," where *aṅga* means "part") therefore means a "state of mind" that is inseparable for a period of existence.

- When not disturbed by a strong external sense input (via the five physical senses or the mana indriya), a human mind is in its natural bhavaṅga state received at the beginning of this human bhava. Each person's bhavaṅga state is different (it is based on the sense object taken in at the paṭisandhi moment), and it feels kind of "neutral" to each person. For example, when one is in deep sleep or "just staring out into space," one's mind is likely to be in **one's natural *bhavaṅga* state, which we can denote by B**.
- On the other hand, when one's mind is deeply affected by some event like in the examples we mentioned above, then the mind goes into a "temporary *bhavaṅga* state" corresponding to that event ("state of

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rage" when really angry or "state of sadness" upon the death of a loved one). **We can denote this by B_T.**

4. Now, this "state of mind" (whether it B or B_T) could be interrupted by a *citta vīthi* triggered by an external sensory input coming through one of the five physical senses or the *mana indriya*.

- For example, when another loved one comes to pay respects to the dead loved one (who is in a "sad B_T"), one's mind may become happy just for a few minutes upon seeing that person. Then they may recall a past event about the dead person, and both may get sad again. That "sad temporary *bhavaṅga state*" (B_T) may not go away for several days. And then the mind will gradually fall back to the natural *bhavaṅga* state, B.
- For less strong life events, that temporary state of mind may last only minutes or hours.
- For example, if one sees an old friend on the street, one's mind may become happy, and they talk excitedly. When the friend departs after talking for a while, that B_T state may linger for a little while more, but then could be suppressed when another thought process based on remembering a task that one needed to get done urgently.

5. Therefore, within a given day, one's mind could get into several B_T states. But unless a B_T state is triggered by a significant life event like the loss of a loved one, the mind would fall back to the natural B state by the time one wakes up the next morning.

- For the reasons discussed above, the natural *bhavaṅga* state, B, could be called the "*uppatti bhavaṅga*," and those temporary *bhavaṅga* states, B_T, could be called "*pavutti bhavaṅga*."
- However, such labels are not used either in the *suttā* or in *Abhidhamma*. I mention that to make the connection better.

6. Please reread the above discussion. That should help one get the basic ideas about what *bhava* and *bhavaṅga* are. **It is important to note that *bhavaṅga* is a state of mind, not *citta vīthi* (thoughts).**

- Another way to describe a *bhavaṅga* state is to say that while the mind is in that state, one has corresponding *gati* (*gathi*). This is also an important aspect.
- For example, when one gets into a B_T state of anger, then one, of course, has predominantly "angry *gati*" during that time. Furthermore, one who generally has cultivated "angry *gati*" is also likely to get into B_T state easily.
- By the way, the Sinhala word for bhava is just "*bava*" (බව). For example, when one sees an eye-catching thing and generates a "*lobha bhava*" at that moment: ලෝභ බව ආවර්ම ලෝභයක්වනෙවා

7. Another important aspect is the when one is in an "angry B_T state**," it is easier to generate more angry thoughts. This is due to the "Annantatra and Samanantara Paccaya": That "state of mind" is receptive to more angry thoughts. This is why it is important to try to get the mind away from the angry state to focus on something entirely different.**

- **It is good to contemplate the** above basic ideas with examples from one's own life. For example, when one is angry at someone, it is easier to recall more such bad past experiences and suppress any past good experiences coming to the mind.

8. When one is having a calm state of mind when reading/listening to Dhamma, it is easier to generate compassionate thoughts about others. Therefore, it is important to "set the background" when starting on an important task.

- This is why in the old days' people went to a temple and offered flowers, etc., and chanted *gāthā*, before sitting down to listen to a *desanā* by a *bhikkhu*. The state of mind is critical. One cannot

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comprehend deep *Dhamma* if the mind is in an angry state or even in an excited state (like thinking about a sick child at home, for example).

- This is why it is a good idea to at least recite the qualities of the Triple Gem (Buddha, *Dhamma, Saṅgha*) before starting a formal meditation session; see "Buddhist Chanting."

9. Another important application of the "Annantara and Samanantara Paccaya" relevant to this case is that while in a human *bhava*, only *kamma vipāka* that are "compatible" with the human *bhava* and human *gati* (and thus human body) can bring in *vipāka*.

- Even if one has *kamma bīja* suitable to bring harsh *vipāka* experienced in the *apāyā*, they will not be able to bring *vipāka* as long as one is with a human body. Similarly, any highly pleasurable *vipāka* has to wait until one is born in a *deva bhava* with a fine body suitable to experience such good *vipāka*.
- An animal always lives with fear for its life; that is part of *bhavaṅga*. Similarly, a *tihetuka* human has a natural, pleasant demeanor; an *ahetuka* human (disabled, etc.) has a weakened mindset. A *dvihetuka* is in between.

10. Yet another is the state of mind at the dying moment, when the grasping of a new *bhava* is getting close (if *bhava* energy is to run out at death, i.e., if there are no more *jāti* left in the current *bhava*).

- Here the *kammic* power will start bringing various thoughts to mind via the *mana indriya* compatible with the strongest *kamma bīja*. For example, one who is about to grasp a new life in the hell (*niraya*) may start recalling some fear-generating events (even from previous lives), and one's mind could be bent to a "fearful temporary *bhavaṅga* state (B_T)." Then more and more such fearful events will start coming into the mind.
- This is why some dying people's fear can be seen in their eyes, even if their bodies have become non-responding.
- Some people start to yell with fear when they see an especially unpleasant *bhava* coming their way. Flashes of the existence awaiting will come to their minds, such as burning in hell, being cut by sharp weapons, or just seeing others engulfed in flames.
- On the good side, some people will remain calm with a pleasant look on their face, even if the body is becoming non-responding. Some smile when they see the scenery of the happy environment they are going to.
- There are many things like that, which can be explained by this basic knowledge.

11. For those familiar with *Abhidhamma*, *bhavaṅga citta* are called "*dvāramutta citta*" or *citta* that arise without needing a sense door. Let me clarify this in simple terms.

- When we hear something, that sound comes through our ears, and many *citta vīthi* will be generated at the *manodvāra* (mind-door) after that initiating *sotadvāra citta vīthi.* A seeing event may be started by a picture seen with eyes, etc.
- This is a swift process. For example, when watching a movie, we get sense inputs to the ears and eyes very rapidly. But *citta vīthi* flow so fast that the mind will fall to a *bhavaṅga* state (B or B_T) even between the rapidly incoming *citta vīthi.*
- Therefore, what we see, hear, taste, smell, or body touches are all due to *citta vīthi.* Even our thoughts generated by the mind (coming through the *mana indriya*), are due to *citta vīthi.*

12. In contrast, a *bhavaṅga* state (B or B_T) DOES NOT come though any of the five physical senses (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body) or the *mana indriya* in the brain. That is why it is called "*dvāramutta citta*" or "*citta* that arise without the need for a sense door."

- Therefore, *bhavaṅga* is a "stationary state of mind" that falls back to when there are no running *citta vīthi.*

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- Note that the *mana indriya* — where concepts and memories come to the mind — is unknown to scientists; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."
- *Bhavaṅga* (B or B_T) is just a state of mind with a corresponding *gati*. There are no associated *citta vīthi*. But of course, some *bhavaṅga citta* can appear in a *citta vīthi*; see, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

13. It is also important to note that *cittā* do not flow continuously; see below. It is the kammic energy that runs without a break during *saṃsāra*.

- For example, when one is born in the *asaññā* realm, there will be no *citta* is generated for 500 *mahā kappa*. Remember that a *mahā kappa* is our Solar system's age, which lasts about 15 billions years!
- During that whole time, the body of that being in the *asaññā* realm is kept alive by the *kammic* energy for that *bhava*, and the *bhavaṅga* is active during that time. As we emphasized above, *bhavaṅga* is a state of mind.

14. Please keep in mind that it is unnecessary to learn the material in #11 and #12 above if one can grasp the basic idea of what is meant by *bhava* and *bhavaṅga* that is enough to grasp important concepts at a bit deeper level.

- We will continue this discussion in one or more upcoming posts.

12.2.6 Citta Vithi – Processing of Sense Inputs

Revised April 26, 2018; revised May 30, 2018; October 17, 2019; February 24, 2020; January 18, 2021

1. Thoughts (*citta*) do not arise as individual *cittā*; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

They arise in the mind due to sense inputs from the five physical senses (*cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, jivhā*, and *kāya indriya* corresponding respectively to the eye, ear, nose, tongue, and body) and also by the *mana indriya* (located in the brain; see, "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body").

- Each of our sensory inputs coming in through any one of the five physical senses is received and analyzed by the mind in a "*citta vīthi*" (series of *cittā*) with 17 *cittā*. These are called *pañcadvāra citta vīthi*. *Pañcadvāra* ("pañca" + "dvāra" where "pañca" is five and "dvāra" is a door) means five (physical) doors. See the post, "What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?."
- *Vīthi* is pronounced "veethi"; in fact, the actual Pāli (and Sinhala) term is *veethi* (meaning "road"), since, like a road, the flow is continuous. But *vīthi* has become the established English word, just like "*pīti*" for the actual word "*preethi*." And, *citta* pronounced "chiththā."
- The convention for spelling Pali words is different from "standard English." See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."
- When we THINK ABOUT those external sensory inputs, that involve only *manodvāra citta vīthi*, and those normally have 10-12 *cittā* in them.
- Here we will describe both types of *citta vīthi*.

2. According to *citta niyama* (or Law of *Cittā*), a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* proceeds in a standard way for an object with great intensity (*atimahantārammaṇa citta vīthi*). That means the object is of high interest and also the conditions for the object to be grasped are optimum; for example, if it is a visual object, that visual object is of high interest and also the light conditions for seeing that object are good.

The sequence of *cittā* in a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* is as follows:

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Pañcadvāra Citta Vīthi

# in the Series	Citta Type	Symbol
1	Atīta Bhavaṅga (Past Bhavaṅga)	AB
2	Bhavaṅga Calana (Vibrating Bhavaṅga)	BC
3	Bhavaṅga Upaccheda (Arrest Bhavaṅga)	BU
4	Pañcadvāravajjana (Sense-door adverting consciousness)	PD
5	Cakkku Viññāṇa (eye-door perceiving consciousness) - for example	CV
6	Sampaṭicchana (Receiving consciousness)	Sam
7	Santīraṇa (Investigating consciousness)	San
8	Votthapana (Determining consciousness)	V
9-15	Javana	J
16, 17	Tadārammaṇa (Registering consciousness)	T

3. When the mind is not dealing with a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* or a *manodvāra citta vīthi*, it is in a "dormant state" called the *bhavaṅga. Bhavaṅga* ("bhava" + "aṅga" where "aṅga" means "part of"), thus represents the particular "*bhava*" of the living being, in this case, a "*human bhava*." The conventional English term is "life continuum", but we will use *bhavaṅga*.

- The meaning of *bhavaṅga* is further explained in, "State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vīthi – Bhavaṅga."
- The *bhavaṅga* state is conventionally represented by the following series as if they are a series of *bhavaṅga citta*:

..B B B B B B B B ……

- When the mind is in the *bhavaṅga* state, we do not "feel" anything. Just like an eye cannot see itself, the mind cannot "see" its own state. This is the "dormant state" in-between sense inputs. When one is in deep sleep or unconscious, one is fully in the *bhavaṅga* state.
- The mind is normally at the *bhavaṅga* state. It comes off the *bhavaṅga* state when an object of interest comes through one of the five physical senses (*cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā*, or *kāya indriya.*) A "*dhammā*" coming to the "*mana indriya*" can do that too.
- As we will see later, the mind is in the *bhavaṅga* (B) state most of the time even if the mind feels very active. Even during watching a movie, the mind is mostly in the *bhavaṅga* state (in between various types of *manodvāra* and *pañcadvāra citta vīthi*). Yet our brains are stressed to the limit since it needs to analyze the sights and sounds from the movie. See, "Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy."

4. We can represent the *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* in the above Table as follows:

B B B B B "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J T T" B_T B_T B_T B_T…..

It must be noted that this is the strongest *citta vīthi. There* are many variations WITHIN this *citta vīthi* where some do not have T or even J *citta*. Different types of *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* are discussed in detail in "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma", by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000).

- In the above case, the *bhavaṅga* temporarily changes to B_T due to the strong sensory input. For details, see, "State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vīthi – Bhavaṅga."

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- In the above example, we took a "*cakkhu viññāṇa*" event, i.e., what happens when a picture is presented to the mind via the "*eye indriya*" and the mind investigating that picture.
- First, the "mind is released from the "*bhavaṅga* state", and that takes three thought moments of AB (*atita bhavaṅga*), BC (*bhavaṅga calana*), BU (*bhavaṅga upaccheda*). Here "*atīta*" (or "*atheetha*") means "past", "*calana*" (or "*chalana*") means "move" or "vibrate", and "*upaccheda*" (or "*upachcheda*") means "stopped".
- Then the mind looks at the "five physical senses or *pañcadvāra* (PD)" and determines through which of the five sense inputs it is coming through, and then picks the relevant door, which in the present case we assumed to be *cakkhu viññāṇa* (CV).
- Then it investigates what that "picture" is, with the *sampaṭiccana* (Sam) *citta* and decides what type (like, dislike, etc) with the *santīraṇa* (San) *citta*. Based on those, the *Votthapana* (V) *citta* determines what actions to take.
- The all-important 7 *javana citta* arise based on that determination made with the *votthapana citta* (V). This is where potent *kamma* are done by the mind.
- The *votthapana citta* is the same as *manodvāra citta* (MD) where the decision is made (see below in *manodvāra citta vīthi*).

5. In the last two *Tadārammaṇa* (T) *cittā*, the mind takes in the "flavor" or the "essence" of the sense object and then falls back to the *bhavaṅga* state at the termination of the *pañcadvāra citta vīthi.* Only the very strong (*mahantaārammaṇna*) *citta vīthi* have them, and such strong impressions are "retained in one's memory" for a period of time (i.e. one will not forget immediately.

- Until one loses that "temporary memory" it becomes one's "temporary *bhavaṅga*." For example, when one hears about the death of a parent, one will become sad and that "sad state of mind" will be there for days.
- That is explained in detail in the post, "State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vīthi – Bhavaṅga."
- Of course, ALL happenings are recorded as *nāma gotta*. Even unimportant events are recorded. The ability to recall events and what detail depends on one's capabilities. Sometimes, such limited capabilities become possible due to "*puñña iddhi*" for even average humans. See, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."

The Simile of Tasting a Mango

1. A *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* is the procedure by which the mind experiences an external object (sight, sound, taste, etc.). The following analogy is given in the commentaries to the *Tipiṭaka*.

2. Suppose a weary traveler is asleep at the foot of a mango tree. This state of being asleep is analogous to the *bhavaṅga* state. Now a ripe mango drops to the ground near the traveler. This event is similar to the striking of a visible object of very great intensity at the "eye door".

3. The falling of the mango awakens the traveler and causes him to raise his head. This event is similar to the appearance of the visible object at the eye door causing the *bhavaṅga* to vibrate twice and become arrested; now he is not asleep anymore.

- The traveler opens his eyes and looks around to inquire what the disturbance was. This is similar to the *pañcadvāravajjana* (PD) *citta* adverting the mind towards the sense object.

4. The traveler sees the fallen mango. This is analogous to the eye-consciousness of seeing the object (CV). Now the man picks up the mango, which is similar to the *sampaṭicchana* (Sam) *citta* receiving the *cakkhu viññāṇa*. **By the way, *sampaṭicchana* comes from "*san*"+"*paṭicca*"; you can contemplate on this to get the basic idea; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)?".**

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- Then the man inspects the mango to see whether it is suitable for eating. This is similar to the *santīraṇa citta* ("*san*" + "*tirana* or "*theerana*," where "*theerana*" means "decide on whether the sense object is good or bad") investigating the sense object.
- Then the man decides that the mango is good and edible. This is similar to the *votthapana* ("*votta*" + "*pana*" meaning "deciding on what to do" or in Sinhala, "පණ දෙනවා(*pana denava*)" or "energize"). *vottapana* is pronounced "voththapana". If it was a rotten mango, one would decide to throw it away.
- Most Pāli terms can be understood well if one understands Sinhala. As I have mentioned before, it is the Sinhala language that is close to Pāli and not Sanskrit.

5. The man bites the mango seven times eating and enjoying the taste. This is similar to the occurrence of seven *javana cittā* enjoying the taste of the sense object. These are really the "actions corresponding to the decision made with the *votthapana citta*"; if the mango was bad, here the mind will generate appropriate *javana citta* to throw the mango. We will discuss such complex processes later.

- Then the man gathers the remnants of the fruit and the juice sticking on the teeth with his tongue and swallows twice. This is similar to the two *tadārammaṇa* (T) *cittā* following the *javana cittā.*
- Task completed, the man falls back to sleep. This is similar to the resumption of the *bhavaṅga* state.

6. **However, according to the *Tipiṭaka*, three *manodvāra citta vīthi* will follow each *pañcadvāra citta vīthi.*** The *javana cittā* in those three *citta vīthi* become increasingly strong, and it is *javana cittā* of the last *manodvāra citta vīthi* that instructs the brain to get the body to act (and initiate speech).

- We will discuss this in detail in the future posts. But it takes three more *manodvāra citta vīthi* to complete the sequence of a thought process initiated by a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi.* In fact, when one gets "absorbed" (for example, keeps looking at an attractive picture), one may be generating numerous of such "one plus three processes" with the mind falling back to the *bhavaṅga* state repeatedly in between.
- It will be easier to visualize this process by understanding what happens when we look at an object, for example, in scientific terms; see, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises" (especially starting with #4 of that post).

Now let us look at a typical *manodvāra citta vīthi.*

Manodvara Citta Vīthi

# in the Series	Citta Type	Symbol
1	Bhavaṅga Calana (Vibrating Bhavaṅga)	BC
2	Bhavaṅga Upaccheda (Arrest Bhavaṅga)	BU
3	Manodvāaravajjana (Mind-door adverting consciousness)	MD
4-10	Javana	J
11, 12	Tadārammaṇa (Registering consciousness)	T

1. We can represent the *manodvāra citta vīthi* in the above Table as follows:

B B B B B "BC BU MD J J J J J J T T" B B B B B…..

- Here it takes only two thought moments to be released from the "*bhavaṅga* state": BC (*bhavaṅga calana*), BU (*bhavaṅga upaccheda*).
- The mind already knows the *ārammaṇa* (thought object).

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- The *manodvāra citt*a (MD) is the same as *votthapana citta* where the decision is made.
- The 7 *javana cittā* arise, and then the *citta vīthi* ends with the two *Tadārammaṇa* (T) *cittā.*
- Just like in the case of a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi,* here also we considered an object with high intensity as an example. We will discuss the variations when handling signals of lower intensities as the need arises. However, this discussion is sufficient to get an idea about how the two types of *citta vīthi* function in the cognitive processes.

2. Now we can write the complete sequence of *citta* for a sense event initiated by a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi as:*

B B B B B "AB BC BU PD CV Sam San V J J J J J J J T T MD J J J J J J J T T MD J J J J J J J T T MD J J J J J J J T T" B B B B B…..

- As mentioned above, three *manodvāra citta vīthi* will run following the initial *pañcadvāra citta vīthi.* The object is recognized only after the four *citta vīthi.* But that happens within a billionth of a second.

3. On the other hand, *manodvāra citta vīthi* can arise just by themselves.

- Furthermore, even though the length of a *manodvāra citta vīthi* is normally 10-12 *cittā* for average people, a single *manodvāra citta vīthi* can have many *javana cittā* while in a *jhāna*.
- **In a *jhāna***, such long *manodvāra citta vīthi* are interrupted by *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* that arise in between. This is why one could hear external sounds while in a *jhāna*.

4. But **in a *jhāna samāpatti*,** a single *manodvāra citta vīthi* goes on uninterrupted for long times, with *javana* citta arising unceasingly :

B B B B B "BC BU MD J J J J J J J J J J ……..

- Thus there is no way to get back to the *bhavaṅga* state, or for a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* or another *manodvāra citta vīthi* to arise, and one becomes unaware of what happens in the outside world. Before getting into the *samāpatti*, one makes a determination on how long to stay in the *samāpatti.*
- This is why the real power of *javana citta* can be truly displayed by people who can get into *jhāna samāpatti.*
- This can be visualized crudely as follows: Suppose one is trying to light an oil lamp (oil-soaked wick) with the light of a matchstick. If one is not holding the lighted matchstick steady and the light moves in and out of the vicinity of the wick, it will not light. But if one can hold the light steady, it will light up quickly.
- That is probably too crude an analogy. A better one may be given for those who are familiar with lasers. One can drill holes in a metal plate using a laser beam. But the metal spot will not heat up and evaporate unless the laser beam is held steady at that spot. Being in a *jhāna samāpatti* is like holding a laser beam quite steady on one spot for long times.

It is important to realize that a *citta vīthi* always starts with an external sensory input due to a past *kamma*, i.e., due to a *kamma vipāka;* see, "Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāna."

Citta Vīthi for Attainment of *Magga Phala*

B B B "BC BU MD P U A G Pa Fr Fr" B B B

B B B "BC BU MD U A G Pa Fr Fr Fr" B B B

First is the *magga phala citta vīthi* for a normal person; the second is for one with "higher wisdom".

- B, BC, BU, MD are, as discussed above.

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- Then it goes through the *Parikamma* (P), *Upacara* (U), *Anuloma* (A), *Gotrabu* (G), Path (*magga*) (Pa), and Fruit (*phala*) (Fr).
- **As you can see, there is no connection to *jhāna*.** In particular, the *magga phala citta vīthi* does not go through a *jhāna citta*. Also, the *Gotrabu* (change of lineage) *citta* for *magga phala* is COMPLETELY DIFFERENT than that in the case of a *jhāna citta vīthi*.
- The change **of lineage here is to become an *Ariya* or a Noble Person.**
- In fact, the change to an *Ariya* happens even before the *Sotāpanna phala* moment, at the *Gotrabu* (G) moment. *Gotra* means "lineage" and *Gotrabu* is the change of lineage. **Thus, one would become a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* with the *Gotrabu citta*.**

Citta Vīthi for Attainment of *Jhāna*

B B B "BC BU MD P U A G Jh" B B B

B B B "BC BU MD U A G Jh" B B B

First above is the *jhāna citta vīthi* for a normal person. The second is for one with "higher wisdom".

- B, BC, BU, MD, P, U, A, G are, as discussed above.
- Then it goes through a *Jhāna* (Jh) *citta*.

12.2.7 Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power

Revised July 15, 2020

Javana Cittā Are Associated with *Abhisaṅkhāra*

1. The power of the human mind has been discussed in several posts starting with "Power of the Human Mind – Introduction." There are different kinds of *cittā* and the powerful ones are called *javana cittā* ("*javana*" means an arrow in flight; it can be highly potent).

- Such *javana cittā* are responsible for *abhisaṅkhāra*, those *saṅkhāra* that are potent and will lead to (good or bad) consequences. *Puññābhisaṅkhāra* are the meritorious *abhisaṅkhāra* that will lead to good consequences and *apuññābhisaṅkhāra* are the immoral *abhisaṅkhāra* that lead to adverse outcomes.
- *Javana citta* arise in both *pancadvara cittā vīthi* and *manodvara cittā vīthi* when the object is evident and strong; see, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

Vipāka Cittā Do Not Have *Javana* Power

2. Out of the 54 types of *cittā* in the *kāma loka* (the 11 lower realms including the human realm), 29 are *javana cittā*: 12 *akusala cittā*, 8 *mahā kusala cittā*, 8 *mahā kiriya cittā*, and the functional smile-producing *citta* (the latter nine *cittā* only *for an Arahant*).

- A *kusala citta* generates power for rebirth in human or above realms, AND also helps with progressing towards *Nibbāna* or "cooling down".
- When one does an *akusala citta*, one is generating power to form *kammic* energy for rebirth in the *apāyā* (lowest four realms).
- Thus for average human beings, there are only 20 cittā out of 54 that are *javana citta*: 12 for doing evil deeds and 8 for good deeds (here deeds means thought, speech or bodily action).

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- Thus, *vipāka citta vīthi* do not have *javana citta*. Therefore in the detection of any sense input (seeing, hearing, etc.), *javana citta* are absent. They are called *prittārammaṇa* (slight) and *atiparittārammaṇa* (very slight) *citta vīthi.* However, based on these *vipāka citta vīthi*, we MAY instantly initiate potent *atimahattārammaṇa* (very great) and *mahattārammaṇa* (great) *citta vīthi* that will have *javana citta* in them.
- Thus if we start making plans (buy that picture, re-listen to that song, etc) based on those visuals, sounds, etc., then those subsequent *citta vīthi* will have *javana citta* in them, and lead to *abhisaṅkhāra* (GENERATE *kammic* power).

Javana Power Depends on the Type of *Citta*

3. Not all ***akusala javana*** *citta* have the same power. Also see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma" and "12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage."

- Out of the eight greed-rooted *citta*, those four done with pleasure (*somanassa-sahagata*) are more robust than the four done with neutral feeling.
- Next, those associated with *micchā diṭṭhi* (or *diṭṭhi-sahagata*) are more powerful than the four generated without wrong vision (or *diṭṭhi-vippayutta*).
- The power of greed-rooted *cittā* depend on whether they arose spontaneously (sometimes erroneously labelled as *asaṅkhārika*) or occurred with the intention of receiving something in return, i.e., *sasaṅkhārika*.
- The two hate-rooted *akusala cittā* always arise with displeasure and are associated with aversion (dislike.) One that is spontaneous (unprompted) is stronger than the prompted.
- The two ignorance-rooted *akusala cittā* always arise with neutral feeling. The one that is based on *vicikicchā* is stronger than that based on *uddhacca*.

Javana Strength of *Akusala Citta*

4. The above list gives the order of strength of the *akusala citta* , and appear in that order in "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna".

- Thus the first *lobha citta* that is "connected with the wrong view, accompanied by pleasure" or in Pāli, "*somanassa-sahagata, diṭṭhi-sampayutta citta*" is the strongest *akusala javana citta*.
- The last of the 12 *akusala citta* is "one accompanied by equanimity and associated with high-mindedness" or in Pāli, "*upekkha-sahagata uddhacca-sampayutta citta*."

Javana Strength of *Kusala Citta*

5. The power of the human mind can work both ways, for the good or the bad. Now let us see how the eight *mahā kusala* (wholesome) *cittā* rank according to the *javana* power.

- Here again, there are four done with joyous heart (*somanassa-sahagata*) that take precedence over those done with neutral feeling.
- Next, those done with knowledge *are* called "*ñāṇa-sampayutta*" have higher power compared to those done without knowledge (*ñāṇa-vippayutta*). Here, knowledge could at two levels: understanding how laws of *kamma* work and an understanding of *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* at a higher level.
- Finally, they are sorted by whether spontaneous (higher) compared to prompted.

6. Thus the most potent *kusala citta* is "one accompanied by joy, associated with knowledge" or in Pāli, "*somanassa-sahagata, ñāṇa-sampayutta citta"*.

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Here one does a good deed with the full understanding of its benefits, and thus with a joyous heart. The action is spontaneous and joyful BECAUSE one is fully aware of its ethical consequences. Since it is automatic, the knowledge must be there in one's mind.

- The weakest *kusala citta* is, "one accompanied by the neutral mind, dissociated with knowledge, and for one's advantage" or in Pāli, "*upekkha-sahagata, ñāṇa-vippayutta, sasaṅkhārika citta"*. Here one may do a good deed without knowledge either on the prompting by others or after some deliberation. Such acts will bring benefits, but since they have less *javana* power, the benefits are less.

Some Examples of "*Javana* Power"

7. Let us take some examples for clarification.

- Some people are so deep in the wrong path, that they actually enjoy committing evil deeds. Or, they get into a mindset where such deeds become enjoyable. We have heard of instances of a person was killed by multiple stabbings with the body gruesomely mutilated. Such an act is the worst of the worst.
- It should be easy to imagine why the *javana* for *citta* associated with such "passionate" killings are very intense. The killer is absorbed in that act, and is generating potent mental power to carry out the physical act; by the way, any physical actitvity has origins in *citta*. The thoughts lead to actions. See, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation".
- That is also why a *kamma* becomes a "*kamma patha*" or a "strong *kamma*" for bodily action. One needs a strong *javana* to carry out that task. If one is aware of the consequences of such acts (i.e., do not have *micchā diṭṭhi* or wrong vision), then even if one started stabbing, one may likely that one may catch oneself and stop.

8. On the other hand, even the smallest act of kindness can bring many benefits if it was done with full understanding and a joyous heart. Here the "mental power" or the *javana* comes through knowledge or understanding. We see these kinds of 'small acts of kindness" all the time, and we can even share in those merits when our hearts become joyful too.

- For a wealthy person, it is easy to write a check for a lot of money. If it was done just to get publicity, or due to "outside pressure", it will not bring much benefit. If a poor person shares what he/she can with another person in a worse situation with joy, that will bring much more benefit.

Saṃvega – Indication of *Javana* Strength

9. High *javana* power can be expressed by the term "*sanvega*" (*san* + *vega*, where "*vega*" means fast.) See, "What is "San"? – Meaning of Saṃsāra" for the meaning of "*san*"). Therefore, "*sanvega*" (sometimes called "*samvega*") depicts a potent emotional condition. If it is to the "good" one will be doing *puññābhi saṅkhāra* (meritorious acts), and a bad act done with "*sanvega*" will be a potent *apuññābhi saṅkhāra* (immoral acts).

- In the literature "*sanvega*" is commonly written as "saṃvega"; as with many other such words, replacing "san" with "sam" leads to distortion of the meaning of the word. Other such misspelled words are *saṃsāra, samvedana, saṃyoga, saṃvara*; see, "What is "San"? – Meaning of Saṃsāra."
- However, some words like "*sammā*" ("*san*" + "*mā*") are correct, because that is phonetically correct.
- In the Sinhala language, "*sanvega*" is commonly used to describe emotionally intense situations, mostly for sad situations. However, we can see that it should be apply to all "potent" emotional situations.

Emotions Felt Close to the Heart, Not in the Brain

10. The mind and the heart are in close contact. Even that person who derived pleasure by stabbing someone many times, will have a heavy heart until death, no matter how bad a person he/she is. It is in the human nature. Of course, when we do a meritorious act too, we feel the joy in our hearts.

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- The reason that we "feel" at the heart is that citta arise in the "*hadaya vatthu*" that is located close to the physical heart. The *hadaya vatthu* is actually in the *manomaya kaya*, which is like a "energy-field" spread through the physical body. See, "Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body" and "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

Javana Strength Depends on the Level of Desire (Good or Bad)

11. The *javana* power makes a big difference in "how much engaged we are" in our thoughts. The potency of a good or an immoral *citta* critically depends on the strength of the desire to get it done. Three out of four bases of mental power, *chanda, citta, viriya,* originate due to this; see, "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipāda)."

- And the fourth factor of *vīmaṃsā* (reasoning/investigation) is important because that is how one gains the all-important *ñāṇa* (wisdom); see #5,#6 above. When one truly comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, that is leads to the cultivation/growth of the *paññā cetasika* reducing ignorance (*avijjā*).

It Is Good to "Re-live" Past Good Experiences

12. **Another thing that comes out of this analysis is that it is good to contemplate on the past good deeds and "re-live" that experience to gain *citta pasāda* or a joyful mind.**

- Similarly, it is NOT good to do that for past evil deeds. It is better to forget them and get a new start. If something like that comes to the mind, think of an opposite good deed and focus the mind on a good deed.
- That is part of "*Ānāpāna*." We need to keep and cultivate "good things" and "discard" bad things; see, "7. What is Ānāpāna?."
- Our thoughts are what ultimately matter, and they arise due to our character (*gathi*); the more we do "*Ānāpāna*" correctly, the more our "*gathi*" will change for the better.

13. Finally, These *javana citta* have the power to produce *suddhaṭṭhaka*, the fundamental building blocks of *rūpa;* see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

Next, "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description", ……

12.2.8 Cetasika – Connection to Gati

Abhidhamma can be a very useful tool to clarify various concepts given in the *suttā*, especially if different people try to interpret *suttā* in different ways; see, "Sutta – Introduction." Furthermore, it provides minute details on how the human mind gets the physical body (which is just a "shell" made out of inert matter) to do any and all bodily tasks.

1. In the introductory posts in *Abhidhamma* we saw that there are **seven universal *cetasika* (mental factors)** that arise with each and every *citta* (loosely translated as a thought); *citta* is pronounced "chiththā" and *cetasika* pronounced "chethasikā".

- Those 7 universal *cetasika* are essential in forming any kind of *citta*, whether it is an immoral (*akusala*) *citta*, a moral (*kusala*) *citta* or a *citta* that does not do any *kamma*. For the moment, let us concentrate on the 54 types of *cittā* in the *kāma loka*.
- The rest of the *cetasika* provide "character" to *cittā.* Whether a given *citta* is good or bad depends on whether a "good" or "bad" set of *cetasika* arise with it; see, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises." They are listed in the post "Cetasika (Mental Factors)" and you may want to print it out for reference when reading this post. There is no need to memorize them. With time, one may even know them by heart.

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- Out of the 54 *cittā* in the *kāma loka*, there are 12 *akusala citta* and 8 *kusala citta*. Other 34 are *vipāka citta* and *kriya* citta that do not generate *kammic* power.
- It may sound confusing all these terms, but you will get used to them! Try to get the essence.

2. Then there are six *cetasika* called **particulars (also called occasionals)** or *pakinnaka* that **MAY** appear in any type of *citta*. Therefore they do not determine the PURPOSE of the *citta*, but they HELP with any type of purpose that was intended.

- For example, *viriya cetasika* could be in a *kusala citta* and it can also be in an *akusala citta*. In either case, the *viriya cetasika* will HELP intensify the effort with that *citta*.

3. Out of a total of 52 *cetasika*, the other 39 (= 52-7-6) *cetasika* determine whether a given *citta* will be an *akusala citta* or a *kusala citta*.

- There are 14 *cetasika* (called *asobhana* or immoral or bad *cetasika*) that could be present in an *akusala citta*; out of those, 4 ALWAYS are present in any *akusala citta*; those 4 are *asobhana universals*.
- The other 25 *cetasika* (called *sobhana* or moral or good *cetasika*) can be present only in *kusala citta*, and 19 of those are ALWAYS in any given *kusala citta*; those 19 are *sobhana universals*.
- Therefore, 11 *cetasika* (7 universal plus 4 universal immoral) arise with each and every *akusala citta*. There may be other immoral and particular *cetasika* as well.
- There are 26 *cetasika* (7 universal plus 19 universal moral) arise with each and every *kusala citta*. Thus there are only 6 more moral *cetasika* that that do not arise with each and every *kusala citta*.

4. Therefore, it is those *sobhana and asobhana cetasika* that determine the *kammic* nature of a *citta*. If we want to get rid of all *akusala citta*, what we need to do is to remove the 14 *asobhana cetasika* from our minds (they come up automatically with our *gathi* and *āsavas*).

- **In other words, our *sansāric* habits ("*gathi*") and cravings ("*āsavas*") are embedded in those 14 *asobhana* (and *sobhana*) *cetasika*,** such as *lobha* and *dosa*. For example, one may have dominant "*lobha gathi*" (excess greed) or "*dosa gathi*" (strong hate); but normally, we have a mixture of many different inter-mixed *gathi*.
- In the same way, cultivating good "*gathi*" and "*cravings*" (basically for moral deeds) leads to "good *cetasika*."
- As we follow the Noble Eightfold Path, those 14 *asobhana cetasika* are reduced. When reaching the *Sotāpanna* stage, the two *asobhana cetasika* of *diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā* are REMOVED, and all others are reduced to some extent. In particular, *lobha* is reduced to *rāga* level and *dosa* is reduced to *paṭigha*. This why a *Sotāpanna* will never be born in the *apāyā*.
- *Raga* has 3 components: *kāma rāga*, *rūpa rāga*, and *arūpa rāga*, corresponding to attachment to the *kāma loka, rūpa loka*, and *arūpa loka* respectively. At the *Sakadāgāmī* stage, *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are REDUCED to the level that one will never be born at or below the human realm.
- At the *Anāgāmī* stage, both those (*kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*) are REMOVED and thus all bonds to the *kāma loka* are broken and one will never be born again in the *kāma loka*. Of course other remaining *asobhana cetasika* are reduced too.
- All *asobhana cetasika* are removed at the *Arahant* stage.

5. Thus we can see that this is yet another way of looking at what is involved in attaining *Nibbāna*. All these different ways of explaining are fully inter-consistent. There are more, but I am providing links to a few below.

Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?

The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas

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Key to Sotāpanna Stage – Diṭṭhi and Vicikicchā

What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)

6. We can easily see why **four immoral universal *cetasika*** arise with each and every *akusala citta*. These four are: *moha* (delusion or moral blindness), *ahirika* (shamelessness of wrong), *anottappa* (fearlessness of wrong), and *uddhacca* (restlessness).

- We do not realize, but when we get greedy or hateful enough, we can become morally blind. One loses any sense of decency just for a short time, but that is enough to commit an immoral act.
- Then we lose the fear of doing wrong and the shame of doing wrong because at that instant our minds are covered (it takes only a fraction of second to generate a thought and sometimes even to act on it if the *javana* is strong enough). This inevitably leads to a restless mind (*uddhacca*) too.

7. Now let us discuss the 7 pairs in the universal moral *cetasika list*, starting with the pair of *kayapassaddhi* (tranquility of mental body, which in turn lead to tranquility of the physical body itself); *cittapassaddhi* (tranquility of consciousness). All these 7 pairs are states of mind and body that correspond to some "cooling down". When one is doing a *kusala kamma*, the body and mind both relax and "cool down". This is the first glimpse of *Nibbāna* as one is already in the mundane eightfold path.

- This is why the Buddha said that the state of the mind does affect the state of the body. When one starts on the *lokuttara* eightfold path, these *cetasika* all get stronger,one starts feeling the "*nirāmisa sukha*," and thus one becomes motivated to follow the Path.
- But it is important to emphasize (as I have stated many times), things COULD get worse before getting better. **When one is depriving the mind of things that is has gotten used to, it does not like that.** Until it clearly sees the benefits of staying in the Path, it may try to pull one strongly in the "wrong direction". One needs to be persistent, and this is where the *satara iddhipāda* (*chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṃsā*) need to be cultivated aggressively.

8. It is important to realize that the 19 universal moral *cetasika* can arise in ANYONE regardless of one's religion or any other "label". When doing a good deed (or speech or thought), these moral *cetasika* ALWAYS arise. They can arise when one is on the mundane eightfold Path (nothing to do with a religion *per se*); see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

- Also note that *hiri* (shame of immoral deeds) and *ottappa* (fear of the consequences of immoral deeds) are the two that are opposed to the immoral ones of *ahiri* and *anattappa*. This means regardless of the religion, one has been able to sort out right from wrong (moral from immoral) in that instance.
- Then there is *saddhā* (faith) and *sati* (mindfulness), both of which grow even more after embarking on the Path. Here, *saddhā* is not the faith in Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha, but the faith that such a moral act will bring about good outcomes.
- And *sati* is NOT *Sammā Sati*, but just the mindfulness of being involved in a moral act. However, once one gets on the *lokuttara* eightfold Path, it can become ***Sammā Sati.***
- The other two familiar ones are *alobha* and *adosa cetasika*; they are of course opposite to the immoral ones of *lobha* and *dosa*. *Alobha* is not mere absence of *lobha*, but also embodies generosity. *Adosa* is not mere absence of *dosa*, but embodies compassion.
- Then there is *tatramajjhattata* (neutrality of mind; "*majjhatta*" means "in the middle"). This is not *upekkha*, which is one of the *saptha bojjanga*; see, "37 Factors of Enlightenment."
- Thus far, we have discussed the 19 universal moral *cetasika* in #7 and #8. Now let us discuss the 6 moral *cetasika* that arise only with some *kusala citta*.

9. It is easier to list those 6 moral *cetasika* that do not necessarily arise with each *kusala citta*. These are the ones that NEED TO BE CULTIVATED with true comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

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- They are: ***Sammā Vaca*** (speech that is conducive to eliminate "*san*"), ***Sammā Kammanta*** (actions that are conducive to eliminate "*san*") ***Sammā Ajiva*** (life style that is conducive to eliminate "*san*"), *karuna* ("*Ariya*" compassion), mudita ("*Ariya*" appreciative joy), and *paññā* (wisdom) which is the same as ***Sammā Diṭṭhi***.
- Of course those are developed to some extent when someone lives one's life morally, but they will NEVER grow to higher stages until one understands *anicca, dukkha, anatta* at least to some extent.
- This is why *sammā vaca* is not just "good speech" or *sammā kammanta* is not just "good deeds". *Sammā* ("*san*" + "*ma*") means "with the intention of removing '*san*'", i.e., done with an understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*; see, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?."

10. However, *amoha* does not mean wisdom (*paññā*)! *Amoha* is not a *cetasika*, but is a root cause. **It is in all *kusala citta* in the sense that the immoral *cetasika* of *moha* is not present at that moment, i.e., the mind is not "covered".**

- Some people interpret *amoha* to be *paññā*; not so. *Paññā* (wisdom) or *lokuttara Sammā Diṭṭhi* needs to be cultivated via comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and starts when one is on the *Sotāpanna magga*; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma."
- The more *paññā* one has, it is more likely that one would be generating *amoha* thoughts more frequently!
- No matter how intelligent one is, one cannot start cultivating *paññā* until one hears about the correct interpretations of *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*

11. Now let us briefly revisit the 6 **particulars (also called occasionals)** or *pakinnaka* that we mentioned in #2 above. They are: *vitakka* (focused application), *vicara* (sustained application); *adhimokkha* (dominate), *viriya* (effort), *pīti* (joy); *chanda* (desire).

- As we can readily see, these six can be in *kusala* or *akusala citta* and make them stronger.
- This is why it is said that "*dhammo ha ve rakkati dhammacari*" or "dhamma will guide one in the direction of dhamma that one follows", applies to both moral AND immoral paths.
- *Vitakka* (focused application of thoughts), when cultivated in the *lokuttara* Path, can become ***sammā saṅkappa***. Similarly, *viriya (effort) can become* ***sammā vayama***.

12. Therefore, *abhidhamma* helps us understand the connection between *cetasika* and *gathi*, and how "bad *gathi"* are removed at each stage of *Nibbāna* (see #4 above). We can also see from the above discussion how 8 of the *cetasika* (related to "good *gathi*") turn to components of the Noble Eightfold Path when one starts on the *Sotāpanna magga*. Actually, we discussed only 7 above (they are highlighted in bold red). The eighth one is the universal *cetasika*, *ekaggata* (one-pointedness) that can become ***sammā samādhi***.

- However, depending on one's behavior and understanding, all these eight could be developed in the direction of the immoral (*micchā* eightfold path), mundane moral (*lokiya* eightfold path), or the *lokuttara* Noble eightfold Path; see, "Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi."
- Looking from different perspectives there could be many types of *samādhi*. For a discussion on three other types of *samādhi*, see, "What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness."

13. This world is very complex. And the Buddha has analyzed it in many different ways. But they are all self-consistent. If one can get some traction, there is no other pleasure better than the pleasure of finding out about this world, pleasure of Dhamma.

- It is said that, "*sabba rathin Dhamma rathin jinathi.*" Here "*rathi*" means "taste", thus "from all tastes in the world, taste of Dhamma wins". The "taste of Dhamma" optimizes for an *Anāgāmī.*

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- However, when one attains the *Arahanthood*, it is said that one has lost all interest in all worldly things, including that of Dhamma. That is why the Buddha said, "A boat should be used just until one crosses a river; one should not carry it after crossing the river. Just like that even my Dhamma needs to be used only to find the true nature of this world, and then it should be discarded too".
- When one reaches the *Anāgāmī* stage, one would have lost all cravings for worldly pleasures (in *kāma loka*), but one really likes to learn Dhamma at every opportunity. And there is no end to it. This is why the Buddha gave the above advice, especially for the *Anāgāmīs*.

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12.3 Mind and Consciousness

What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?

What is a Thought?

What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important

What is Consciousness?

1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction

2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms

3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious

12.3.1 What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?

Revised January 17, 2019

1. Everything that we experience comes through six "doors" or "*āyatana*" we have to the outside worlds: eye, ear, nose, tongue, body, and the mind. Through those six doors we can see pictures, hear sounds, smell odors, taste food, feel things physically by touch, and be aware of concepts (say, mundane things like remembering past events or make plans about future events, or think about a black hole in the middle of the universe or a mathematical concept).

- The six sense faculties (and the corresponding six external "*āyatana*" which are *rūpa, sadda, gandha, rasa, pottabba, dhamma* or visuals, sounds, smells, tastes, touches, and concepts) are what the Buddha called "*sabba*," or "everything." These are 12 *āyatana* (6 internal and 6 external).

2. All those sense experiences are done with *citta* or thoughts. But this is probably not a good translation. We normally associate a "thought" with an idea or one visual event, etc., a moment of "experience." But *citta* is very fast and no one can experience a single *citta* which lasts a billionth of a second or less; see, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises."

- **Don't be fooled by the title of that post.** It has a simple description of how the "mind" puts together all six sense inputs to give the illusion that we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think all at the same time (at least start reading at #3 there).
- It is a good idea to also read the posts, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means" first.

3. When we look at an object, the "eye" generates visual consciousness (*cakkhu viññāṇa*): Comprehending what is seen is accomplished via a series of very fast thought processes. There are billions of thoughts per second, so each citta or thought moment is billionth of a second; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." Let us see how the mind "sees" an object in a series of very fast "snapshots" alternating between the "eye" and the "mind":

- The "eye" captures a snapshot of the object and the brain transfers that captured information to mind: that process takes 17 thought moments or *cittā* (let us abbreviate it as TM); this series of TM is called a **"sense input *citta vīthi*" (or *pañcadvāra citta vīthi*)**. Next the mind analyzes that "imprint" with three *citta vīthi* that involve only the mind. These latter **"mind-only *citta vīthi" (manodvāra citta vīthi)*** are shorter, around ten TM, and try to discern what the object is. It may first try to discern the color of the object for example.
- Then the "eye" takes another snapshot and transfers that "imprint" to the mind, which in turn receives it in a *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* containing 17 TM, analyzes that in 3 more *manodvāra citta vīthi* containing about 10 TM, and makes better sense of the color. This "back and forth" process goes on until the object is determined.

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- This process is slowed down only due to the time needed for the brain to put together the information captured by one of the five sense faculties (*pañcadvāra*), for example, the eyes. This time is of the order of 10 milliseconds; see, "What is a Thought?." Thus there can only be about 100 (600 if they are processed in parallel) or so "sense events" per second; since science show that the brain has different regions for processing different sense inputs, the latter number (600) is probably right.

4. Since these *citta vīthi* run very fast, once the brain sends an "information packet" to the mind it is processed very quickly, within billionth of a second. Thus the process is slowed down only by the brain. **Still, everything about the object is grasped in a small fraction of a second.**

- Now, many of you may be thinking, "this looks like some far off theory made up by someone." The Buddha said he experienced everything that he taught. Phenomena in this fast time scale are discernible only to a Buddha.
- Once the Buddha explained the key aspects to Ven. Sariputta, it was Ven. Sariputta and his group of *Bhikkhus* that developed the Abhidhamma, where all these details were worked out. It took generations of *bhikkhus* to develop the Abhidhamma to the final form that was recited at the Third *Sangayana* (Buddhist Council) and was written down in the *Tipiṭaka* in 29 BCE (we know that there were many *Arahants* before 100-200 CE; see the timeline in "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline"). For us, the truth of these minute details become apparent as all observable phenomena are EXPLAINED using all three forms of Dhamma in the *Tipiṭaka*: *Sutta, Vinaya*, and *Abhidhamma*).

5. As all this information comes in, the mind recognizes the object; this is ***saññā* or perception**. Based on that recognition **feelings (*vedanā*)** are generated (for example when we see a friend we generate a happy feeling; if it is someone we don't like, it is a unhappy feeling, etc).

- Once everything about the object is grasped, then if it is an "interesting object", the mind may start its own "wheeling around" process: the "*pati +iccha sama+uppada*" or *paṭicca samuppāda* process leading to the **accumulation of *saṅkhāra*:** see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction," "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand," "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka," and other related posts. All these tie up together, but one needs to be a bit patient since there are many inter-coupled concepts.

6. Thus experiencing a visual object in the above example generates all kinds of mental phenomena: *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and during this whole process we have the *viññāṇa* or *citta* flowing. *Viññāṇa* is the momentary consciousness, a *citta*. In the above example, it alternates between visual consciousness (*cakkhu viññāṇa*) and the mind consciousness *(mano viññāṇa*).

- The baseline state of a *citta*, i.e., when the mind is not looking at an external object or thinking about it, is called "*bhavaṅga*." Here we do not "feel" anything, for example when we are in deep sleep. The mind falls back to the *bhavaṅga* state even in between *pañcadvāra citta vīthi.*

7. Same kind of process happens with any of the five physical senses (the "back and forth switching" between the sense faculty and the mind). **When someone is just remembering a past event or planning something, those are exclusively mind processes (only *manodvāra citta vīthi* take place).**

Now let us look at some details on how the mind processes all the "signals" from the real world where multiple "signals" come in.

- When we watch a movie, what happens is the projector projects about 30-50 static pictures per second on the screen; a movie is a series of static pictures. When the projection rate is above 30 frames a second or so, our eyes see a continuous movie, not individual frames. **Thus even though cittā run at billions per second, we do not "experience" them individually, not even close.**
- This fast rate of *citta vīthis* (which, as we saw above run at about 100 *citta vīthis* per second) also make it possible to perceive all six inputs from the outside world "simultaneously"; at least we experience them as "simultaneous." For example, we can be watching a movie and enjoying some popcorn; so we see and hear the movie, and taste popcorn and feel the popcorn cup, and also may be thinking about something related to the scene on the screen; all at the "same time."

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- *Citta vīthi* just alternate among the six sense inputs; it is possible only because there are hundreds of *citta vīthi* per second. Since it happens so fast, we experience them all as "simultaneous", just like the static pictures projected at a fast rate on a movie screen are perceived as a continuous "movie."
- Not only that, but the mind can ignore a multitude of "signals" that are of no interest to one's own habits ("*gathi*") or cravings ("*āsavas*"). And those depend on the individual. Two friends could be walking on the street, and one (woman) stops abruptly and starts looking at a dress on a shop window. The other (man) looks at it, shrugs, and wants to move on; he would not have even noticed it.

8. As we saw, information to the mind comes via the brain. All five physical sense inputs (vision, hearing, smell, taste, touch) come through the brain. Thinking about concepts involves the brain too (those involve only the *manodvāra citta vīthi*), and that happens much faster compared to the processes associated with the five physical senses; we will discuss that later.

- When someone gets old, the brain starts functioning less efficiently; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)." Or, the brain may get damaged due to a *kamma vipāka*; for example, getting Alzheimer's disease is a *kamma vipāka*.
- As the body gets old, various other body parts also start functioning less efficiently and are also vulnerable for many *kamma vipāka* to come to fruition. *Kamma vipāka* are not deterministic; they come to bear fruit only when conditions become suitable (see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka"). Thus meditation and regular exercise help keep both the body and the mind (through an efficiently working brain) in good condition.

9. In any case, the mind goes to the "baseline or dormant state" called "*bhavaṅga*" even in between these *citta vīthi*. When the mind is fairly inactive, say when someone is dozing off, the mind is mostly in the *bhavaṅga* state. When someone is unconscious or in deep sleep, it is in the *bhavaṅga* state for the whole duration. When seeing a dream, the mind is active.

- Even when *citta vīthis* run at a fast rate of about 600 per second (say, while watching a movie or while playing a competitive sport), the mind drops to the *bhavaṅga* state while the brain is processing those "10 millisecond information packets", as discussed above.
- The above discussion is all about receiving information from the outside world and then getting attached to "things" ("*taṇhā*"), generating *mano saṅkhāra*, etc.

10. Based on that process, we may decide to take further action too, either verbally or bodily, thus generating *vacī saṅkhāra* and *kaya saṅkhāra*: We may speak or do some physical activity. All those are done with the mind too, and each action done with thought process or *citta vīthi*.

- This is why the Buddha said, "*mano pubbangama dhamma*, ,,,," i.e., "mind precedes everything that we do…." **We cannot even lift a finger without generating a *citta vīthi*, i.e., without the initiation by the mind.** The physical body, with the brain acting as a "sophisticated control center", helps the mind to achieve whatever physical activity it wishes; see, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation!."

Further reading: "A Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2010). This book has summarized *citta* and *cetasika* very well. But discussions on *paṭicca samuppāda* or *anicca, dukkha, anatta* are not correct.

Next, "What is Consciousness?", …….

12.3.2 What is Consciousness?

Revised July 16, 2020

1. Philosophers through the ages have struggled to figure out how consciousness arises in a human being. For "materialists" everything that makes a human being originates in the body, and they have been trying to explain consciousness in terms of something that comes out from the workings of the brain.

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- For the "dualist" consciousness is totally distinct from the material body, and falls into the realm of theistic religion (related to a "soul").
- According to the Buddha, consciousness, together with the body, are two of the five "aggregates" that a human being consists of. **And Consciousness does not arise from the body, but arises with the body at the conception.**

2. First of all, let us define consciousness.

- The Buddha said that being conscious is "being aware," but with feelings and perceptions, and the ability to "recall the past."
- There are several definitions of consciousness in modern science, but the general consensus among the scientists and philosophers is that the state of being conscious is a condition of being aware of one's surroundings as well as one's own existence (or self-awareness).
- Therefore, we could say that science and Buddhism are attributing similar the same meaning to the word "consciousness".
- However, the Buddha's definition of consciousness takes into account the critical roles played by the *vedanā* (feelings), *saññā* (perceptions), and the *manasikāra cetasika* among 52 other mental factors (*cetasika*), which combine to produce the *viññāṇa* which can be roughly translated as consciousness.

3. As to the origins of consciousness, we have three "theories":

- Contemporary science is totally matter-based: the universe started with the "big-bang" which created all existing matter, and all living beings "evolved" from this inert matter, and thus consciousness also evolved by some (yet unknown) manner.
- The theistic religions believe, of course, that humans were created with built-in consciousness by an Almighty-God, and animals were also created (sans consciousness).
- The Buddha's is different from both above: It states that living beings (humans and animals) with built-in consciousness are different from inert matter, but they were not created. Rather, there is no traceable beginning to sentient life; life always existed, and it will exist forever (until *Nibbāna* is attained). Everything has a cause, so does life.

4. Consciousness is more than registration of a visual event, or an auditory event, for example. It has associated a variety of mental factors such as *saññā* (perception) and *vedanā* (feelings).

- A camera captures an image of a cat, but it is not aware of the presence of the cat. On the other hand, a dog sees a cat and becomes aware of its presence. It not only sees the cat, but knows exactly where it is and can try to catch it.
- Have you ever thought about how we can not only see things, but know exactly where they are? Without this ability, we can not even walk without bumping into things. How do we know that the person in front of us is only a few feet away? Consciousness is associated with a sentient being with a MIND. Science cannot yet explain this capability.

5. There is also the issue of the phenomenal quality of the conscious experience: qualia, subjective feelings, the redness of red, the warmness of warmth, etc. How do these arise in a being made up of inert atoms? There are basically two approaches to solve this problem in modern philosophy and science:

- One is that it arises as an emergent property in the neuronal activities in the brain. The other is the proposal of duality by Rene Descartes in the 17th century that persists to the present; see, for example, David Chalmers, "The Character of Consciousness", (2010).
- A subset of these scientists believe that consciousness is associated with the microtubules in a cell (for example, see "The Emerging Physics of Consciousness" Ed. by Jack A. Tuszynski (2006) and John Smythies, "Brain and Consciousness: The Ghost in the Machines", Journal of Scientific Exploration, vol.

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23, No. 1, pp. 37-50, (2009)). Despite much research, the question of how qualia and subjective feelings arise from dead matter remains a mystery.

- Just because a cell responds that does not necessarily mean it has consciousness; the cell can expand and contract (chemical reactions) in response to environmental stimuli. In a way, something similar happens when a plant turns towards sunlight; of course, plant life is not sentient. Thus, just because an entity responses to outside influence does not necessarily mean the entity is "mentally aware" of the outside influence, i.e., that it is conscious.

6. Therefore, all these scientists and philosophers are a long way off of solving the issue of the four mental aggregates of feelings, perceptions, volitional formations (*saṅkhāra*), and consciousness that make up the mental aspects of a human being. They are mainly focusing on consciousness and perception at this early stage, and even then are totally disregarding the intrinsic mental nature. It will be interesting to see what progress they can make by just taking a totally materialistic approach.

7. There is evidence, though, that some leading scientists are beginning to suspect that a complete "world view" cannot be achieved without taking into account the mental aspects. This trend started with the invention of quantum mechanics at the beginning of the 20th century, and is gaining traction slowly. Some interesting ideas are discussed in a number of books including "Wholeness and the Implicate Order" (by David Bohm, 1980), "Quantum Enigma" (by Bruce Rosenblum and Fred Kuttner, 2006), "Biocentrism" (by Robert Lanza, 2009).

- However, attempts to explain the mind as a manifestation of quantum phenomena will also fail, because it is the mind that precedes matter; see, "The Double Slit Experiment – Correlation between Mind and Matter?."

8. Consciousness (*viññāṇa*) discussed in this section does NOT take account the fact that consciousness of any living being (other than an *Arahant*) is contaminated by defilements. This our awareness is not pure; it is like looking through a foggy window. This is discussed in the "Viññāṇa (Defiled Consciousness)" and "Expanding Consciousness by Purifying the Mind."

Next, "1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction", ……

12.3.3 What is a Thought?

Revised January 24, 2019

There are many confusing terms in *Abhidhamma* like *citta* and *mano* which have been differently interpreted in different books. In order to clarify these concepts, I am writing a few posts in the "Dhamma Concepts" section under "Mind and Consciousness" starting with: "1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction." I highly recommend reading those, and especially, "3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious."

1. In Buddha Dhamma, a thought or a *citta* is the briefest moment of awareness experienced by a sentient being. *Citta* is pronounced "chiththa." There are well over billion of *cittā* (plural of *citta*) in the blink of eye.

- Let us keep in mind that a *citta* takes much smaller than a billionth of a second. What we experience is the cumulative effect of millions of *cittā*.

2. A pure *citta* only has seven *cetasika* (*phassa, saññā, vedanā, cetana, ekaggata, jivitindriya, and manasikara*) in it; see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)." Thus it is the purest form a "thought", but it is too brief for anyone to experience.

- The first thing to note is that one will never be able to experience a single thought if we mean by a thought to be a *citta*, even though we say, "I just had a thought". **The briefest awareness that we actually experience** is probably a fraction of a second; Scientists say it is about 10 milliseconds. But that 10 millisecond time is mostly spent by the brain in processing the sense input; once that is done, a series of

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citta with 17 *cittā* flow in a very brief time (less than a billionth of a second), and that is what is registered in the mind. We will discuss this later in detail.

- This series of *citta* with 17 *cittā* is called a *citta vīthi* (pronounced "chiththa veethi"); see below.

3. Even a single *citta* has three phases: *uppada* (rising), *thiti or thithi* (reached peak but still changes), and *bhanga* (dissolution). Thus a *citta* arises and fades away very fast.

- **Only a Buddha can see such details as I pointed out in the Introduction.** Even people with highest *abhiññā* powers (attained via *jhānā*) cannot even come close to seeing such details.
- This is why *Abhidhamma* is a special section of Buddha Dhamma that needs to take "as is", i.e., we just have to believe what the Buddha said. We cannot hope to verify these details by our own experience (for example that there are a certain number of *citta* in a *citta vīthi* as discussed below). Yet, *Abhidhamma* is very valuable in clarifying any issue down to the minute detail.

4. A pure *citta* with 7 *cetasika* does not last. Even though it starts as such a pure *citta*, within the duration of the citta itself (less than a billionth of a second), it gets contaminated by either a set of bad *cetasika* like *lobha* (greed), *issa* (envy) or a set of good cetasika like *saddhā* (faith) and *sati* (mindfulness).

- Before it starts decaying, it goes through NINE STAGES to become *viññāṇakkhandho* (this is NOT the aggregate as in the common usage of *viññāṇakkhandha*; rather, here the mind has coupled the information in the previous stages of this *citta* with past *viññāṇa* and future *viññāṇa* that are in the mind and has made a "composite").
- **However, the convention is to call this whole process still a *citta*.**
- All this happens in less than a billionth of a second! This process keeps repeating in the *citta* to follow and the process is cumulative, i.e., as more and more *citta* flow by, the awareness *of the event* gets stronger, and we actually begin to feel it.
- It may be a good idea to read about *citta vīthi* before proceeding: "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

5. **Thus what we experience is the cumulative effect of numerous *citta vithis***. That is why the Buddha talked about *kandhas* (which means "heaps" in Pāli or Sinhala) as in "heaps" of feelings (*vedanākkhandha*), perceptions (*saññākkhandha)*, volitions (*saṅkhārakkhandha)*, and consciousness (*viññāṇakkhandha)*; those are the "heaps" that we actually experience in a "thought".

- If *cittā* fly by that fast, and captures six kinds of possible "inputs" (through the five physical senses and the mind itself), how do we "experience" seeing, hearing, etc "at the same time" but still sort them out?

6. This is because the mind is the most powerful entity in this world. All five physical senses just provide traces of inputs ("memory imprints"), and billions of them arise and perish each second. The mind keeps a record of all past events and MAKES A COMPOSITE SENSE EXPERIENCE moment-by-moment.

- For example when we hear someone say "apple", even the letter "a" is comprehended by the mind via billions of *citta*; then "p" is captured, and by that time "a" sound is gone from the ear.
- We speak (and are able to understand) about 150 words/minute. The minimum "packet of information" **that the brain (not the mind) can process** is estimated to be about a hundredth of a second (10 milliseconds) by the scientists. This comes about 1-2 letters in such a "packet".
- When it has captured the whole word "apple", the mind automatically matches that with all the past memories and instantly produces an awareness or a mental picture of an apple; **past memories, as well as hopes for future, are recalled by the *mansikāra cetasika* and the *citta* is "put together" by the *cetanā cetasika*.**

7. The mind can do this because it can process billions of *citta vīthi* per second!

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- But there is a "bottleneck" at the brain, which takes a relatively long time to process. The brain takes a relatively long time to process a "packet" of information that comes in.
- **Therefore, the mind falls back to the *bhavaṅga* state in between the comprehending of information packets.** For example, right after receiving the letter "a", it falls to the *bhavaṅga* state and waits until the next packet with "p" comes.

8. Furthermore, the mind is capable of processing multiple inputs (received via the five senses) that are coming in mixed up.

- For example, after hearing the letter "a" that comes through the ears, the mind may get a "packet" with information about the smell of the apple. But the mind is capable of "sorting out" these different inputs.
- It is also able to carry out its own mental processes (thinking and coming to conclusions about what is perceived through the five senses by comparing it with past memories) such a fast speed, that it appears to be done in "real-time".
- There is nothing that is faster than the mind in this world; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)." Also, see the previous post, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises."

9. Now the mind "knows" what that person was referring to, and has a mental image of an apple.

- If someone hears the word, "lemon", one could even feel the sour taste of lemon; the mind brings it back from the past memories.
- Even if we see just the outline of a familiar person at a distance, the mind "fills in the blanks" and flashes an image of that person in your mind so you know who it is.

10. One sensory "event" does not happen in one *citta.* A sensory event from one of the five physical senses is captured by a single *citta* (say, *cakkhudvāra citta* for a seeing event), but that information is processed by a string of *cittā* with 17 *cittā* in it; this "string of *cittā*" is called a *citta vīthi* (pronounced "chiththa veethi"). A *citta vīthi* for 'seeing" is referred to as a *citta vīthi* at the "eye door" or the eye, one for "hearing" occurs at the "ear door" or the ear, etc.

- When one *citta vīthi* provides a sensory input, that information is then processed by three *citta vīthis* that involves only the mind; this *citta vīthi* "at the mind-door" is variable; it has around 12 *citta* normally. But in a *jhāna samāpatti,* which is solely a mind door process, there can be a very large number of *citta* without interruption.
- Thus there are two types of *citta vīthi* involved in processing a sensory input: a long one with 17 citta to CAPTURE an input from one of the five physical senses (*pancadvara*) AND three *manodvara citta vīthi* (at the mind-door) with about 12 *citta*. Both types are thus involved in cognition (awareness) processes; there are other processes by the mind that we will discuss later.
- Only one *citta vīthi* runs at a given time; they do not overlap.

11. Thus it is mind-boggling if we try to imagine the frantic pace the mind works at. At this point, it may be a good idea to look at an analogy to simplify things a bit.

- A movie is generated by a series of static pictures. When a movie is projected on a screen, static pictures are projected at a rate of about 30 frames a second, and we see the movie as a continuous progression of events; if the projection rate is low, we can see it frame by frame or as "packets of information" separately. When we watch the movie, we do not perceive those static pictures or "packets of information", but we perceive a continuous progression without any gaps.
- This was described in #4 of the previous post, "Citta and Cetasika – How Vinnana (Consciousness) Arises."

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12. In the same way, when we perceive that our mind is hearing a word, but in reality that word is the result of many *citta vīthi* originated at the ear door; and the scene that appears simultaneous is the composite of many *citta vīthi* coming through the eye door and none of it happens "at the same time".

- Just like the movie projected at 30-50 frames a second, *citta vīthi* are generated at many frames a second. (I had previously mentioned billions of *cittā* and that is not correct; the flow of *citta vīthi* is subsided by the processing time of about 10 milliseconds needed by the brain to process each each sense input). Thus we feel that we are watching, hearing, tasting, smelling, touching, and thinking all at the same time.
- **To repeat for emphasis:** Our minds processes probably less than 100 *citta vīthi* per second. However, each *citta vīthi* with 17 *citta* (for five sense inputs) or about 10 *citta* (for mind inputs) and each of those *citta vīthi* take less than billionth of a second. Even though it takes the brain to process a sense input about 20 milliseconds or so, that information is grasped by the mind in less than a billionth of a second.
- While the brain is processing a sensory input, the mind falls back to the *bhavaṅga* state.

13. Just like a movie reel, there is actually a tape (not a physical one) that is recorded in the "mind plane"; this is the origin of the "*nama gotta*" discussed in, "Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra." That tape is there forever, and allows one with *abhiññā* powers to look back to any time in the past; see, "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."

- Therefore in order to verify rebirth or to look at really old memories, all one needs to do is to develop *abhiññā* powers! And there are people, including my teacher *Theros*, who can do this today.

14. A *citta* evolves into *viññāṇa* and that is actually what we experience; see, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations."

- There is only one *citta* at a time. But there is a memory, as we just discussed. And that memory is normally hidden because the mind is covered up by the defilement, and when one develops *abhiññā* powers what one is really doing is to clean up the mind so everything becomes clear.
- One who develops *abhiññā* powers through *anāriya jhānā* just let the gunk settle at bottom and see just the upper layers; but one who has developed *abhiññā* powers through *Ariya jhānā* is doing that by "cleaning up" the gunk so a much more penetration to deeper past is possible; see, "Solution to a Wandering Mind – Abandon Everything?."

15. Thus any of individual sense experiences are VERY BRIEF (the duration of a *citta vīthi*). **It is the mind that puts everything together and presents us with a "movie- like" experience.** This is what the Buddha meant when he told Bahiya Daruciriya in the *Bāhiya Sutta* (*Udāna* 1.10). From that *sutta*, "*diṭṭhe diṭṭhamattaṃ bhavissati, sute sutamattaṃ bhavissati, mute mutamattaṃ bhavissati, viññāte viññātamattaṃ bhavissatī'ti*" or "seeing is just a trace of seeing, hearing is just a trace of hearing, enjoying is just a trace of enjoyment, experiencing is just a trace of experience".

- It is the mind (specifically the *viññāṇa khandha* or the aggregate of consciousness) that put everything together and present it as a smooth movie-like experience.
- Here, *diṭṭa, suta muta, viññāta* mean "seeing, hearing, enjoying (with smell, taste, and touch), and consciousness respectively; "*mantan*" means "a *mātra*" in Sinhala or "a trace" in English. Thus "seeing" is just trace of a visual event lasting only a billionth of a second. Then it passes away and a new one comes in. It is like taking a series of pictures with a camera. It is the mind that makes everything appear solid, permanent, and stable. This is the deeper meaning of that verse.

16. If all this appear too technical, do not worry about it. It took me a long time to figure it out. I got the final details worked out recently by also combining information from recent scientific studies. The Buddha could not use today's technical terms, but what he said in summary form is completely compatible with science. But science is still way behind in terms of the bigger picture.

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Next, "What is in a Thought? Why Gathi are so Important?", ……

12.3.4 What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?

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There are many confusing terms in *Abhidhamma* like *citta* and *mano* which have been differently interpreted in different books. In order to clarify these concepts, I am writing a few posts in the "Dhamma Concepts" section under "Mind and Consciousness" starting with: "Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāna), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction."

1. In the previous post, we saw that a thought (*citta*; pronounced "chittha") lasts much less than a billionth of a second. The more surprising part is that each citta has structure! Each *citta* "contains" multiple *cetasika* (mental factors.) Actually it is more accurate to say that each *citta* rises with a number of *cetasika* and they all perish together within a billionth of a second.

- Of course, a *citta* does not arise by itself . It is in a *citta vīthi* involved in "sensing the outside world." That can occur via one of the six senses. Such a *citta vīthi* has either 17 *cittā* (for those sensing events involving the five physical senses) or about 10 *cittā* in *citta vīthi* involving only the mind. In between those, the mind is at the "*bhavaṅga*" state, which is commonly described as "*bhavaṅga citta*."
- The *citta* (including those "*bhavaṅga citta*") flow CONTINUOUSLY within a life and then start a new stream at the next life; there is no break in between the two lives.
- The stream of thoughts we have, has been running non-stop since the beginning-less time; see, "What Reincarnates? – The Concept of a Lifestream".
- However, we do not "feel" all the *citta*. There are "gaps" in between *citta vīthi* mainly with the mind in the *Bhavaṅga* state.

2. The *cetasika* (mental factors) provide different qualities to each *citta*. A *citta* is moral (*kusala*), immoral *(akusala*), or neutral (*kriya*) depending on the what type of *cetasika* rise with it.

A complete description of 52 *cetasika* are given in, "Cetasika (mental factors)". A brief summary:

- There are 7 universal *cetasika* that rise with ANY *citta*.
- Six others CAN appear in any *citta*, i.e., only some of them may be in a given *citta*.
- There are 14 *asobhana cetasika* (non-beautiful mental factors) that appear only in *akusala citta*.
- There are 25 *sobhana cetasikā* (beautiful mental factors.) Nineteen *sobhana cetasikā* appear in each and every *kusala citta,* and thus, those 19 are called beautiful universals.

3. Let us first discuss the 7 universal *cetasika*. These arise with ANY *citta*. A *citta* with just these is called a "*pabhassara citta*" because it is the "purest form" of a *citta*. It becomes a "*viññāṇa citta*" as it develops in time within a billionth of a second! See, "Citta, Mano, Viññāṇa – Stages of a Thought."

- **What we actually experience are "*viññāṇa citta*," as *viññāṇa khanda (aggregate of viññāṇa or a "heap of viññāṇa").***

The 7 universal *cetasika* that arise with any *citta* are:

- *Phassa* (contact), *saññā* (perception), *vedanā* (feeling), *cetana* (intention), *ekaggata* (one-pointedness), *jivitindriya* (life faculty), and *manasikara* (memory).

4. The *phassa* (contact) *cetasika* is what makes contact with the "object of the *citta*" whether it is sense input from one of the five physical senses or a concept that makes contact with the mind.

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- In *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, this is the *phassa* in the step "*saḷāyatana paccayā phasso*". Of course, *saḷāyatana* are the six senses. Thus it is *phassa* that makes it possible for the mind to make contact with the world.
- *Saññā* (perception) identifies the object by working with *manasikāra* (memory), and *vedanā* (feeling) arises.
- Depending on the object, one will generate good, bad, or neutral feeling, and also different types of *cetasika* (greed, shame, compassion, etc) can arise; *cetanā* (intention) puts it all together and "prepares" the *citta*. Based on the types of *cetasika* in the *citta*, it could be a good or bad thought. This is why *cetanā* can be good or bad, and the Buddha said: "*cetanā* is *kamma*."
- *Ekaggatā* is the ability to keep the mind on one object. *Jīvitindriya* maintains life in the current life (keeps the body alive) until death. And *manasikāra* is the all-important memory. *Manasikāra* has ALL memories (or *nāma gotta*) from the beginning-less time; see, "Difference between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra" for a discussion on *nāma gotta*.
- This is why the present *citta* is the precursor to the next *citta* and that next *citta* is NOT totally different from the previous *citta*; *manasikāra*, for example, just keeps building up on the past *citta*. "Cause and effect" is at work from *citta* to *citta*, maintaining the "personality" or "*gati*" of the given life-stream. This is why the Buddha rejected the notion of a "no-self", as well as a "self".
- Yet it is important to realize that "*gati*" can change even in a *citta*, for example, one attains the *Arahanthood* with a single *citta* (of course with billions of *citta vīthi* making gradual progress towards it).

5. So, we can see the basic working of a *citta* with these 7 universals; they carry out the most fundamental and vital functions of recognizing the object, matching it with old memories and figuring out what it is, and also *sukha*, *dukha,* or neutral feeling arise because of that recognition.

- Yet all that does not happen in a single *citta*. When an "input" comes through one of the six senses, it is captured by a *citta vīthi* containing 17 *citta* for a physical sense input and about 10 *citta* for a mind input as we discussed in the previous post. Then that "captured event" is discerned and analyzed by three follow-ups "*manodvāra citta vīthi*", i.e., by the mind.
- Even then we actually experience only the "net result" of millions of such *citta vīthi*, as we mentioned in the previous post. But due to the extreme rapidity of these processes, we feel like we are using all six in real time. We are not. The mind is always analyzing a set of events that have already gone by. This is discussed in the Bāhiya Sutta (Ud 1.10), "*diṭṭhe diṭṭamattaṃ bhavissati* ……". What we experience NOW is what has already transpired.

6. But invariably other *cetasika* (other than the 7 universal) arise as the *citta* develops in time, and the *citta* becomes *kusala citta, akusala citta* or a *kriya* (neutral) *citta* depending on the *cetasika* that arise with the *citta*.

- *Sobhana cetasika* arise with *kusala citta* and *asobhana cetasika* arise with an *akusala citta.*
- These *cetasika* types do not mix, i.e., no *sobhana cetasika* arise with an a*kusala citta* etc.

7. Now the question arises: If *citta* arise and fall and go by so rapidly, how do we willfully stop *akusala citta* from arising? Especially when exposed to a tempting external object like an eye-catching figure.

And the answer lies in a very simple concept that I have discussed in many posts:

- This is where one's character qualities (*gati*) and *āsava* come into play. **One automatically responds with the "set of values" one has.**
- By changing one's habits one can change one's character (*gati*)and eventually change one's deep-rooted cravings (*āsavā*). Even though the answer is simple, it takes a long time to get rid of bad habits and cultivate good habits, at least initially.

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- The with time, as that *gati* loses its power, one will be less and less tempted when subjected to the same sensory input. For example, this could be the sight of an attractive figure or an enemy.

8. The key to reducing such bad *gati* is to forcefully suppress that bad-thought as soon as you become aware of it. Even though a bad thought arises automatically, one becomes aware of it after a few seconds.

- As soon as you become aware of a bad thought you should think about the bad consequences and forcefully stop that thought stream. Just start thinking about something good or start doing something that needs your full attention.
- When you keep doing this for a while, that tendency will slowly reduce, i.e., that bad *gati* will lose its power.
- For example, if one needs to quit smoking, as soon as one starts lighting a cigarette one should think about the bad consequences of smoking and throw it away. Keep some mints handy and pop one in your mouth. Finding a "replacement activity" always helps to break a bad habit.
- If it is hateful thought, one could stop it and start thinking about something good. Recalling something pleasant, say a picture of the Buddha, can help. Always have a "replacement" ready.
- One needs to keep doing this faithfully in order to make the old habit weak.

9. When one gets rid of bad habits and cultivates good habits, the neural connections in one's brain get rewired. The brain changes gradually and that is how the thoughts change. This is the an easy answer to using the modern science.

- But there is a deeper analysis. Not only the physical brain changes but also our *manomaya kāya* is transformed. Eventually, that is what controls the brain; see, the couple of posts on *manomaya kāya* and also, "Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation!" for details.
- This idea of gradually changing one's habits holds the KEY in making progress on the Path or even on achieving mundane goals, as I have discussed in other posts.

10. Therefore, initially one responds with one's current set of values or *gati*. But after a few moments, one CAN think about the consequences and make corrections to the initial automatic reaction.

- This is further explained in terms of the instant reaction coming from the limbic system in the brain and the "reasoned out" corrective action coming from the neo-cortex or "the thinking brain"; see, "Truine Brain – How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits."
- And that is how we slowly change our *gati*, by willfully making corrections to the initial "auto-response". This is what makes us different from animals. Animals do not have this ability, at least not to our level.
- **The more you "catch" such "inappropriate auto-responses" and stop them, the more effectively we can get rid of bad habits, cultivate good habits and change our *gati* (character) in the right direction. This is "*ānāpāna sati*", i.e., one keeps good thoughts and gets rid of bad thoughts willfully; see, "What is Ānāpāna?" in the Meditation section.**

11. As mentioned above, *cetasikā* present in a given *citta* determines the quality and/or the function of the *citta*.

- An immoral (*akusala*) *citta* have one or more immoral roots; *avijjā* (delusion *cetasika*) is in any immoral *citta*.
- A moral (*kusala*) citta will always have non-greed and non-hate *cetasika*. Wisdom (*paññā*) *cetasika* rises only in *citta* with all three roots (*tihetuka citta*).
- We have come across many of the *cetasika* in the posts on various topics: the five hindrances are of course included in the 14 *asobhana cetasika*.
- The four bases of mental power (*satara iddhipāda*) are four of the *sobhana cetasika,* i.e., *chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṃsā*. Here *citta* means "thinking about the goal" and thus is *sammā saṅkappa* when

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fully cultivated. *Vīmaṃsā* is another name for *paññā* and becomes *sammā diṭṭhi* when fully cultivated; see, "37 Factors of Enlightenment."

- Some of the factors in the Noble Eightfold Path are directly in the set of *sobhana cetasika*, for example, *sammā vācā, sammā kammanta*, and *sammā ājīva*. Other *cetasika* like *sati* and *paññā*, when cultivated become *sammā sati* and *sammā diṭṭhi*.
- Similarly, *ekaggatā* in the universal *cetasika* set becomes *sammā samādhi*, and *viriya* and *vitakka* in the set of particulars become *sammā vāyāma* and *sammā saṅkappa* when cultivated.

12. As we noted, we can control a bad series of thoughts like planning a robbery or even making a quick plan to steal an item from a store. There is enough time to think about the consequences of such a bad action and deliberately stop such thoughts. **But one needs to be in a fairly stable "state-of-mind" to be able to do that. When the mind is agitated, the mind cannot see "right from wrong". The five hindrances are covering the mind.**

- Sometimes people commit horrendous crimes in the spur-of-the-moment. One can get into a rage and shoot someone with a gun that is close by. How do we stop such quick reactions? By being mindful to control that bad *gati,* which is the tendency to get mad at the slightest provocation. See #10 above.
- When one keeps reducing one's "bad *gati*," those really dangerous *gati* — which could lead to rebirth in the *apāyā* — will be permanently eliminated when one becomes a *Sotāpanna*. With that achieved, that mindset persists even in future lives. As we saw, a *paṭisandhi citta* in the new life arises based on the *cuti citta* of the past life, so it has all the "*gati*" from a past life. Changing to a "*gati*" of a *Sotāpanna* is a change in the lineage (*gotrabhu*.) One becomes an *Ariya* or a Noble person forever.

Next, "Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi Is Key", …….

12.3.5 1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction

It will be beneficial to read this post even if one is not interested in learning *Abhidhamma*.

1. After writing a few posts in the *Abhidhamma* section, I realized that it is a good idea to write introductory posts on English meanings of some *Pāli* key words related to the mind. **In the end, words do not matter and what matters is grasping of the concepts involved.** But conveying the concept correctly REQUIRES the use of right words.

- This is a bit of a problem because there are no words in English that truly conveys the meaning of some *Pāli* key words when talking about the mind (like *mano* and *viññāṇa*). Thus what I need to do is to write several introductory posts describing such keywords (like what I did for *anicca, dukkha, anatta*).
- More details will be given in the *Abhidhamma* section, but the posts that appear in this section provide just the basics.

2. A *Citta* (pronounced "chiththa") is widely translated as a "thought", *viññāṇa* as "consciousness" and *mano* as "mind". **I am going to keep using the former two, but am going to use "*hadaya vatthu*" as the *Pāli* word for mind.** Let us first discuss the reason for using this term for the mind.

- *Hadaya vatthu* is where *citta* (thoughts) arise; thus it is appropriate to call it the mind or even more appropriately "seat of the mind". ***Hadaya vatthu* is the "link" between the "*mano loka*" (mind plane) and the "material plane" whether it is in *kāma loka*, *rūpa loka* or *arūpa loka* (i.e., anywhere in the 31 realms).** Mind or the *hadaya vatthu* is a very fine *rūpa* (matter); in technical terms, *hadaya vatthu* is formed at *paṭisandhi* as a *vatthu dasaka*.
- By the way this *hadaya vatthu* is the only trace of matter associated with a living being in the *arūpa loka*. It is much smaller than an atom; only a form of "*suddhāshtaka* [*suddhaṭṭhaka*]" in the form of a "*dasaka*."

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- For example, if a *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition occurs from a cat to a human, then the "cat *hadaya vatthu*" dies and a "human *hadaya vatthu*" is formed and the very next *citta* arises in the "human *hadaya vatthu*" or the "human mind" in the "human *gandhabba*"; see, "Cuti-Patsandhi Transition – Abhidhamma Description". With that in mind, let us discuss the ultimate "primary elements".

3. In the absolute sense (*paramatta*), there are four entities: *citta, cetasika* (pronounced "chetasika"), *rūpa* (pronounced "rüpa"), and *Nibbāna*. The last one, *Nibbāna*,does not belong to "this world" of 31 realms. Therefore, there are only *citta, cetasika*, and *rūpa* that are in anything and everything in this world.

- *Citta* and *cetasika* are "*nama*" and all tangible things are made of "*rupa*".
- There are 89 (or 121) types of *citta*; 52 kinds of *cetasika*, and 28 kinds of *rūpa*. These are all listed in the "Tables and Summaries" section.

4. A *citta* (thought) does not arise by itself, but arises with a number of *cetasika* (mental factors). There are 7 *cetasika* that arise with ANY *citta*, and normally there are other *cetasika* that arise in addition to those seven. This is discussed in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)".

- There are "good" and "bad" *cetasika*. The familiar ones are *lobha, dosa, moha* and *alobha, adosa, amoha*, but there are many others. These determine whether a given *citta* is a "good" (*kusala*) citta or a "bad" (*akusala*) citta. There are only good or bad *cetasika* in a given *citta*; they do not mix.

5. Even though a *citta* arises and perishes within less than billionth of a second, it gets contaminated during its lifetime. Starting as a "pure *citta*" ("*pabasvara citta*" which is also called "*prabhasvara citta*" in *Sanskrit*) with those 7 universal *cetasika*, it gradually degrades by incorporating many other *cetasika* into a *"contaminated citta"* or *viññāṇa*. Without going into details, the nine steps are:

- ***citta, mano, manasan, hadayan, pandaran, mana indriyan, manayatan, viññāṇa, vinnanakkhandho.*** [*Yaṃ cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ hadayaṃ paṇḍaraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññāṇaṃ viññāṇakkhandho*...] But this happens during the life of the *citta* itself (in billionth of a second) according to the "*gathi*" that we have. **This is why we cannot control our initial thoughts; but as those initial thoughts turn to speech and bodily actions, we may have time to control them.**
- But we still use the term "*citta*" to denote the final outcome; in order to differentiate the one that the sequences started off, we call it a "pure *citta*" or a "*pabasvara citta*."
- What we end up is basically what we call *vinnanakhandha,* and all this happens within a billionth of a second. This "contamination process" cannot be controlled willfully at that early stage; it happens automatically based on one's "*gathi*." **The only thing we can do is to change our "*gathi*."**

6. We can use the following analogy: If we start off with a glass of pure water that can be compared to a pure *citta* with just the 7 universal *cetasika.* If we add a bit of sugar (*mano*), salt (*manasan*) it gets a bit contaminated but we cannot see the contamination. Now we add a bit of brown sugar and we can see the water turning to brown; this is like the *hadayan* stage. Then we keep adding chocolate, milk, etc, the water gets really contaminated; but it is still mostly water. A contaminated *citta* is like at the *viññāṇa* stage; it is a *citta* that is contaminated.

- The citta of an *Arahant* does not contaminate beyond the *masanan* stage (While in the "*Arahant phala samapatti*" enjoying *Nibbānic* bliss, an *Arahant* has the *pabasvara citta* or the pure *citta).* All others get to the *viññāṇa* stage, but of course the "level of contamination" is much lower even by the time one gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage, because one has gotten rid of any "*gathi*" associated with the *apāyā*.
- As we can see, it is not possible to control such a fast process by sheer will power; it is a matter of "cleansing the mind" progressively of the contaminants of greed, hate, and ignorance.
- Now we can see why "*mano*" cannot be the mind. "*Mano*" is just a bit "contaminated" *citta*. It gets progressively contaminated and by the time it comes to the "*viññāṇa*" step it has captured all relevant *cetasika* for that *arammana* or the "thought object".

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- **At the last step, a very profound thing happens.** The *manasikara cetasika* brings in to play all relevant past viññāṇa (which are fixed as "*nama gotta*") as well as one's "hopes and dreams" for the future that are relevant to the "event in question". For example, if the thought occurs due to seeing a nice house, one may compare that house with houses like that one has seen before AND one's "dream house" that one is hoping to build one day. Therefore, in the "final version", a *citta* is a very complex entity that reflects not only the "nature of the object seen" but also one's own likes/dislikes for it.
- This last stage of the *citta* or *Viññāṇa* is the "composite awareness" for that particular event, which also has one's own likings, dislikings, etc for that particular event; see, "Citta, Mano, Viññāṇa – Stages of a Thought."

7. And we do not, and cannot, just perceive a single or even a few *vinnanakkandho*; rather what we "feel" as a "thought" is the sum of many such ***vinnanakkandho,*** and we still call that a "*citta*" or a "thought"; see, "What is a Thought?" and "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises".

- We also alternatively call such sense experiences "*citta*," "thoughts," "consciousness," and "*viññāṇa*."
- Thus it is critical to understand that what we mean by *viññāṇa* in general is the sum total of many *cittā*; in *paṭicca samuppāda*, at the "*avijjā paccayā viññāṇa*," *viññāṇa* means this sum total of many *cittā* or even more accurately the sum total of many of *vinnanakkhandho***.**

8. Now I would like to point out a few important conventions:

- It is important to remember that a thought can have many meanings even in English: WebLink: WIKI: Thought
- **Normally "*citta*" is used to denote a thought, and "*viññāṇa*" is used to denote the "awareness" associated with a thought. It is fine to do that most of the time, but if a discussion gets technical one could come back to this post and refresh memory as to the details.**
- And as you can imagine, such an "average of thoughts" may have many type of cognitions and underlying "awarenesses", and we will talk about the different types of *viññāṇa* in the next post, "2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms".

12.3.6 2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms

1. *Viññāṇa* is unique to sentient beings. Plants are alive but have no *viññāṇa*; they respond to the environments but are not capable of "thinking". Sentient beings are aware that they are alive and just that basic awareness of "being alive" is not really a *viññāṇa.*

- This purest level of *viññāṇa* (the awareness of being alive) is called the "*citta*" (pronounced "chiththa") stage.
- A *citta* arises with 7 concomitant "mental factors" (*cetasika*, pronounced "chetasika"), and this is described in "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises". To emphasize, a pure *citta* arises with those universal *cetasika*; a *citta* always has those 7 *cetasika*.

However, the *citta* of a sentient being gets "contaminated" by other *cetasika* as soon as it arises. Within the lifetime of a *citta* (which is less than a billionth of a second), it progressively gets contaminated by "good" or "bad" *cetasika*, and this happens in nine stages! This was discussed in the previous post: "Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction."

2. As discussed in "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises", it is those additional *cetasika* that provide "color" to a *citta*: if a set of "good *cetasika*" arise with the citta it becomes a "good thought" or a "good *viññāṇa*"; if it is a set of "bad *cetasika*" , then the thought or the viññāṇa is bad (those *cetasika* do not mix). Also, there are neutral thoughts or neutral *viññāṇa* that are neither good nor bad.

- *Viññāṇa* can be experienced in many different ways; since it is hard to come up with different names for each case, they are all bundled together as *viññāṇa*. Words like *citta, viññāṇa, mano,* as well as

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cakkhu viññāṇa, sota viññāṇa, etc and *vipāka viññāṇa* are used in different contexts and that can be confusing to many regardless of whether their native language is English, Chinese, or even Sinhala, which is the closest language to Pāli. But each term has its own "subtle identity" and as we discuss more, those subtle differences will become clear.

3. Viññāṇa is often translated as "consciousness" but *viññāṇa* can be used in many different contexts like "subconscious" or "layers of consciousness".

- The same problem is encountered by those who speak *Sinhala*, because there the word "*sitha*" is used in many occasions to represent the Pāli words *citta, mano*, and *viññāṇa*. Similarly, in Sinhala "*yati sitha*" is used to denote the subconscious.
- This "subconscious" in English (as introduced by Sigmund Freud) or "*yati sitha*" in Sinhala is not a separate citta (there can be only one citta at a time). But, each *citta* can have "layers of consciousness"; the *manasikara cetasika* plays a big role here.
- For example, at a given time we may have several "subconscious" *viññāṇa*: **we may have plans to buy a certain car, getting ready to go on a trip next week, in the process of building a house, etc; all these are in the subconscious, and in each *citta*.** If we see a car on the road that looks like the car we are interested in, the *viññāṇa* alerts you to it, and you take a good look at it.
- As the Buddha advised *bhikkhus*, what really matters is to convey the meaning. Just like in the case of *paṭicca samuppāda* or *taṇhā*, it is best to use the *Pāli* words and comprehend their meanings; those key words convey deep meanings that may take several words or even sentences in any other language to get the idea across.

Types of Viññāṇa associated with Kamma and the Sense Doors

Viññāṇa is complex and can be presented in various different types and forms. We will start by looking at "two categories" of *viññāṇa*.

1. First, we can categorize them according to *kamma* (or *saṅkhāra*) associated with the *viññāṇa*: ***Kamma viññāṇa, vipāka viññāṇa*, and *kiriya* (or *kriya*) *viññāṇa***.

Let us describe in plain English what these terms mean.

- We can put *viññāṇa* into three categories in relation to *kamma*: Those *viññāṇa* that arise while doing a *kamma* (*saṅkhāra*) is called a *kamma viññāṇa*. For example, when one steals something, one has an awareness of that; that is the "*viññāṇa* that one is stealing".
- Then there are those that arise as *kamma vipāka*, and thus we do not have much control over them; they just happen to us and are called *avyakata viññāṇa* or *vipāka viññāṇa*. I like the term *vipāka viññāṇa* than *avyakata viññāṇa* because then it is easy to differentiate those two kinds. For example, when one is walking on the road and sees something valuable on the roadside; that is a *cakkhu viññāṇa* (seeing something) and also a *vipāka viññāṇa* (due to a *kamma vipāka*).
- The third type in this category are called *kiriya (kriya) viññāṇa*, and they are not connected to *kamma*. When we think, talk, or do something that does not involve *kammically* "good" or "bad", those are done with *kiriya viññāṇa*. For example, when we think about the cleaning chores for the day, or ask someone what time it is, or walk to the kitchen to get a drink, all those are done with *kiriya viññāṇa*.

2. When we are travelling by a vehicle and are looking out of a window, we see many different things out there. But most of it we do not pay any attention, even though we are "aware" that we are seeing things. Those are *vipāka viññāṇa*, they are "presented to us", but most of them may not interest us.

- Then all of a sudden we see something that "piques our interest", say a nice house by the roadside. Then we fix our attention on that and even may keep looking at until it moves out of our range. That is a *vipāka viññāṇa* that triggered a "*gathi*" in us; it was of interest. And it could put us in a position to acquire more kamma by initiating a *kamma viññāṇa.*

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- For example, if we really got interested in that house, we may start thinking about how nice would it be if we could build and live in a house like that. Now we are making *saṅkhāra* (i.e., generating *kamma*) based on that "seeing event". Thus such thoughts (or *viññāṇa*) that followed the initial *vipāka viññāṇa* of "seeing the house" are *kamma viññāṇa*.
- Our life experiences belong to basically one of those three categories.

3. All those *viññāṇa* may also be described in another totally different form; they can be differentiated into six categories, this time based on the sense door: thus we have *cakkhu viññāṇa* (vision consciousness), and *sota* (sound), *ghāṇa* (smell), *jivhā* (taste), *kāya* (touch), and *mano* (mind) *viññāṇa* (consciousnesses).

- In the previous example, the three types of *viññāṇa* were all initiated by *cakkhu* viññāṇa, a "seeing event or consciousness". At the *kamma viññāṇa* stage, they became *mano viññāṇa*, because those thoughts about acquiring a house originated in our minds.
- Then if another passenger touched us, we would turn and look at that person, because now we had a *kaya viññāṇa* (which was also a *vipāka viññāṇa*).
- If that touching turned out to be done by accident, we just let go of it, and it was just a neutral event of seeing someone (*kiriya viññāṇa*).
- However, if it was someone with whom we had a romantic relationship in the past, then we may start generating *kamma viññāṇa* (*mano viññāṇa*). In the same way, if it was someone with whom we have had a bad relationship, we may start generating another type of *kamma viññāṇa* (*mano viññāṇa*).
- Thus if you contemplate a bit on this, you can see that ALL our experiences can be put into either of those two "divisions", i.e., we can analyze them to be in *vipāka viññāṇa, kamma viññāṇa, and kiriya viññāṇa* categories or the sense consciousness categories.

4. There are other types of *viññāṇa* that we will talk about later, but for now let us discuss something that is really important to *paṭicca samuppāda*.

- The *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*", and "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*". **This *viññāṇa* is NOT a *vipāka viññāṇa* or a *kiriya viññāṇa*, but only a *kamma viññāṇa*.**
- When we see something, hear something, etc., those are things that HAPPEN to us. Thus there is no *avijjā* (or ignorance) initiating that consciousness. There is no *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle associated with such a consciousness (*viññāṇa*).
- However, if we now decide to act on it (say, take another look at it because we like it), then we may be initiating a *saṅkhāra* (*kamma*) event: now this new event initiates a (*pavutti*) *paṭicca samuppāda* cycle with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*", which leads to, "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*", i.e., this *viññāṇa* was initiated by a *saṅkhāra*; thus it is a *kamma viññāṇa*.

5. Usually, what happens in our lives is that we are bombarded with sense inputs via all six senses. We tend to turn our attention to as many as we can because we are afraid that "we may miss out on something". This is the root cause for the lack of "peace" in our minds, because we are constantly moving our attention among the six senses, going back and forth. If we have too many "likings" our mind will be pulled in all different directions trying to follow all those sense inputs.

- By avoiding busy environments (i.e., by going to a secluded place) we can reduce this effect. **But, we still cannot "turn off the sixth sense input", i.e., the mind, unless we purify our minds.** This is the key to meditation. It is not possible to have a "peace of mind" if the mind is burdened with greed, hate, and ignorance (wrong vision or *micchā diṭṭhi*).

6. Thus an *Arahant* can have a peaceful mind even when in the busiest place. A *Sotāpanna* can do that to a certain extent too.

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- Even before any of the "*magga phala*" are attained, one can easily get to *samādhi* and then to *jhānā*, by gradually getting rid of the defilements associated with "wrong vision" just by learning Dhamma (mainly *anicca, dukkha, anatta*).
- Then the number of different types of viññāṇa going through the mind will be reduced ("Sounds like my neighbor's car leaving, I wonder whether she is going to the mall?", "I wonder what (my enemy) is up to today?", "I wish I could have a body like that!", "How come I don't have a nice house like that?"; these are all types of *viññāṇa* that we burden our minds with unnecessarily.
- And it is important to realize that it is not easy to just turn those off; they WILL BE turned off automatically when we purify our minds first by learning Dhamma ("What is the use of thinking about unnecessary things? There are better things to think about that provide lasting happiness").

Next, "3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious", ……

12.3.7 3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious

Revised February 25, 2020

Cetasikā (Mental Factors) Determine the Nature of a *Citta* (Thought)

1. A thought (*citta*) arises based on a specific thought object (*ārammaṇa*), say thinking about buying a car or going for a walk. There is only one *citta* at a time, but each lasts less than a billionth of a second. The word *citta* is pronounced "chiththa." See, "'Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1."

- *Cittā* (plural of *citta*) flow at a very fast rate. We do not experience individual citta, but the overall effect of billions of *cittā* that arise in a second.
- Each *citta* has many *cetasika* (mental factors) in it, including the all-important *saññā, phassa, manasikāra cetasika*.
- Then there are "good" and "bad" *cetasika* in a *citta* that describes the "quality" of the *citta*.
- When someone is angry, most *cittā* **at that time** will have anger/hate (*paṭigha* and/or *dosa cetasika.*) When the same person is feeding a hungry person his/her *cittā* **at that time** will have the benevolence and/or loving-kindness *cetasikā*.
- The good and bad *cetasikā* do not mix, i.e., one either has a good thought or a bad thought. For discussion on *cetasika*, see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)".

What Is *Viññāṇa*? – Role of *Cetasikā*

2. Even though we simply think about a "thought," a thought is really a complex entity, that goes through nine stages within a billionth of a second. It ends as *viññāṇa or viññāṇakkhandha.* See, "Citta, Mano, Viññāṇa – Stages of a Thought." *Viññāṇa* represents the overall experience of "thought" and is largely described by the *cetasikā* in those *cittā*.

- Of course, no one experience a *viññāṇa* due to a single *citta*; rather what one experiences is the average of millions or billions of *cittā*. A bunch or a heap is called *khandha* in Pāli or Sinhala. Thus what we experience is a *viññāṇakkhandha* or the overall effect of a bunch or a heap of *cittā*.
- *Viññāṇa* is complex and multifaceted. But they are primarily of two types: *vipāka viññāṇa* and *kamma viññāṇa* See, "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."
- We can look at those two types in a simple way as follows.

3. The *manasikāra* and *saññā cetasika* are in each and every *citta*, and they can incorporate all past memories, habits (*gati*) and cravings (*āsavā*) to a given citta. It is the *cetanā cetasika* that "puts it all

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together." Only the mind of a Buddha can "see" such amazing details. It all happens within a billionth of a second!

- Our *gati* and *āsavā* (plural of *āsava*) may not be displayed in each *citta.* Rather, they lie dormant, waiting for a "trigger" to come up. For example, greedy thoughts arise only when a "pleasing thought object" is in play, as in seeing a tasty dish or an attractive person.
- Therefore, the way we think (*viññāṇa*) depend on our *gati* (habits/character,) *āsavā* (cravings,) AND the particular "thought object" or *ārammaṇa.*
- Of course, we can get rid of certain *gati*/*āsava* and cultivate new ones.
- The main goal of *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditations is to remove bad *gati*/*āsava* and to cultivate good *gati*. See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?" and "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

Vipāka Viññāṇa and *Kamma Viññāṇa*

4. The mind is directed to a new thought object (or *ārammaṇa*) with a *vipāka viññāṇa* that may come through **any of the six sensory inputs**. For example, we may be walking down the street, but an attractive item in a shop window may catch our attention.

- Now, if we like that item, we may start thinking about buying it. That is a *kamma viññāṇa.* Now we have generated a new *viññāṇa* with a desire to buy that item. A *kamma viññāṇa* has an expectation. We may not buy it at that time. But if we go home and again start thinking about it (generating *vacī saṅkhāra*,) then we build up that *viññāṇa* via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa"* step in *Paticca Samuppāda.* Therefore, a *kamma viññāṇa* **arises only in the mind.**
- Without getting deep into the issue, we can just say that a *kamma viññāṇa* is an expectation. Once formed, a *kamma viññāṇa* will stay with us at least for a while. It will grow only if we keep thinking, speaking or doing things (with *vacī* and *kāya saṅkhāra*) related to that expectation.

Kamma Viññāṇa Come Back as *Vipāka Viññāṇa*

5. When we build such an expectation, the memory of that can come back as a *vipāka viññāṇa* at a later time.

- For example, the memory of that item in the shop window in #3 above may come back to the mind via one of the six senses later on. For example, we may hear about it on the radio, we may hear someone else talking about it, etc. It may even "pop into the mind" too.
- That item in the shop window is a "thought object" or a *ārammaṇa*.
- Then if we keep thinking, speaking, doing things related to that *ārammaṇa,* that associated *viññāṇa* will grow.

What is Subconscious?

6. Such *vipāka viññāṇa* are waiting in the background to bring their fruits. There may be many types hiding beneath the surface. **This is what Sigmund Freud called the "sub-conscious".**

- When I am paying for my groceries, my thoughts stay focused on that transaction. But there can be many types of *viññāṇa* lurking "in the background". I may be building a house, studying for an exam, planning a trip, planning a birthday party for my child, etc. and all those "*viññāṇa*" are working in the background even though I am not thinking about any of them at the time I am paying for my groceries.
- However, any of those, and even some things that I had not been thinking about for a long time, can be there in the "subconscious". But there is no separate "subconscious" as such.

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- All these different types of *viññāṇa* cannot be there in a single thought (*citta*), and there is only one *citta* at a time; see, "What is a Thought?". Then how is it possible for many types of *viññāṇa* to be lurking in the background? That is what we discussed in #2, #3 above. Based on the particular *ārammaṇa,* the *cetanā cetasika* "transforms" a pure *citta* to the "contaminated" *viññāṇa* stage in several steps.

7. The more one does something repeatedly, there starts a *kamma viññāṇa* for that particular event or behavior. For example, when one starts smoking, a *viññāṇa* starts building, and the more one smokes, the stronger the *viññāṇa* gets. This is called "feeding the *viññāṇa*" by doing it again and again. In other words, habits are formed via repeatedly feeding the *viññāṇa* for that habit.

- When a certain *viññāṇa* is pleasing to the mind, that *viññāṇa* tries to get fed frequently. When someone has the habit of smoking the *viññāṇa* for that tries to deviate his/her attention to smoking at every possible opportunity. For example, if a smoker sees an advertisement for smoking, that "triggers" the liking or the *viññāṇa* for smoking that was in the subconscious.

8. But it works the same way for a *viññāṇa* that got established with a dislike also. For example, if someone did something really awful to you in the past, the hearing of his/her name will bring back that *viññāṇa*.

- This is why we get "attached" (*taṇhā*) to things we like as well for things we dislike and is the meaning of *taṇhā* (get bonded via greed or hate); see, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance".

Viññāṇa Are Not Permanent

9. Not all *viññāṇa* keep accumulating in the background. Those weaker ones, especially if don't get fed, diminish and disappear.

- For example, suppose I had planned an overseas trip and had been making preparations for it. The more preparations I make and the more thoughts I have of the trip, those are "food for that *viññāṇa*", and it grows. If I see a new article with that country's name, I would immediately read the article. But suppose, a major war breaks out in that country before my trip; then I would cancel that trip right away. I will no longer be planning for the trip and my mind will "not be interested" in it anymore. Since that *viññāṇa* for "visiting that country" is not going to get fed anymore, it will be gone in a short time.
- We don't even need to actually physically do the activity to "feed the *viññāṇa*" or make a habit stronger. There are studies that show that one could improve the game of basketball, for example, by just visualize practicing, and getting the ball mentally. These are called "*mano sañcetanā*". Focusing attention on a given task can be very powerful.
- One's associations strongly influence which of those different types of *viññāṇa* will grow by "getting fed" frequently. If one starts associating with people who drink regularly, one's *viññāṇa* for "getting drunk" will grow as one keeps feeding that *viññāṇa* by drinking frequently.

Summary

12. A built-up *viññāṇa* can form a habit (*gati*.) As the habit or the *gati* gets stronger, it can be carried over to the next life, possibly in two ways.

- If a human dies and has time left in the "human *bhava*" then when he/she is reborn as a human most of the previous *gati* will be there.
- A really strong habit could lead to a "*paṭisandhi viññāṇa*" at the dying moment and can lead to a corresponding "*bhava*" based on that particular *gati*. For example, an extremely greedy person, may acquire a "*peta bhava*" at the dying moment and be born as a "*peta*" or a hungry ghost.

13. Thus *viññāṇa* is very complex. It is not just "awareness." *Viññāṇa* also has one's "hopes and dreams" as well as "likes, dislikes, and habits". It also includes the "subconscious." It is a complex combination of the 52 *cetasikā.*

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- Of course, not all *cetasikā* are involved in a given *citta* or in our thoughts. *Sobhana* (good) *cetasikā* do not arise with *asobhana* (bad) *cetasikā* in a given *citta*.
- See, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)" for a discussion on *cetasikā*.

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12.4 Role of the Brain in Human Consciousness

Brain – Interface between Mind and Body

Body Types in Different Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya (located at The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma)

12.4.1 Brain – Interface between Mind and Body

April 22, 2016; revised September 22, 2019

The brain is Not the Mind

1. Contrary to what scientists believe, our minds are not in the brain (this is another prediction from Buddha Dhamma that will be proven correct in the future).

- The "mind door" where *citta* (or thoughts) arise is at the *hadaya vatthu* is not located in our physical bodies. It is in the *manomaya kāya* of the *gandhabba;* see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)-Introduction."
- The *gandhabba* has a subtle body and it is not a "body" in the sense we usually think about. It is more like an energy field that overlaps the physical body; see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."
- The *hadaya vatthu* overlaps the heart in the physical body. When we hear traumatic news, we feel burning sensation close to the heart, and not in the hear. We don't say, "Oh, my head felt like burning when I heard the news." It is the heart area that feels it. (Head may start hurting later, if one keeps thinking about the loss).
- On the other hand, when we overuse our five physical senses or when we think hard about a difficult problem, it is the head that hurts. Because in those situations, the brain has to do a lot of processing. While watching a movie, our brains work overtime to convert those sensory inputs from the eyes (*cakkhu indriya*) and the ears (*sota indriya*). When we think about a hard problem, the *mana indriya* in the brain has to work hard; see below.

Two Overlapping "Bodies" – Physical Body and *Gandhabba* (Mental Body)

2. A physical body is a temporary shelter or "shell" for the *gandhabba* subtle body. The *gandhabba* receives sense inputs from the outside world via the physical body. See, "Body Types in Different Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya."

- Since a given physical body has a lifetime of around 100 years, we have to "build a new physical body" when the current one decays and finally dies. (That is if we have extra *kammic* energy for the human *bhava*); see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

3. Before entering the mother's womb, the *gandhabba* has a very fine "body," more like and "energy packet." Thus, it cannot experience taste or touch, even though some can "digest odors" and become a bit denser.

- A *gandhabba* waiting for a womb usually is about the size of the fully-grown human, but is has very little "matter" that is visible to us. At the moment of "*okkanthi*" or entering the mother's womb, he/she will enter THROUGH the mother's body and collapse to the size of the zygote when taking possession of it; see, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."

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- Thus a *gandhabba*, when outside waiting for a suitable womb, is just like a ghost shown in the movies. Of course, a human cannot see it even using technological advances. It is much smaller in mass than the first cell formed by the union of the mother and father, the zygote.
- The physical body grows starting with that single cell (zygote) using the nutrition from the mother. After the baby is born, it grows to the full size of an adult by consuming food.
- Thus it is useful to have this visual, where a very fine *gandhabba* trapped inside physical body of over a hundred pounds controls it.

Brain – Interface Between the Physical Body and *Gandhabba*

4. Once inside a physical body, *gandhabba* **has to** use the physical body to interact with the outside world. It is like being trapped in a solid shell. Initially, its mind will be in the *bhavaṅga* state (see, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs") and will not be conscious about its environment, except for body sensations.

- In a human, the brain first processes the signals coming through the "physical senses" (eyes, ears, etc.). The brain transmits the information to the five *pasāda rūpa* located in the *gandhabba*. Those *pasāda rūpa* then pass that information to the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) in the *gandhabba;* see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction."
- That is how our minds receive information from the external world.
- Now the question arises: "How do the sense inputs coming through the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and the body, are transmitted to the *pasāda rūpa* located close to the *hadaya vatthu*?." Note that the *hadaya vatthu* overlaps the physical heart.

5. It is the brain that acts as the intermediary between those physical sense inputs and the five *pasāda rūpa*. It processes the incoming information to a form that can be understood by the mind (*hadaya vatthu*).

- First, the sense inputs coming in to the physical body through the eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and the body go to specific regions of the brain. This has been well-researched by the scientists over the past hundred years. The following figure shows the specific areas of the brain that analyze the data from the five senses.

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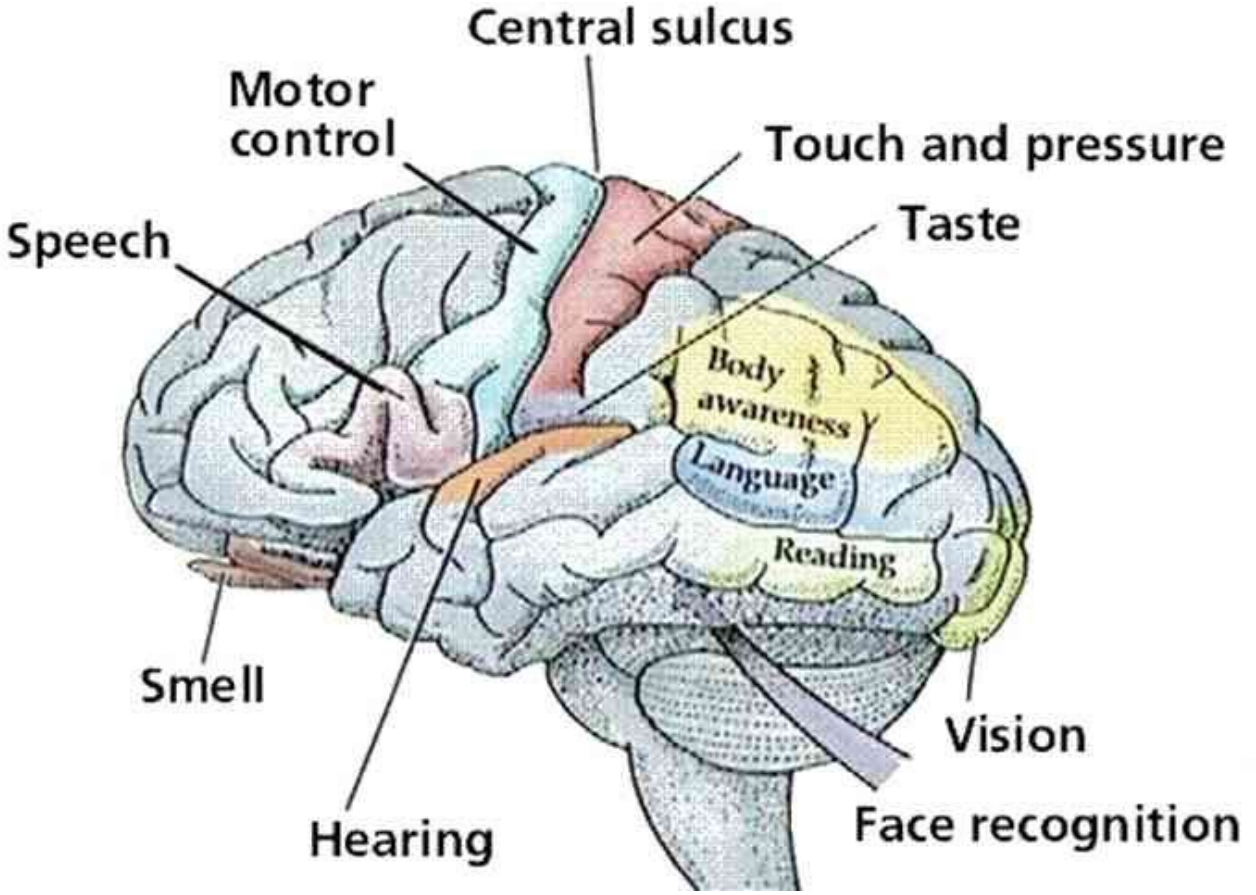

- Science is unable to explain how the mind comprehends the corresponding signals. For example, in vision, there is no "picture" formed in the back of the head; see "On Intelligence" by Jeff Hawkins (2005) for a helpful discussion.

6. The signals for vision, sounds, smells, and taste come into the body through specific body parts. In contrast, the touch sensations can come from anywhere in the body, and conveyed via an intricate system of nerves:

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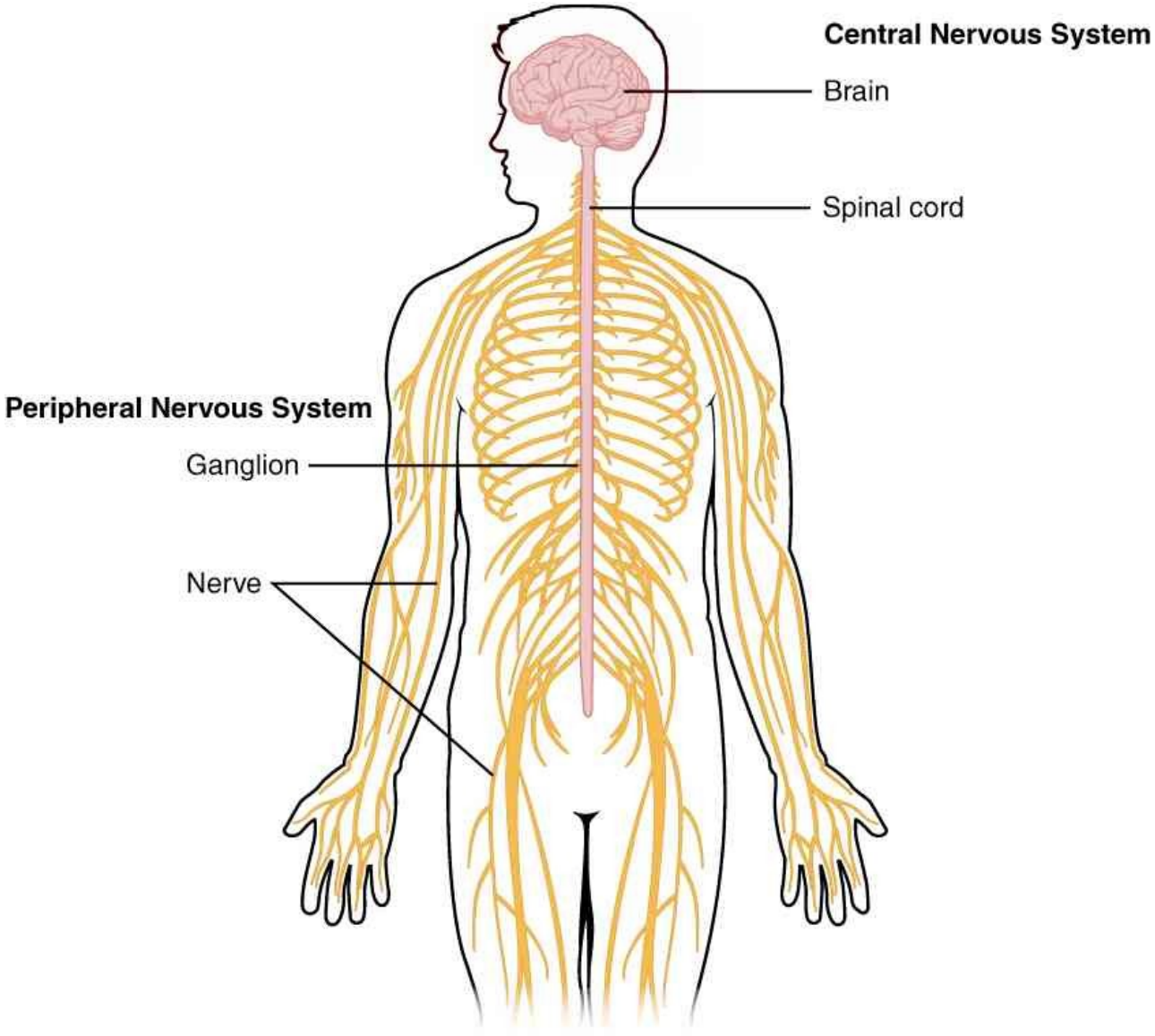

- These nerve signals go to the brain for processing (see the "touch and pressure" processing area in the figure in #5 above).

Gandhabba (Mental Body) Overlaps the Physical Body

7. By the way, it is essential to note that the misty *gandhabba* has a similar "nervous system" that overlaps the physical nervous system shown above. Yes, that is extremely fine, more like an "energy field." That is not entirely relevant to the present discussion, but physical body is there to impart *kamma vipāka* via body aches, diseases, and injuries.

- The physical nervous system has to align with the nervous system of the *gandhabba*. That alignment could change (due to *kamma vipāka*), which makes our body's nervous system to go out-of-alignment for proper body function leading to aches and pains. See, #6 of "11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga."

8. The signals from the other four senses go to specific brain areas (indicated in the figure in #5 above) via specialized neural pathways. For example, the optical nerve carries the visual signals to the brain:

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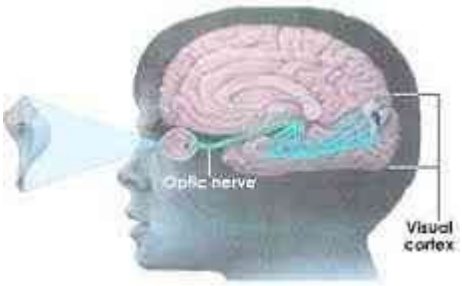

- Once the brain processes those sensory inputs from the five physical senses, they are "transmitted" to the corresponding five *pasāda rūpa* in the *gandhabba* (*manomaya kāya*). See below.

Mana Indriya in the Brain

9. So far, we have identified five of *gandhabba*'s "windows to the outside world" from his/her "shell" or the physical body: eyes, ears, nose, tongue, and the body.

- What about the "*dhamma*" that are the finest *rūpa* (these are called *mano rūpa*) that interact with the physical body? That is how we think about "random things" out of the blue. For example, we may be washing dishes in the kitchen, and all of a sudden, thoughts about a friend or a relative may come to the mind.
- Thoughts about a friend — who may be thousand miles away — comes through the *mana indriya* in the head (inside the brain). Of course, science is not aware of that.
- We discussed this in a previous post: "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

10. So, how do the signals processed in the brain due to incoming vision, sound, smell, taste, touch, and *dhamma* are passed to the five *pasāda rūpa* and the *hadaya vatthu?* Detail in "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction."

- It is well-known that there are electromagnetic brain waves of different types (alpha, beta, theta, and gamma). I will write a post on this in the future. These waves are called "*kirana*" in the *Tipiṭaka*.

The Origin of *Citta Vīthi*

11. When information comes to one of the five *pasāda rūpa,* it passes on that signal to the *hadaya vatthu* by impinging (hitting) the *hadaya vatthu*. That results in the *hadaya vatthu* vibrating 17 times, just like a clamped blade vibrates a certain number of times when hit by an object; see, "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) – Introduction" and "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

- That is the origin of a *citta vīthi* of 17 *citta*. Each *citta* in a *citta vīthi* corresponds to a single vibration of *hadaya vatthu*. This 17 thought-moment time period is the lifetime of a *hadaya rūpa* (vibrational energy) of the *hadaya vatthu*.
- It is a common mistake to take this to mean that **any *rūpa*** has a lifetime of 17 thought moments. That is a terrible mistake; see, "Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?."
- It is not possible to describe these details in one or even several posts. One may need to look through other posts to clarify some concepts. The "Search" button on the top right is an excellent resource for this task.

12. Any of the five *pasāda rūpa* has to strike the *hadaya vatthu* to pass on its signal. However, signals from the *mana indriya* can exchange information with the *hadaya vatthu* directly.

- When the *mana indriya* interacts with the *hadaya vatthu,* that also results in *citta vīthi*. Such *manodvāra citta vīthi* do not have a fixed length.

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- Still, only one of the six sense-signal can be in contact with the *hadaya vatthu* at a given time. But since the process is swift, billions of *citta vīthi* can run through the *hadaya vatthu* "in the blink of an eye".

Two Inter-Dependent "Bodies"

13. Therefore, this whole process involves interaction between two overlapping systems. The physical body and the corresponding subtle "energy body" of the *gandhabba.*

- When the *gandhabba* escapes from the body under stressful situations, it can float above the physical body, and physical body. Then the physical body becomes inert until the *gandhabba* returns to it; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

14. Thus it is clear that the brain plays a significant role in shaping our future. Similarly, the five physical senses play vital roles too.

- If one of the five physical senses are damaged, we lose the corresponding "window to the external world". We will not be able to see if both eyes are damaged. If the sensors inside the ears go bad, we will not be able to hear, etc.
- But the most critical is, of course, the brain. If the brain is damaged, sensory signals cannot be processed, and we will not be able to interact with the external world. Thus, being brain dead is virtually equivalent to being dead.
- However, if one's brain becomes damaged due to an accident, for example, it will not affect the *gandhabba* inside. It is just that the *gandhabba* will not be able to communicate with the external world. And if damage to the brain results in the death of the physical body, the *gandhabba* will just come out of the dead body and will wait for a suitable womb.

Next Existence Determined by *Gati* and *Kamma Vipāka*

15. It does not matter whether one gets killed due to an accident or dies due to an illness or old age. The *gandhabba*'s future is determined by his/her *gati* (or *gathi*), past *kamma* (*kamma bija*), etc.

- If the physical body dies in an accident, the *gandhabba* will immediately come out of the dead body. Then it will wait for a suitable womb if there is still more *kammic* energy left for the human *bhava* (in an accident, that is likely).
- But if one gets to old age and dies or dies due to illness — and if one has exhausted *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* — then the *cuti-paṭisandhi* will happen at that time. If one is to become a *deva*, a *deva* will appear instantaneously in the corresponding *deva* world. If one is to become an animal, an animal *gandhabba* will emerge from the dead body and will have to wait for a suitable womb to become available.

16. It is also clear why we need to take good care of the body, our sense faculties, and of course, our brains. *Gandhabba*'s (our) ability to make decisions depends on all those faculties working in optimum condition.

- We have a short lifetime of around 100 years to get rid of our defiled (immoral) *gati*. We also need to cultivate good (moral) *gati*, and comprehend the real nature of this world (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), and be free from future suffering.
- We need to try to get to the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* and be free from the four lowest realms (*apāyā*). At least, we must make progress towards that goal so that in a future life, we will have a *tihetuka* birth that makes it easier to attain *Nibbāna*.
- To accomplish those things, we need to eat well, exercise well, and take care of our bodies to perform optimally. It is also necessary to stay away from drugs and alcohol. And to associate with those who have similar goals (and stay away from those with bad habits).

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12.5 Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)

Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) – Introduction

Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments? Moved to Paṭicca Samuppāda → Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda

Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)

Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?

Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body

Brain – Interface between Mind and Body

Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)

Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description

These posts complement some of the posts in the "Udayavaya Ñāṇa" section, which is important for the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. All these are pieces of a complex puzzle, but they are all inter-consistent. So, don't worry if you do not understand it all; with time it will all make sense and will lead to unbreakable faith in Buddha Dhamma even through future lives. Faith comes via true understanding.

12.5.1 Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya) – Introduction

Revised April 22, 2016

1. In most realms, beings are born fully formed (*opapatika* births). But in the human and animal realms, first the blueprint of that life form arises at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment . That is the *manomaya kāya* or a *gandhabba*. Once that *gandhabba* "descends" to a womb, the physical body starts growing.

- Once born a *gandhabba*, It can possibly make many new physical bodies in a given *bhava*. For example, a "human *bhava*" may last many hundreds of years. But a human body lives only about 80 years. Therefore a "human *gandhabba*" can make many "human bodies" during the existence as a human; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."
- This is why in some cases of rebirth stories, there are resemblances of both mental and physical characteristics between the two lives.

2. Let us take the example of a being that was born many times as a cow making a transition to a human *bhava* at the end of the "cow *bhava*" (which is a very rare event).

- The transition from a cow to a human occurs in the last *citta vīthi* of the "cow life". See, "Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description," At the end of that *citta vīthi*, a human *gandhabba* comes out of the dead body of the cow. That *gandhabba* has a very fine body that cannot be seen, but it is a "blueprint" of the human body. But the "gross physical features" that will be partially determined by the parents of the new life.
- This *gandhabba* now awaits a suitable womb to be available. Of course, the *gandhabba* cannot decide on a womb; rather, when a suitable womb becomes available (i.e., matching the "*gathi*" of the *gandhabba*), then it will be pulled into the womb by the kammic energy.
- When a sperm fertilizes an egg in a womb, a single cell called a zygote results. But there is no life there until the *gandhabba* enters the womb and is incorporated with that zygote. Now the zygote becomes an embryo, then a fetus, and once out of the womb grows to a full-size human according to that blueprint in the *gandhabba*.
- More details can be found at, see, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."

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3. At the cow-human transition in the last *citta vīthi* of the cow life, some very important changes occur in that lifestream. The concept of a lifestream, which is really a very basic introduction, is discussed at, "What Reincarnates? -Concept of a Lifestream."

- Of course, the biggest change is that now the lifeform has a mind that is at the human level, not at the animal level; the baseline "consciousness level" has shifted. This is expressed in several ways in the *manomaya kāya* or the *gandhabba*.
- At the *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition, the *kammic* energy creates three very fine *rūpa* called *vatthu dasaka*, *kāya dasaka*, and *bhava dasaka*. **We will discuss these in detail later, but they basically correspond, respectively, to the mind-door (or the mind), the blueprint for the human body, and dominant features including male or female character** (it is not just the sex type, since *rupi brahmā* also have *bhava dasaka*, but are gender-neutral).
- As the physical body grows, first inside the womb and then outside the womb, the fine body of the *manomaya kāya* expands with it when the physical body grows from the single cell. Thus overlapping the physical body that we see, there is a very fine body (*manomaya kāya*) of the *gandhabba. Gandhabba* means the same as the *manomaya kāya*.
- Therefore, the *gandhabba* is really like a "driver" driving or navigating the physical body; see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

4. The fine body of the *gandhabba* or the *manomaya kāya* basically has all key components as the physical body. However, it is in the form of very fine matter at the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level. It is an invisible "energy body."

- The *gandhabba*, when outside the physical body can experience the world without eyes, ears, etc. The *gandhabba* sometimes comes out of the physical body in traumatic situations like during heart operations. Then it can see doctor operating on its own physical body! Such "out-of-body experiences" (OBE) have been reported; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."
- The main thing to remember is that *hadaya vatthu* is the mind-door, and it is surrounded by the five *pasāda rūpa* (*cakkhu, sota, jivha, gandha,* and *kaya*) which correspond respectively to the five physical senses of eye, ear, tongue, nose, and touch.
- The Thus all six sense actions actually take place away from what modern science believes they take place. Physical eye, ear, nose, tongue are of course in the head (those are the physical sensors), and the sense of touch is sensed physically via the nevous system. There is also a "*mana indriya*" located inside the brain, where the mind inputs (*dhamma*) come in. Just like our vision process starts at the eyes, our "external thought inputs" come through the "*mana indriya*" in the brain; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!" and "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

5. The physical body is really a "shell" that is controlled by the mind (*hadaya vatthu*). The physical body is there to be subjected to the *kamma vipāka*; this is especially true for animals because they do not have much control over what happens to them.

- We humans have an advanced mind. We have the ability to avoid bad *kamma vipāka* and steer our lives in the direction we want to. Let us see how the *gandhabba* uses the physical body to experience the outside world and also to control the body movements.

6. The world is experienced through the physical body, and this basic interaction is slow compared to the fast pace of the *citta*. The sensory data are collected by the five physical senses of eye, ear, nose, tongue, and the body. Then they are transmitted to the brain via the central nervous system, which takes time of millisecond scale.

- At the brain, data for a certain time interval (possibly around 10 milliseconds; see, "Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises") are processed and then converted to a format suitable for transmission to the five *pasāda rūpa* and the *hadaya vatthu*, via a fast "ray system" (called "*kirana*" in Pāli or Sinhala).

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- Individual "packets of information" from each of the five senses are then transmitted to the corresponding *pasāda rūpa* and the *hadaya vatthu* are located on the *manomaya kāya*, which overlaps the physical body; information from the *mana indriya* are sent to the *hadaya vatthu.*

7. For example, let us consider a "packet of data" sent from the physical eye to the brain. This information is processed by the brain, converted to a "ray system" and is transmitted to the *cakkhu pasāda*. Now the *cakkhu pasāda* vibrates and hits the *hadaya vatthu* that is located close to it. The *hadaya vatthu* is surrounded by the five *pasāda rūpa*. That causes the *hadaya vatthu* to vibrate 17 times, much like a gong hit by an iron rod vibrating for a certain fixed number of times.

- The 17 vibrations of the *hadaya vatthu* correspond to the 17 *cittā* in a *citta vīthi*. Such a *citta vīthi* is called a *pancadvaravajjana citta vīthi* because it is initiated by one of the five physical senses or *pancadvara* ("*panca*" or five + "*dvara*" or "door").
- Imagine a blade clamped at one edge and is hit by an object on the other edge; it vibrates for a certain FIXED number of times per second; that number is called frequency of vibration and is fixed for a given material. And one can see the blade vibrating. Pretty much the same thing happens when the ***hadaya vatthu*** vibrates when hit by one of the *pasāda rūpa*, and this "vibration" is called a ***hadaya rūpa***, which thus has a lifetime of 17 *citta*. Thus the *hadaya rūpa* is not a physical *rūpa* but basically is a mode of vibration.
- The misconception that any *rūpa* has a lifetime of 17 thought moments arose because of not understanding that it is the *hadaya rūpa* that has a lifetime of 17 thought moments.
- In other words, this information packet is received and processed by the *hadaya vatthu* within those 17 *cittā*. The information is fully received by the fourth *citta* (vibration) and then the rest of the *citta* in that *citta vīthi* deal with this information. This "information processing" by the *hadaya vatthu* will not be completed until three more *citta vīthi* run by the *hadaya vatthu* itself. Such *citta vīthi* initiated by the mind itself is called a *manodvara citta vīthi,* where *manodvara* means the "mind door".
- Information packets from the *mana indriya* are sent directly to the *hadaya vatthu.*

8. Thus we can see that there is a **huge difference** in time between the physical body acquiring senses data (time of the order of 10 milliseconds) and the mind processing that information within a billionth of a second using one *pancadvara citta vīthi* and three *manodvara citta vīthi.*

- Even if the five senses keep sending data continuously, the mind is "just sitting there" most of the time. Let us examine this in a bit detail: Suppose the brain keep sending data from the eye non-stop; since each "packet" takes, say 10 milliseconds, then in a second there will be 100 "data packets" of vision coming in. If the brain is going at full speed, it can send at most 500 (=100×5) "data packets" from all 5 physical senses in a second. Then the mind will be spending less than a millionth of a second in processing all that data, since it takes less than a billionth of a second to process one "data packet" (from previous bullet).
- During those gaps, the *hadaya vathu* also interacts (both ways) with the *mana indriya*. **In particular, it gives instructions to the *mana indriya* on how to control the physical body in response to the sensory inputs.**
- Thus most of the time the mind is just sitting there, and this is called the "*bhavaṅga*" state of the mind. In this state, the mind is actually taking the object that came to the mind at the *paṭisandhi* (rebirth) moment in that last *citta vīthi* of the last life. *Bhavaṅga* ("*bhava*" + "*anga*" or associated) denotes that this state of the mind is characteristic of this new life, in the present case as a human. Just like the eye cannot see itself, **the mind cannot see this "*bhavaṅga*,"** it is the present mind itself.

9. In the example that we started with, the "cow mind" has now switched over to a "human mind," It has the object taken at the *paṭisandhi* moment. But we do not become aware of what is in the *bhavaṅga*.

- You may remember that there are times when one just stares blankly "out into the space", and if someone asked "what were you thinking about?", we would be hard-pressed to recall anything that we

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were thinking about. Here the mind was mostly in the *bhavaṅga* state; we are aware that we were alive, but did not have "actual thoughts" going through the mind.

- In reality, even when we think we are fully engaged, the mind is mostly in the *bhavaṅga* state. As we discussed in a previous bullet, it takes very little time for the mind to process data. Even if all five physical senses keep sending data about the outside world non-stop, the mind takes less than a millionth of a second to process those data coming in within a second!

10. However, the sixth sense or the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) itself is also initiating *citta vīthi* either to process information from the five physical senses, or to "think about those senses inputs". **Furthermore, it also initiates *citta vīthi* to get the physical body to speak and to do any kind of work;** this information is relayed to the *mana indriya,* which in turn works with the brain to carry out those instructions.

- For example, if the mind gets interested in a sound, it can direct the body to walk towards the source of that sound. To do this, it sends the instructions to the *mana indriya* in the brain via the same "ray system" instantaneously. The *mana indriya* then decodes that information — and working with other parts of the brain — sends instructions to the muscles in the legs (via the nervous system) to move. These bodily movements take time because the mechanical motions are comparatively slow.
- Speech is done in the same way. The mind sends the information to the brain and the brain gets the vocal cords to move to produce the sounds. Here is a short video showing how the muscle movements give rise to sounds:

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: Inside the Voice

11. Thus we can see that the brain is just a very fancy computer, carrying out the instructions given by the mind.

- Now the questions arise, "Why is nature going through all this trouble to give us a physical body that is sort of cumbersome and slow?". The main answer is that this is to impart *kamma vipāka*.
- For example, a *deva* has a fine body that is not subject to aches and diseases as for humans; that was acquired by a good *kamma vipāka*. On the other hand, there are some *petas* (hungry ghosts) who suffer from hunger. They have large bodies, but a very small mouth.
- In the human realm, our individual bodies are "pre-designed" by kamma vipāka to impart varying degrees of suffering. That is why some people are relatively healthy, while some have health problems. There are of course ways to reduce or even get rid of such problems. One could make suitable conditions (eating well, exercise, etc.) for a healthy body.
- We do not realize the constant stresses that we are subjected to (both physical and mental) because we are used to it. By living a moral life, we can begin to experience the *nirāmisa sukha* achieved by "liberating the mind from the burdensome thoughts." When one gets to *jhāna*, this is further enhanced, and at higher *jhāna* one sees quite significant relief from "dissociating from the body". Then one makes a big jump in attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage.

It is possible that I may not have clearly explained some concepts. If you send me a comment referring to the corresponding item number, I can try to clarify it. Also, when you read other posts in this section, things will become more clear. This basic description is critical if one is really serious about learning *Abhidhamma*.

Next, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?", ……..

12.5.2 Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)

February 18, 2016; updated April 5, 2016

1. I have discussed the fact that when a living being gets a "human *bhava*" it does not necessarily mean that it is born with a human body during all that time; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

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- For example, when a human dies and still has *kammic* energy left for the human *bhava*, then it is very unlikely that it will be conceived as a human baby right away. At death a "human *gandhabba*" with a fine body leaves the dead body and has to wait in that state until a suitable womb becomes available. There are a large (uncountable?) number of such human *gandhabbas* waiting for a suitable womb.
- This is one reason that a mother and father are so revered. No matter how bad they may be in some cases, just the fact that they made it possible for a *gandhabba* to have a human body, makes them invaluable.

2. Beings are born as human because they crave the sense pleasures associated with the human body. The most valued are the tastes and the body pleasures. A *gandhabba* has a very fine body that we cannot see weighing much less than 0.01 g; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body." A *gandhabba* born at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment is much smaller than an atom in modern science. Some could inhale aroma (*gandha*) and get a bit more dense; thus the name "*gandhabba*" ("*gandha*" + "*abba*").

- Thus a *gandhabba* is unable to taste solid food or experience physical touch. But they can see and hear very well. Thus their life is miserable, since they can see the normal humans engaging is "pleasurable activities". That is what they crave too, but they are unable to experience them.
- When a zygote is created in a womb as a result of intercourse (see, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?"), there are a huge number of *gandhabbas* waiting to "get hold of that zygote". But of course, they don't have a choice; only the *gandhabba* matching the "*gathi*" of the father — and especially the mother — is pulled into the womb.

3. Therefore, even though a human "*bhava*" may last thousands of years, the actual time that one is "born with a human body" (human *jathi*) could be a fraction of that time. This is another reason why a "human birth" is so precious that it should not be wasted.

- The same is true for the "animal *bhava*." There are an uncountable number of "animal *gandhabbas*" waiting for a suitable womb at any given time.

4. Both the human and animal *gandhabbas* can be said to live in "*para loka*" ("*paralowa*" in Sinhala). It is a world that a normal human cannot see, even though they can see us. Of course there is no English word for it, but "netherworld" or "the hidden world" seems to convey the idea.

- *Para loka* is not a distinct realm in the 31 realms. Just like human and animal realms co-exist, the *para loka* co-exists with the human and animal realms, but we normally cannot see those beings in the *para loka* (unless one develops *abhiññā* powers). One can imagine there being another world with human and animal *gandhabbas*. Thus *gandhabbas* are not *pretas*.
- WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation: "paralowa" or "para loka"
- Those with "human (or animal) *bhava*" spend their time either in "this world that we can see" or in the "*para loka*" or the "hidden world" (netherworld).
- Many people are not even aware of the existence of "*para loka*," because (like the concept of the *gandhabba*), it is not discussed in the *Visuddhimagga*. It is unfortunate that current *Theravāda* relies on *Visuddhimagga* (written by an *Anariya*) rather than the *Tipiṭaka*.
- *Gandhabba* is described in detail the *Tirokudda Sutta* in the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, where it is called "*tirokudda*" or "*tirokuddaya*," instead of *gandhabba*.

5. The idea behind giving a special offerings ("*dāna*") to the *bhikkhus* after the death of a person is mainly for the benefit of the *gandhabbas* (and also *pretas*). This is a common practice in Buddhist countries. Normally it is done after seven days and after three months etc of death, and I will discuss the reasons for those specific dates in a future post.

- Not all beings can receive merits. Especially those in the *niraya* (hell) are unable to do so because they don't have the right mindset to receive merits (absence of *samanantara paccayā*). Those who can benefit most are the *gandhabbas* and *pretas*.

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- Also, note that *gandhabba* are totally distinct from *pretas* or hell beings in the *niraya*. Only *gandhabbas* live in "*para loka*" waiting for suitable wombs. *Pretas* and hell beings have instantaneous (*opapātika*) births, just like *devas* and *brahmā*.

6. It has been described how the Buddha saw human beings wander from life-to-life when he first comprehended the *cutupapada ñāṇa* during the night of his Enlightenment; "*cutupapada*" comes from "*cuti*" for death and "*upapada*" for birth.

- Thus *cutupapada ñāṇa* is the knowledge about the rebirth process. But this particular description was restricted to births and deaths associated with a single human *bhava*.
- *Cuti* is pronounced "chuthi", and "*cutupapāda nāna*" is pronounced "chuthupapāda gnāna".
- WebLink: Listen to Pronunciation: "cutupapāda nāna"

7. That description by the Buddha was not about the general wandering among the 31 realms, but is on how a being in a human *bhava* wanders from human birth to human birth with *gandhabba* states in between (i.e., going back and forth between "this world that we can see" and the "other world that we cannot see" or the *para loka*).

- The description is as follows: If one is situated in the upper level of a building at a four-way junction, he can see the street below. He can see many people wandering in the street (*gandhabbas* wandering around). Sometimes, one goes into a house and stays there for a long time. This is compared to a *gandhabba* entering a womb and making himself a physical body; that house is the analogy of a physical body.
- Then at the death of that physical body, the *gandhabba* comes out and starts wandering again (a person walking on the street); he may be wandering the streets for a long time before entering "another house", i.e., to get a chance to go into a matching womb.
- Sometimes, he may enter a house and may come right out. This can be compared to an unsuccessful pregnancy. A *gandhabba* taking hold of a zygote, but for some reason cannot stay there and has to come out, mostly because it turns out to be a mis-match of "*gathi*" of the potential mother.
- Thus it describes a human being going back and forth between "this world" and the "other world" or the "netherworld" ("*para loka*"). Once the *kammic* energy of the human *bhava* is exhausted, a new "*bhava*" is grasped.
- If the new *bhava* is not human or animal, then one would be born instantaneously in another realm (*brahma, deva*, *asura, preta*, or *niraya*). There are no *gandhabbas* associated with those realms.
- Thus we can see that *bhava* and *jathi* mean the same in all the other realms. In those realms, *bhava* automatically leads to *jathi*. For example, one with *deva bhava* is always a *deva*.

8. When one studies the accounts of people (of mostly children) describing their rebirth stories, there are always "gaps" between births; see, the references (books) cited in "Evidence of Rebirth." For example, see, "Children Who Remember Previous Lives: A Question of Reincarnation", by Ian Stevenson (2000).

- During those "gaps" in between successive human births, they had been in the *gandhabba* state, i.e., they were in *para loka*.
- When one dies in an accident especially at a younger age, it is more likely that their *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* had not been exhausted. Thus they are more likely to be in the *gandhabba* state, waiting for a suitable womb.
- This is why in most rebirth stories the previous life tends to have been terminated by an unexpected incident (killed by someone, a natural disaster, etc).
- This "memory from the past life" fades away as children grow, and that is why it is mostly children who provide these accounts. As they grow old, these memories disappear gradually.

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9. A *gandhabba* changes with time (just like everything else). In fact, it is even possible that if a *gandhabba* properly receives merits from an almsgiving (*dāna*) mentioned in #5 above, he/she can gain a *deva* or *brahma bhava* and be born instantly in such a realm.

- On the other hand, another human *gandhabba*, who had been engaged in behavior appropriate for an animal (say, a dog) in the previous human life, could cultivate those "dog *saṅkhāra*" as a *gandhabba* and slowly transform into a "dog *gadhabbaya*" while in *para loka*.
- When we think about these possibilities we realize how complex life is, and why we need to be mindful of the consequences of our actions. Not only that, we need to avoid doing things mechanically and understand the reasons behind even meritorious actions like alms-giving. I have seen many almsgivings that are conducted in a "party-like" atmosphere. One needs to do it with the proper mindset with the *gandhabba(s)* in mind.

10. Another interesting bit of deduction is how the concept of a soul or "*athma*" came to be established by the ancient Hindu *yogis*. Even to attain higher *anāriya jhānā* (above the fourth *jhāna*) that enables one to acquire the ability to see previous lives, one has to have that "*gathi*" of cultivating *jhānā* through recent human lives. Therefore, such a *yogi* with powerful *abhiññā* powers can be expected to have had many recent human lives.

- Thus it is possible that such *yogis* would have been born human hundreds of times (with *gandhabba* states in between). When they looked at their previous lives, they could see that every time they died a *gandhabba* came out, and sooner or later took hold of another human body. Thus it is this *gandhabba* that they thought was the indestructible "*athma*" or "soul". They could look back hundreds of lives and always see that they were born as human again and again.
- Thus, in the Hindu scripture *Bhagavad Gita,* getting hold of a new body is compared to discarding an old suit and wearing a new suit. As far as those *yogis* could see, it was the same *gandhabba* that came back in a different physical appearance! Thus for them it appeared that there was an unchanging entity coming back in a different form; this is why it is called "reincarnation".

11. Our world is much more complex than we can ever imagine. The Buddha said that only a Buddha can truly comprehend the complexity of this world: "*loka visaya acinteyya*" for a normal human, i.e., a normal human, by himself, cannot grasp the true nature to the full extent.

- Even though we do not need to comprehend everything (and we cannot), it is beneficial to learn these concepts at least to some extent.
- If one can comprehend *anicca*, these in-depth analyses are not needed. But especially these days, humans do not have the ability to grasp *anicca* right away. So, learning Dhamma and appreciating the unmatched knowledge of the Buddha gives one the confidence to persevere in one's efforts.

12.5.3 Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?

Revised July 14, 2019

1. The "mind-body problem" has been a central problem of philosophy since Descartes formulated it over 350 years ago. René Descartes proposed that while the physical body is subjected to the physical laws, there is a soul associated with a human body which is normally called the "mind" and it is non-material; for him, having a mind amounted to having an immaterial soul, outside the physical space, whose essence consisted in thinking. This is the so-called "Cartesian dualism".

- Here mind and body are on equal footing, each in its own domain.

2. Philosophers no longer take this "dualism" view seriously. Instead current philosophers have adopted a "material monism" that claim that our world is fundamentally material; this is materialism or physicalism. The only question they are debating on is how the "mental" arises from "material", i.e., how thoughts arise in a material brain.

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- We must note that the Buddha's worldview is totally different from both the above. It is "mental monism", i.e., that our world is fundamentally mental. This is why he said his Dhamma is "*pubbe anunussetu dhammesu*" or a Dhamma (or a theory on nature) that was not known to the world.
- This world view of the Buddha has been hidden for many centuries.
- This is of course a paradigm shift and a shocking one too at the first glance. But I hope to convince you with evidence gathered from various fields of study and illustrate the consistency across diverse disciplines.
- It must be mentioned that this monism is not the "mental monism" (or "idealism") that a few philosophers have proposed. They say that material things are mere imagination. On the contrary, the physical world is very real, it is just that it cannot provide any lasting happiness because of its transient nature.

3. In 1949 Gilbert Ryle introduced the phrase "ghost in the machine" to ridicule the concept of Cartesian dualism in his book, "The Concept of Mind". It is said that with that book, he put the final nail in the coffin of Cartesian dualism. Of course, the "ghost" is the soul or the mind and the machine is the body, in "ghost in the machine".

- In Buddha Dhamma, it is not a called a "ghost" but a "*gandhabba*"; see, "Mental Body – Gandhabba."
- And unlike in Decartes' ghost, *gandhabba* has a trace of matter. Furthermore, even the basic building block of a physical body (cell) has origins in the mind. Therefore, mind and matter are inter-related and inter-dependent; see, "Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin."

4. I think the ghost in machine analog is actually a good one to describe a human or an animal. The body actually plays a secondary role, and the mind is the controlling entity. **But the "ghost" or the *manomaya kāya* is NOT all mental**; it has a fine form of matter even though it would not be detectable by current scientific instruments.

I must emphasize that this concept is NOT a version of dualism. Mind and body are interdependent: "*viññāṇa paccayā nāmarūpa*" and "*nāmarūpa paccayā viññāṇa*"; a *manomaya kāya* has both *nāmarūpa* and mind.

- This *manomaya kāya* is made by the last *citta vīthi* of the previous existence (*bhava*), which is called *cuti* (pronounced "chuthi") citta; see, "What is a Thought?" in the *Abhidhamma* section. Thus this fine material form was PRODUCED by the mind. This is why it is said, "*mano pubbangamā dhammā*.....", i.e., "the mind precedes EVERYTHING…".
- You probably have seen pictures of a "misty ghostly figure" rising out of a physical body in literature on "astral projection" or "out-of-body experience". That is a good visual, but of course only people with *abhiññā* powers can see them.
- Many people have, though, experienced this out-of-body experience usually under stressful conditions. Most common is the case when a patient undergoes an operation and is unconscious, but recalls later how he/she was able to see the operation from above. This seems to happen more often to women than to men; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

5. When one has cultivated *abhiññā* powers, one can bring out the *gandhabba* or the *manomaya kāya* out of the physical body. Then the body is lifeless, until the *gandhabba* comes back into the body. The "ghost" or the *manomaya kāya* can now see and hear without the aid of a physical ear or eye. Thus it can "focus" on events happening far away, and can see and hear what is going on at that place.

- All this may sound very esoteric but there is a lot out there that is not "captured" by our five physical senses; see, "The 4 percent Universe : Dark Matter, Dark Energy, and the Race to Discover the Rest of Reality" by Richard Panek (2011).
- Our eyes can see only an infinitesimally small part of the electromagnetic spectrum from 390 nm – 700 nm. The human audible range is commonly given as 20 to 20,000 Hz, though there is considerable

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variation between individuals. Modern scientific instruments can expand these, for example, to see in the infrared frequencies with infrared cameras, etc.

- The "ghost" does not need light to see, or a sound wave to travel in air to hear.

6. The *manomaya kāya* has all six senses in the sense that all five *pasāda rūpa* corresponding to the five physical senses and also the *hadaya vatthu* that is the "seat of consciousness". **The *hadaya vatthu*, where *citta* (thoughts) are originated, lines up with the physical heart, not the brain. Thus we can say that mind is located close to the heart, and is not in the brain; brain is like a computer that helps run the physical body; see, "Neuroscience Says there is no Free Will – That is a Misinterpretation!."**

- The five *pasāda rūpa* in the *manomaya kāya* are also located close to the *hadaya vatthu*. Signals between the five physical sense faculties (eye, ear, etc) — called five *indriya* — and the five *pasāda rūpa,* and also between the (frontal cortex of the) brain and the *hadaya vatthu,* occur via a "ray system", probably electromagnetic, and are thus very fast.
- However, the "eye" is not just the "eye ball" but includes associated processing units in the brain, which is the visual cortex. It is the visual cortex that sends the signal to the "*cakkhu pasāda*" located close to the *hadaya vatthu.* When the *cakkhu pasāda* receives a signal from the visual cortex ("eye *indriya*"), it hits the *hadaya vatthu* which in turn vibrates 17 times corresponding to a "*citta vīthi.*"
- The same process occurs for the other four physical senses. The "motor cortex" sends/receives signals from all body parts using the central nervous system, and sends "ray signals" to the "*kāya pasāda.*" I will discuss this in detail later.
- The five *pasāda rūpa* are located around the *hadaya vatthu* much like the five small balls (clappers) are situated around the "main clapper" in temple bells in Sri Lanka (I am not sure whether this true in other countries). Such a bell symbolizes the five *pasāda rūpa* around the *hadaya vatthu*.
- When the "ghost" is inside the physical body, it cannot see or hear without the aid of the physical senses of eyes and ears. Similarly, the mind cannot "think" without the aid of the brain.
- This is why the efficiency of all six senses degrade with time: Because the physical body degrades. As we get old, all six physical sense faculties of eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body (outer skin), and the brain degrade, and lose their effectiveness.

7. Thus in the visualization as a "ghost," the *manomaya kāya* has all six senses. But it cannot use the *kāya pasāda* outside the physical body since not enough "matter' is in the *gandhabba* to "feel" the touching sensation. Similarly, the *manomaya kāya* ("ghost") cannot taste or smell when it is outside the physical body.

- Thus the *gandhabba* can only see and hear when outside the physical body. And it can do those without any limitations imposed by physical eye or physical ear, i.e. it can see and hear things far away.

8. When a human dies, if there is still *kammic* energy left for the "human *bhava*", i.e., the potential to be born as a human, then there is no *paṭisandhi citta* at death. A *paṭisandhi* ("pati" + "sandhi" = bind to a new life) happens when a transition to a "new *bhava*", for example to a "*deva bhava*" or an "animal *bhava*", happens. If the '*bhava*" remains the same and the next birth is also human, the *manomaya kāya* ("ghost" in this new terminology) or the *gandhabba* just comes out and waits until a suitable womb becomes available. The old physical body is now lifeless and just decays.

9. If the *kammic* energy for the "human *bhava*" is exhausted at death, then in the last *citta vīthi* the transition to a new "bhava" takes place. Then a new *manomaya kāya* for the new existence (*bhava*) is formed within that final *citta vīthi*, and at the end of that *citta vīthi*, the new *manomaya kāya* corresponding to the new life comes out of the dead body. If it is deva, then a new *deva* is instantly born in the *deva loka*. If it is an animal, say a dog, then a *manomaya kāya* (or *gandhabba*) that resembles the form of a dog comes out of the dead body and will wait until a suitable "dog womb" becomes available.

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- As mentioned in other posts, births in 29 realms happen instantaneously, i.e, a fully formed figure is born at the very instant of death in the previous life. An intermediate "*gandhabba* state" with a *manomaya kāya* (a "ghost" in the current analogy) that needs to wait for a suitable womb is involved only for birth in human and animal realms.

10. There is another interesting facet: The *kammic* energy automatically prepares the "blueprint of the body" to deliver the *kamma vipāka* (consequences of previous actions). Thus the physical body has "built-in" defects and flaws that may become evident at birth or at different stages of life: for example a cancer may develop at latter stages of life. This is the reason why some people are born handicapped; some have healthy bodies, beautiful bodies, ugly bodies, and a healthy person may die suddenly too; the varieties are endless.

- Furthermore, the nervous system is also setup to induce various effects as kamma vipāka. The incessant "urge to do something" works at different levels for different people. This actually reveals a deeper meaning of the First Noble Truth of Suffering; if you are ready for a deeper analysis, see, "The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca".

11. Therefore, the concept of a "ghost in the machine" may be useful to describe the *gandhabba* state or the separation of the *manomaya kāya* from the physical body in the cases of out-of-body experience (OBE), or with *abhiññā* powers. However, it must be kept in mind that in this case, the "ghost" does not depict an unchanging soul and also it is not totally "mental"; it has very fine material (*rūpa*) associated with it, that is invisible to the naked eye, but is visible to someone with *abhiññā* powers.

- Contrary to the idea of a soul, the *manomaya kāya* will keep changing even during an given existence and will make a huge transition at a new existence, for example when an animal is reborn a human or vice versa.

12. The main usefulness of this "ghost in the machine" concept is to accurately describe the physical body for what it really is: a temporary "residence" for the *gandhabba*. The "residence" decays with time and finally dies and then the *gandhabba* needs to find a new "residence". The *gandhabba* derives its uniqueness or the "personality" via *sansāric* habits (*gati* and *āsavas*), and the *gandhabba* has the power to change those habits; see, "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gathi)."

- Further information can be found on several posts on the *manomaya kāya* and *gati* (or *gathi*). You can do a keyword search using the "Search" button on the top right.

13. Here is a recent article by the philosopher Colin McGinn on the current theories on the "mind body problem" (click to open the pdf):

WebLink: PDF file: All machine and no ghost - McGinn-2012

- Also see, Thomas Nagel's book: "Mind & Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False" (2012).
- Obviously, both of them have had no exposure to Buddha Dhamma. But I am very much impressed that they have came to the conclusion that mind MUST play a central role.

14. A *gandhabba* with a fine body cannot "seen" with our eyes, because they are "more energy that matter". It is possible that the entities detected by "ghost detectors" are such *gandhabbas*.

- There are "ghost detector" apps made by many software companies that can detect "ghosts"; if you Google, "ghost detector" you can explore more on that. Even though right now this is done mostly for fun, it will be shown to be correct concept in the future. These detectors detect "packets of energy" that we cannot see with our eyes.
- Whether these ghost detectors actually can detect *gandhabbas* or not I am not sure. But the concept matches what is described in the *Tipiṭaka*.

July 14, 2019: I recently started a new subsection, "Origin of Life" to point out that not only the mental body (*gandhabba*), but also the physical body (which is a vast collection of cells), have their origins in the mind.

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12.5.4 Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body

Revised April 20, 2016; July 31, 2017; September 6, 2019

Introduction

1. *Manomaya kāya* means a "mental body". We should not perceive the "mental body" in the same way as the physical body of ours. The mental body is mostly energy than matter. It is called a "body" more in the sense of a "collection", as in a "body of water" or a "body of evidence."

- The Pāli term for a physical body is *āhāraja kāya* or *karaja kāya.*
- The mental body or "*manomaya kāya*" is also called *gandhabba* kāya or simply *gandhabba*. The *manomaya kāya* is made of three parts called *utuja, kammaja, cittaja.*

2. Therefore, we have four types of bodies (*kāya*): *āhāraja, utuja, kammaja, cittaja*. The *āhāraja kāya* is the physical body. The other three are parts of our "mental body," the *gandhabba*.

- It is easy to visualize a "person" to be consisting of two overlapping bodies. Those are the physical body that we see and the gandhabba with a light body (it is not a body in a sense we are used to but more like a "misty ghost"). **The fine body of the *gandhabba* "overlaps" the physical body.**
- The *gandhabba* makes the physical body "alive." Without it, the physical body is like a piece of wood and is inert. If you touch a dead body you will feel the difference compared to touching a live person.
- The dead body can be compared to a metal wire without a current flowing through it. When a current flows the wire, it becomes "energized."
- In the *Tirokudda Sutta* in the *Khuddaka Nikāya*, *gandhabba* is called a "*tirokudda.*"

3. The physical body (*karaja kāya*) that we see is built from the food we eat (*āhāraja kāya*). Starting with a single cell (zygote) in the womb, it grows by taking in food from the mother.

- The *gandhabba* consists of the other three *kāya*: *kammaja, cittaja, utuja.*
- Under stressful conditions (or with *abhiññā* powers), the misty *gandhabba* can come out of the physical body, and the physical body is no longer under the control of the *gandhabba.* But it is not dead because the *jīvitindriya* that maintains life is still there.
- Only at death, both the *gandhabba* and the *jīvitindriya* leave, and the body becomes inert like a log.

Kammaja Kāya is Primary

4. Let us follow the time sequence of making a *gandhabba* and a physical body in a new *bhava*. That happens via several steps per *Tipiṭaka*: "*jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo āyatanānaṃ paṭilābho*." See, "WebLink: suttacentral: Vibhaṅga Sutta (SN 12.2)."

The basis of all the other four *kāya* is the *kammaja kāya*; it arises from the *kamma* seed responsible that particular *bhava* or existence at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment.

- A *kammaja kāya* has three components called "*dasaka*" or "ten units". Those ten units are eight *suddhaṭṭhaka* and modes of rotation and spin. The three components are *vatthu dasaka* (*hadaya vatthu* or the seat of mind), *kāya dasaka* (blueprint of the final human body), and the *bhava dasaka*. The latter is loosely translated as man/woman nature, but it encompasses many other features related to one's *gati* or *bhava*).
- More details at "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka" and "Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms."
- The formation of the *kammaja kāya* is called "*jāti*" moment of birth.

5. Immediately following its birth, that *kammaja kāya* gives rise to a thought stream (*cittaja kāya*).

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- Both *kammaja* and *cittaja kāya* start producing fine *rūpa* and immediately give rise to a very light physical form called the *utuja kāya.* At this stage, *cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, and jivhā dasaka* are also present. That is called the "*sanjāti*" moment of birth.
- This subtle body with three *kāya* (*kammaja, cittaja, utuja*) is a *gandhabba*. Since all three types of *kāya* have their origin in mind, the *gandhabba* is a "mind-made body" or a *manomaya kāya*. But soon it will acquire a faint physical body by inhaling aroma (*gandha* + *abbha*), thus the name *gandhabba. Therefore* a *gandhabba* would have all four "bodies" (*kammaja, cittaja, utuja, karaja*).
- The five sets of *dasaka* (*kāya, cakkhu, sota, ghāṇa, and jivhā*) arrange around the *hadaya vatthu* (*vatthu dasaka*) in the subtle or "misty" body of the *gandhabba.* This *gandhabba* may exist in that state for a long time waiting for a suitable womb.
- That manomaya kāya or the *gandhabba* will now have to wait for a suitable womb to enter. That could take months or years.

Gandhabba Descending to a Womb

6. When a suitable womb becomes available, this fine *gandhabba* enters the uterus. At that time, it collapses to the size smaller than a single cell and merges with the single cell (zygote) formed by the union of mother and father. This moment of entering a womb is called the "*okkanti* moment" of birth.

- The physical body (*karaja kāya*) results from that single cell (zygote). It grows first by extracting food from the mother's womb and then consuming regular food once born as a baby.
- The physical body grows according to the "blueprint" in the subtle body of the *gandhabba.* The subtle body of the *gandhabba* expands with it so that it overlaps the physical body. For example, there is a nervous system in the *gandhabba* that overlays the physical nervous system.
- The initial growth stage of the fetus inside the womb is the "*abhinibbatti* stage" of birth.

7. Then the fetus inside the womb starts developing and forms the physical senses and the brain over many weeks. During this time, the eyes, ears, nose, tongue, as well as the nervous system grow. Furthermore, the brain develops too. It will have processing units to analyze signals from those five physical senses.

- In Buddha Dhamma, the *cakkhu indriya* is NOT just eyes, but also includes the associated processing centers in the brain. Similarly for the other four *indriya*: *sota, ghāṇa, jivhā, and kāya.*
- Signals generated in these five *indriya* get to the five *pasāda rūpa* located around the *hadaya vatthu* (seat of the mind) as described in "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction."
- The "*khandhānan pātilābho*" stage of birth is complete with the formation of all six sense faculties.
- When that baby is born (i.e., comes out of the womb), that physical body can use all six *āyatana* (eyes, ears, nose, tongue, body, and the mind) to interact with the external world fully. That is the final stage of the birth process: "*āyatanan pātilābho.*"
- A better description of *āyatana* at "Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāna."

8. Ven. Sariputta discussed that sequence of events when he analyzed the *Dhammacakka Pavattana Sutta* in detail to the bhikkhus in the WebLink: suttacentral: Sacca Vibhanga Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 141): "*Katamā cāvuso, jāti? Yā tesaṃ tesaṃ sattānaṃ tamhi tamhi sattanikāye jāti sañjāti okkanti abhinibbatti khandhānaṃ pātubhāvo āyatanānaṃ paṭilābho, ayaṃ vuccatāvuso: 'jāti.'*"

- Those who do not believe in the *gandhabba* state (i.e., a *gandhabba*) need to contemplate hat point. The *gandhabba* state is there only in human and animal realms.
- At death, if that human *bhava* has more *kammic* energy left, the *gandhabba* comes out of the dead physical body and waits for a new womb.
- If *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* is exhausted, then a *cuti-paṭisandhi* transition takes place, and the above discussed time sequence repeated. A brand new *gandhabba* in a new *bhava* emerges from

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the dead body. For a technical analysis of this process, see, "Cuti-Paṭisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description."

The *Manomaya Kāya*

9. We can get an idea of the fineness of the *manomaya kāya* from the following comparison. The average human weighs about 70 kg (70,000g) and has a body volume of about 70 L; the Density of a typical fog (that we can barely see) is approximately 0.1 g per cubic meter. Thus the weight "of the fog of volume equivalent of a human body" is about 0.01g.

- Thus a "human body made of fog" weighs only a tiny fraction of the average human weight.
- For another comparison, the weight of a mustard seed is about 0.002g.
- A *gandhabba* would have a "misty body" like a human figure made of fog, but will be MUCH SMALLER weight; it is immeasurable small. Sexual intercourse between a man and woman creates a zygote (a human cell) in the womb. Then a *gandhabba* descends to the uterus and takes hold of the zygote; see, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."
- My late Noble teacher, Waharaka Thero, has seen how a *gandhabba* enters a womb. When getting closer to the mother, *gandhabba* rotates rapidly and loses all its body other than the *hadaya vatthu, jīvitindriya*, and *bhava dasaka.* So it becomes much smaller than an atom in modern science (at the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level). That tiny body (which would not be seen even by the most powerful microscope) is pulled into the womb through the mother's body and gets attached to the zygote in the womb. I heard him describe this in a *desana*.
- So, a human body starts basically with two cells from the mother and father (which make the zygote) and an even smaller *gandhabba*. Thus virtually all the weight of a human comes from the nutrients. First from the mother's body, and once comes out the womb from the food that it consumes.

10. We can easily see the role of the *manomaya kāya* with the actions by its three components:

- *Kammaja kāya* is the most important. It is the blueprint for that existence (*bhava*). It has the blueprint of the physical body too.
- *Cittaja kāya* is what we EXPERIENCE moment-to-moment. We see, hear, smell, taste, touch, and think about concepts with thoughts: *cakkhu, sota, gandha, rasa, phoṭṭhabba*, and *mano viññāṇa*.
- Those thoughts NORMALLY depend on our habits (*gati*), *āsava* (cravings), and *kamma vipāka*, all in the *kammaja kāya*; see, "What is Mind? How Do We Experience the Outside World?."
- If thoughts arise ONLY DUE TO our past *kamma* and the habits and cravings acquired through them, then *kamma* would be deterministic. And we will be like robots (and that is the case for many beings, like animals). **LUCKILY, we can THINK on our own (unlike animals), and change our destinies.**

11. That last sentence summarizes the message of the Buddha. Do not lose this opportunity to get out of this *sansāric* suffering when we have this precious human life, which will last only about 100 years.

- Even if we are reborn human, what guarantees are there that we will get to listen or read about Buddha Dhamma?

12. If anything is "transferred" from one existence (*bhava*) to another, those would be the "*gati*" and "*āsavā*" of that life-stream. But they also keep evolving. If we do not act mindfully, we let our mind to "go with the flow." Then our actions will be determined by our *sansāric* habits. That would only further strengthen such habits. That is why it is essential to identify bad habits and get rid of them, and ALSO to cultivate good habits.

- That is the process of mind purification called Bhāvanā (Meditation) detailed in *Satipaṭṭhāna* (see, "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta"), *Ānāpāna sati* ("6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)"). I have also written about the *Sabbāsava sutta*: "Habits and Goals," and a bit more in-depth analysis in "Key Points in the *Sabbāsava Sutta*" at the end of the post, "The Sotāpanna Stage."

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- Also, see the post, "The Importance of Purifying the Mind."

Living Beings in Other Realms Have Different "Bodies" and Different *Manomaya Kāya*

13. The above description is valid for humans and animals. In *brahma* realms, there are only *manomaya kāya* and no physical body. There are physical bodies In deva realms, but those are much less dense than human bodies.

- In other realms, different mechanisms (mainly *opapātika* births) operate; see, "Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms."

14. in the post, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream," we mainly talked about the *cittaja kāya*, the stream of thoughts, and the physical body. We saw that, If an animal dies and is reborn a human:

- The physical body in the animal realm is very different from that in the human realm.
- The *cittaja kāya* or the stream of thoughts associated with the animal existence (*bhava*) is also very different from the *cittaja kāya* of the human existence (*bhava*). That is what is meant by "*bhava paccayā jāti*" in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*: the birth is according to the *bhava* that latched on at the moment of death, i.e., "*upādāna paccayā bhavo*"; see, "Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda."

15. Thus it is clear that both the physical body and *manomaya kāya* make "quantum jumps" (large instantaneous change) when switching from one existence (say an animal) to another (say a human).

- The *kammaja kāya* has all the *kammic* potentialities (*kamma* seeds) acquired up to any given time; see, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka," and "Sansāric Habits and Āsavas." But one of those seeds becomes operative for the "new *bhava,"* and becomes the "*bhavaṅga*" for that life. The remaining *kamma* seeds all "tag-along" in the new *bhava* and one of those will rise to the next *bhava* or existence; the same "*gati*" are in all seeds. Thus, whether an animal or a human, the new life will display somewhat similar habits (*gati*) and cravings (*āsavā*).
- That is why "no-self" was not approved or rejected by the Buddha: the new life is not the same as the old life. But it is not completely different either, because those *gati* and *āsavā* propagate (but they all keep changing too). And similarly, the Buddha neither approved or rejected the idea of a "self."
- A living being is a "life-stream" that changes even moment-to-moment based on cause and effect: *paṭicca samuppāda*. Even though there is no "unchanging entity" such as a "soul," the life-stream has its characteristics (*gati* and *āsavā*), which also keep evolving.

More on the *Manomaya kāya* at: "Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)."

Next, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?", ……..

12.5.5 Out-of-Body Experience (OBE) and Manomaya Kāya

Re-written October 24, 2019; revised January 30, 2020

Two Types of Bodies – Physical Body and *Manomaya Kāya*

1. We humans have two "bodies." *Manomaya kāya* is the "mental body" (with a trace of matter) born at the beginning of the human existence or human *bhava*. That *manomaya kāya* is pulled into a womb when a "matching womb" becomes available, and that is the start of a "physical body." Within a human *bhava*, there can be many "human births (*jāti*)" with different "physical bodies." See, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein."

- More details on the two types of "bodies" at "Manomaya Kāya (gandhabba) and the Physical Body."

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2. One could visualize the *manomaya kāya* or the "mental body" as an "energy field" (it has some fine *rūpa* too) overlapping the solid physical body. All vital functions happen in the mental-body. Thoughts generate in the seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*). There are five *pasāda rūpa* (*cakkhu, sota, ghāna, jivhā, kāya*) around the hadaya vatthu responsible for detecting sights, sounds, smell, taste, and touch.

- That *manomaya kāya* can leave the solid physical body under some conditions. Those who have cultivated supernormal powers (*iddhi*) can willfully come out of the physical body. During heart operations, *manomaya kāya* of some patients come out, as discussed below. In both cases, *manomaya kāya* can see and hear without the aid of physical eyes and ears.
- That is hard to visualize for us. But as you read more posts on the *manomaya kāya*, you will see that it makes perfect sense.
- We experience the world with the "mental body" or the *monomaya kāya* (also called a *gandhabba*.) This is explained in, "Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depition of Gandhabba Concept."

When Inside the Physical Body *Manomaya Kāya* Depends on the Physical Body

3. When the *manomaya kāya* is attached to the physical body, the *hadaya vatthu* needs the help of the physical body to see, hear, smell, taste, feel the touch, and to recall memories. One can think of the *manomaya kāya* as being "trapped inside" the physical body. Physical eyes need to capture images of external objects, ears need to capture sounds, nose helps smelling, tongue helps to taste, and the physical body with the nervous system helps to feel touch.

- The brain analyzes all those "signals" and transmits to the five *pasāda rūpa* located in the manomaya kāya around the *hadaya vatthu*.
- The brain is a part of the physical body and is the interface between the physical body and the mental body (*manomaya kāya*).

4. The seat of the mind (*hadaya vatthu*) and the five "internal senses" (*pasāda rūpa*) are born with the *manomaya kāya* at the time of human *bhava* (*paṭisandhi*). All these are very fine *rūpa* that our eyes cannot see. Thus one can visualize the *manomaya kāya* as an "energy field" that overlaps the physical body and provides vitality to the inert physical body.

- The Buddha compared the situation of a *manomaya kāya* separating from the physical body to a sword pulled out of its sheath, or a snake shedding its skin. Once the *manomaya kāya* comes out, the body is like an inert log. And that is precisely what happens when one dies. The vitality is gone the instant the *manomaya kāya* comes out.

Manomaya Kāya of a Human (or an Animal) is "*Gandhabba*"

5. When a person dies, if he/she has more *kammic* energy left in the human "*bhava*," then the *manomaya kāya* comes out of the dead body. Then it will wait until another suitable womb becomes available. The *manomaya kāya* still in the human *bhava*, but we cannot see it. It is in "*paraloka*" or the "netherworld."

- While waiting in the *paraloka*, they could inhale aroma (*gandha*) from plants and food and get a bit denser. Thus the name "*gandhabba*" ("*gandha*" + "*abba*" where "*abba*" means "taking in").
- That is why the *manomaya kāya* of a human (or an animal) is called "*gandhabba*." For more details, see "Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya."
- This *gandhabba* may stay in that form for even years until pulled into a suitable womb with matching "*gati.*"

6. The *gandhabba* also can see and hear, actually with much more flexibility. The capabilities of the physical eye and physical ear are much limited.

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- Of course, a *gandhabba* cannot smell, taste, or touch because its body is too subtle (it is more like an energy field), and thus, cannot make physical contacts.
- When the *manomaya kāya* is separated from the physical body, it can see and hear without eyes and ears. "Seeing" does not need light (one could look at things far away), and "hearing" does not need air as a medium for the sound to propagate (one could hear sounds from far away). Both mechanisms involve "*kirana*" (or "rays" in English, similar to electromagnetic radiation).
- Furthermore, the *gandhabba* can "travel" very fast; it is not physical travel. For example, the *suttā* talk about the Buddha or *Arahants* with *iddhi* powers traveling to *deva loka* in a time comparable to the time taken to "stretch a bent arm."

Gandhabba Inside the Physical Body

7. When the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) merges with the physical body, "seeing" and "hearing" happens with the help of the physical eye and the physical ear. It is like being inside a military tank. One needs to use the sensors mounted on the tank to see and hear what is going on outside.

- Now, "seeing" happens with the help of the physical eye. The physical eye is like a camera that takes a picture. The brain processes that image and sends it to the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* in the *manomaya kāya*. Same with the ear. Thus, eyes and ears can be thought of as those sensors mounted on that military tank.
- Therefore, the ability to see and hear also degrade with old age, as the physical eyes and physical ears age.
- The brain is like the computer in that tank that processes the information coming in through the sensors.
- Therefore, if there is damage to any of these three "physical instruments" (brain, eyes, ears), the ability to think, see, or hear can be degraded or lost. See "Our Mental Body – Gandhabba" and "Brain – Interface between Mind and Body."

8. However, actual "seeing" and "hearing" still happen at the two *pasāda rūpa* (internal eye and internal ear) associated with the *manomaya kāya*.

- For example, have you ever wondered how we could judge the distances as we move around, avoiding bumping into things and each other? The physical eye cannot "judge distances"; see, "The Sense of Being Stared At" by Rupert Sheldrake (2003, p.12). Our eyes can see many things at the same time and judge relative distances of all things. This ability is in the *pasāda rūpa*, and not in the eyes or the brain.

Out-of-Body Experiences (OBE)

9. The *hadaya vatthu* of the *manomaya kāya* (*gandhabba*) overlaps the physical heart when the two bodies are together. However, in some situations, the *manomaya kāya* can separate from the physical body. That leads to "out-of-body experience (OBE)."

- In his book, "Travels," the famous author of the Jurassic Park, Michael Crichton (1988, p. 307) mentions his ability to "shift my awareness out of my body and move it around the bedroom," and he says, "..I didn't think anything about it… I assumed that anybody could do it.. ."
- A similar account has been given by a woman recently who also thought that "everybody could do it": ABCNEWS: Woman Has 'Out of Body' Experiences Whenever She Wants
- A series of books, including "Journeys of the Body," has been written by Robert A. Monroe based on his experiences.

Near-Death Experiences (NDE)

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10. Only a few people have the ability to experience OBE at will. Typically, OBE happens under stressful conditions, most commonly during heart operations. These have a special name of near-death experiences (NDE.) The following video provides a good summary:

WebLink: youtube: Near Death Experiences & Evidence of the Afterlife

- Of course, there are many books on NDE. "Consciousness Beyond Life" by Pim van Lommel (2010) gives detailed accounts of case studies of NDE experienced by people undergoing heart operations.
- A recent book, "Dying to be me: My Journey from Cancer, to Near Death, to True Healing," by Anita Moorjani (2012), describes the NDE experience of her in detail.

Our Thoughts Do Not Arise in the Brain and We Do Not See With Our Eyes

11. The mind-door is the *hadaya vatthu* in the *gandhabba* or the *manomaya kāya*. Thoughts arise in the *hadaya vatthu* in the *gandhabba*, even when the *gandhabba* is INSIDE a physical human body. See, "Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body."

- "Seeing" happens in the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa* in the *gandhabba*. When outside a human body, that *cakkhu pasāda* can see by itself.
- When inside a human body, that *cakkhu pasāda* is shielded by the body. In that case, the visual signal needs to come through the eyes, processed by the brain, and that signal is transmitted to the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*.
- In some cases, people are born with the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*, but the optic nerve (or the physical eye itself) may be damaged. In that case, they cannot see because the brain is not getting a signal from the eyes. But if the *gandhabba* can come out of the body, it can see by itself. The following video clearly illustrates this situation.

  WebLink: youbetube: Near Death Experience - Blind woman 'sees' while out of body
- However, in other cases, one may be born blind because one may not have the *cakkhu pasāda rūpa*. In that case, even if the *gandhabba* comes out of the body, it would not be able to see.
- All five sensory faculties are in the *gandhabba* or the *manomaya kāya*. Those signals are first processed by the brain before the signals arrive at the corresponding *pasāda rūpa*. Then that *pasāda rūpa* transfers the signal to the *hadaya vatthu* and it is the *hadaya vatthu* that really "sees", "hears", etc.

More information at, "Mental Body – Gandhabba" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)."

A new series of posts discusses life in great detail. "Origin of Life."

12.5.6 Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description

1. Many people believe that *paṭisandhi* or the linking to a new life happens in a womb (in human and animal realms). But that is not correct. *Patisandhi citta* is experienced in the next very citta after the *cuti citta* of the old life in the last *citta vīthi* of the dying person.

- The new life form (*gandhabba*) emerges from the dead body right after the last *citta vīthi* (However, if the next life is an *opapatika* one, the life form is fully formed right after the last *citta vīthi*). This is also called the *gandhabba* state. Here we will discuss the case where the new life is either human or animal and thus a *gandhabba* is formed; see, "Manomaya Kāya and Physical Body" and "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

2. *Patisandhi* ("*pati*" is bond and "*sandhi*" is joining in Pāli or Sinhala, thus *paṭisandhi* means joining a new life at the end of the old) happens in a thought moment in the body of the dying person; if the next life is human or animal, then the *gandhabba* for that life comes out of that body at the end of that last citta vīthi. Of

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course the *gandhabba* has a very fine body, and it can be seen only by a person with *abhiññā* powers. let us discuss this step carefully.

- I must warn in advance that this analysis is highly technical, and is suitable only for those who are familiar with *citta vīthi* processes in *Abhidhamma*. **However, the conclusions are informative, so you may want to go through it.** *Citta vīthi* and *cetasika* are discussed in several posts in Citta and Cetasika.

3. The last *citta vīthi* of the old life with 17 *citta* run in the standard way: *atita bhavaṅga, bhavaṅga calana, bhavaṅga upacceda, pancadvara vajjana, cakkhu viññāṇa, sampaticcana, santirana, vottapana*, and then *javana* sequence (7 *javana* citta) starts. After the fifth *javana* citta, there are two more *javana* citta left. The sixth is the *cuti citta* and the seventh and last *javana* is the *paṭisandhi citta.*

- In the last *citta vīthi*, a previous *kamma vipāka* provides an *arammana* (thought object) associated with that *kamma vipāka* through one of the five sense doors: it is normally a visual or a sound associated with the new existence (*bhava*). Even though the person's physical faculties may be very weak, the person will see or hear very clearly whatever the *nimitta* presented by the *kamma vipāka*. Then at the *vottapana citta*, the mind makes a decision to act on that *arammana* based on the person's *gathi*. The person has no control of it. It is called, "*kammaja pure jatha; cittaja pacce jatha*", i.e., *kamma vipāka* comes first, and then accordingly the *javana citta* flow grasping that new *bhava:*

"kamma vipāka vajjanti, vipako kamma sambhavo

Tasma punabbhovo hoti, evan loko pavattatī"

Or,

"*kamma vipāka* presents a new existence, the ignorant being grasps that existence

Thus the cycle of rebirths repeats, and that is how the world exists"

4. First there is the *vipāka citta*; then it induces *kamma sambhava*. *"Vipako kamma sambhavo*" is initiated at the *vottapana citta*. The *vottapana citta* decides how to proceed with the *arammana* (object) that came from the *kamma vipāka,* and the being normally gets attached to that object via greed/hate and grasps a new existence in the *javana citta* that follow. Thus "*vipako kamma sambhavo*" starts with the first *javana citta*. After 5 *javana citta kammic* energy is optimized, with each subsequent *javana* strengthening via *asevana paccayā* from the previous *javana*. The sixth one is called *cuti citta*, and the next *citta* grasps the new *bhava*.

- *Cuti citta* happens in the last *citta vīthi* just after the actual *cuti* (death), because it is *pacce jata* to *kammaja cuti* event. The seventh *javana* always is responsible for the next life.
- Now this linking to the next life happens at the 7th javana citta or the paṭisandhi citta, which is again *pacce jatha* to the actual *kammaja paṭisandhi* that starts at the *pancdvaravajjana citta* in this last *citta vīthi.*

5. Now let us take a look at the last *citta vīthi* of the old life in detail. This *citta vīthi* was started by the last bit of *kammic* energy from the old life, and it will run its course of 17 *citta* before it comes to an end. It is like throwing a stone; even though the energy was fully spent by the time the stone was released, the stone will be travelling until its energy is all spent. In the same way, *even though the kammic energy for the old life has ended, the last citta vīthi will run its course of 17 citta including the last two bhavaṅga citta after the 7 javana citta.*

- *Cuti* or death is not a *citta*; it is the end of the kammic energy of the old life. *Cuti* happens just at the moment of initiating the last *citta vīthi,* and the *cuti citta* is in the last *citta vīthi. Patisandhi* is not a *citta* either. It is also *kammaja* act.
- Here the old *bhavaṅga* has ended too; but there are two *bhavaṅga* citta left in the last *citta vīthi.* The new *vatthu rūpa* cannot be formed until this last *citta vīthi* is done with, because as soon as one is formed, it will start its *citta vīthi*, and no two *vīthi* can be there at the same time.

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6. In that last *citta vīthi*, by the time *atita bhavaṅga, bhavaṅga calana,* and comes to *bhavaṅga upacceda*, the *kammic vipāka* from the old life are finished. Now what comes to the *pancadvara* is the *kamma nimitta, asanna kamma*, or a *gathi nimitta*; **it is the vipāka citta that powers the new life**: "*kamma vipāka vajjanti*". It is received by the *sampaticcana*, *santirana* citta and then "*vipāka kamma sambhavo*" happens at the *vottapana citta*, i.e., a decision is made on what to do and this decision depends on the level of *avijjā* (in the form of one's *gathi* and *āsavas*).

- This "*vipāka kamma sambhavo*" starts with the first *javana citta* and builds up gradually up to the fifth *javana citta*. Now the sixth *javana*, *cuti citta*, had been determined from the beginning of the *citta vīthi*. The new *kamma bīja* starts working at the seventh *javana* in the new *bhava*.

7. When this last *citta vīthi* ends, the old *hadaya vatthu* is dead too; it had exhausted all its *kammic* power. The next *citta vīthi* starts with a new *hadaya vatthu* in the new life that is powered by a new *kamma bīja*. The new *hadaya vatthu* if formed by the new *kamma* seed that was grasped at the 7th *javana* (the *paṭisandhi citta*), and immediately the first *citta vīthi* for the new life starts. The *gandhabba* is formed and comes out of the dead body.

- If a human died and the next life is an animal, the *gandhabba* with the corresponding animal figure comes out fully formed (of course it is very fine); **It is the blueprint for the new physical body.**
- This *gandhabba* now has to wait for a suitable womb. It is not that *gandhabba* decides which womb is good; rather, when a womb that matches the *gathi* of the *gandhabba* becomes available, *gandhabba* will be pulled into it by the *kammic* energy.
- When a sperm fertilizes an egg in a womb, a single cell called a zygote results. But there is no life there until the *gandhabba* enters the womb and is incorporated with that zygote. Now the zygote becomes an embryo, then a fetus, and once out of the womb grows to a full-size human or an animal according to that blueprint.
- Science has been unable to explain how all the complex body parts of a human or animal develops starting from a single cell. This is how it happens. The blueprint for all the complex body parts is in the *gandhabba*, not in that single cell; see, "What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control?."

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12.6 Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi Is Key

1. Most of us feel uncomfortable when we do something immoral or unethical. For example, I remember how my heart rate went up when I stole a cookie or a candy when I was little. We all know how the heart rate goes up and the whole body gets tense when we get angry. Those are definitely not enjoyable moments.

- Therefore, immoral deeds normally make one uncomfortable and even feel like one is "on fire" in extreme cases. This is called "*tāpa*" ("burning")in Pāli or Sinhala. In the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, "*atāpi sampajāno*" means having a mindset to avoid such deeds; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure."
- When one stay away from bad deeds, the heart "cools down"; this is *Nibbāna* or "*nivana*" or "*niveema*" ("cooling down").

2. When a thought comes to our mind (mostly triggered by seeing, hearing something related), the decision to act on it may come automatically based our "*gathi*." If an "enemy" comes into our view when we are walking down the road, thoughts of anger may arise immediately leading to a "fire" in the heart, depending on how "bad" we perceive that person to be. Here the *cetasika* "*dosa*" dominates our thoughts. Such thoughts that come automatically to one's mind are due to one "*gati*" and are the strongest; sometimes they are labelled as "*asankharika" citta*.

- Other times, one may hesitate to do an immoral act, but after deliberation or due to encouragement by others may go ahead and do it; such thoughts are called "*sasankharika*" *citta*.
- When I was thinking about stealing cookies as a child, if I did it with a prompting by a sibling, or I myself did it after not been able to overcome the greed, that would have been a "*sasankharika citta*."
- In another example, the stronger version of "*lobha*" may be in our minds when we compete for something valuable. Here the desire is not only to acquire it, but we also do not want others to have it. Here the "fire" in the heart is more noticeable compared to the above case of desiring a cookie, which comes under "*rāga*" category.
- So, there are many shades of strength for both good and bad thoughts.
- Even if we do some of these "bad deeds" once in a while, we feel that it is wrong to do them. The stronger the bad deed, the stronger that we "feel" them.

3. However, some people seem to enjoy doing bad deeds. We have heard about people who got tens or hundreds or stab wounds when they died in knife attacks. The person who did the stabbing seem to have been enjoying it; killing of a person does not need that many stabbings. This is a rare event that we all agree is disgusting; we are horrified by the mere thought of it.

- But there are milder versions that seem "normal" to more of us.
- Some people get enjoyment watching other people suffer, say when engaged in a fight. We have seen pictures of people kicking the opponent while the opponent was down on the ground, even unconscious. This is of more common occurrence in torturing animals. Many people enjoy watching "cock fights".
- In the even more common occurrence of fishing, most people do not "see" the suffering of a fish as it is writhing in agony hanging by the hook, or convulsing while fighting for "water to breath". These are not immoral people, but their perception about animals has been cultivated to the point that they do not see animals as living beings.

4. *Diṭṭhi* or "wrong vision" play a key role in generating feelings and desires. If we have been taught that killing animals is not an immoral thing to do, then we do not feel uncomfortable doing such an act. People enjoy fishing or hunting because they do not perceive killing fish or deer as an immoral thing to do.

- Instead of getting a "fire" in the heart, they feel a joy while fishing or hunting.
- And this is not restricted to any particular religion. I know many "Buddhists" who enjoy fishing and hunting. On the other hand, most "Buddhists" consider drinking to be immoral, even though "drinking"

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per se is not one of the *dasa akusala* (of course excessive drinking can induce one to do immoral things). It just depends on what "*diṭṭhis*" one has.

- In parts of India, some people believe that washing in a particular river will help "wash away" bad merits. But then the fish in that river should be completely devoid of any bad merits, since they live their whole lives in water. Even such "apparently harmless" wrong visions still cover the mind, and prevent the mind from seeing the reality.
- The problem is that most such *diṭṭhis* propagate from generation to generation without people actually examining the sense of such beliefs.

5. *Diṭṭhi* is one of the key immoral *cetasika* (mental factors), and the opposite *sammā diṭṭhi* or *paññā* (wisdom) is of course a "moral *cetasika*."

- A key point about *cetasika* is that moral and immoral *cetasika* DO NOT arise together in a *citta*. A thought is either moral OR immoral. A moral thought has one or more of "moral *cetasika*" such as *alobha, adosa*, compassion, etc. and an immoral thought has one or more of immoral *cetasika* such as *lobha, dosa*, shamelessness, fearlessness of wrong, etc.

6. The *cetasika* "*pīti*" (pronounced "peethi" or "preethi") which means "joy" is one that can be associated with either a *kusala* or *akusala* thought. The same thing is true for the cetasikas *vīmaṃsā* (liking) and *viriya* (effort). **These three *cetasika* are included in the six types of *cetasika* called "particulars" that can be in either type of thought, *kusala* or *akusala*;** see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)."

- Thus if one does not believe that killing fish or other animals is immoral and can lead to bad results in future lives, then a person with that *diṭṭhi* can enjoy fishing/hunting (*pīti*), can form a liking for it (*chanda*), and enthusiastically make preparations for fishing/hunting trips (*viriya*).
- On the other hand, someone with *sammā diṭṭhi* will definitely feel at least uncomfortable in doing such an act, will not like it, and will not strive to do such acts. He/she will gain joy by doing things with thoughts that have only moral *cetasika*, and also may have *chanda* and *viriya* associated with such activities.

7. Thus there are many types of "*micchā diṭṭhi*" that tend to make people comfortable with immoral acts.

- It must be noted that the word "*diṭṭhi*" is used in Buddha Dhamma to specifically denote *micchā diṭṭhi* or "wrong vision". The opposite is *sammā diṭṭhi* or *paññā* (wisdom).
- Some people do not have a problem with killing other human beings if those are presumed to be "non-believers". They have been taught all their lives that it is "good thing to do" and will pave the way to heaven.
- It is amazing how one's mind can be made to accept certain activities as "acceptable" by conditioning over time, especially if started at young age. This is also called "brain washing". This is why *diṭṭhis* are very difficult to break. Yet, with a determined mindset, one can break *diṭṭhis*.
- The key is to critically evaluate both sides of the particular issue at hand. Does it make sense to say one can go to heaven by killing people? Other than someone's promise, is there any truth to that statement? Is there a doctrine that EXPLAINS HOW "killing unbelievers can pave the way to heaven?".
- The key problem is that human mind likes to "take the easy way". It is easier to try to justify one's vision or position rather than trying to spend time looking deeper into the issue to make an informed decision. But one needs to think about the consequences that can last for unimaginably long times.

8. Some people just enjoy killing other people; serial killers are a good example. Such people have extreme version of the *moha cetasika*; they are totally and completely morally blind.

- While most of us cannot even fathom, "how can such a person go to sleep at night?" after killing another person for fun, they actually sleep well with a content (but perverse) mind.
- People like Pol Pot and Hitler planned systematic killing of millions of people for many years. In their "*diṭṭhi*" that was the right thing to do, and many others started believing in that "*diṭṭhi*" too.

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9. This is why getting rid of "*diṭṭhi*" and embracing *sammā diṭṭhi* is the first step in the mundane Eightfold Path first and then in *lokuttara* Eightfold Path; see, "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?."

- Having wrong kinds of vision (*diṭṭhi*) can be very dangerous, since one may not even realize that one is doing immoral things because of that *diṭṭhi*. Such *diṭṭhis* can only be removed via learning Dhamma. One becomes a *Sotāpanna* just by eliminating such wrong visions and perceptions. The three *saŋyojana* (or *saṃyojana*) that are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage (*sathkāya diṭṭhi, vicikicchā, sīlabbata parāmāsa*) all arise due to *micchā diṭṭhi*.

10. **When we analyze at the *akusala citta* we can see why.** All immoral acts are done with just 12 types of *akusala citta:* eight based on *lobha* (greed), two based on *paṭigha* (dislike), and two based on *moha* (ignorance).

- All "*apāyagāmī*" deeds (those acts responsible for rebirth in the four lowest realms or *apāyā*) are done with the first four *lobha citta* and the *vicikicchā citta*; see, "Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta."
- Those first four *akusala citta* are "*diṭṭhi sampayutta*" or "done with wrong views". The cetasika *vicikicchā* also arises due to not knowing the true nature of the world, i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta.* Thus all five *akusala citta* that are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage arise due to *micchā diṭṭhi,* wrong visions about the world.

11. **If one believes one is not doing an immoral act while doing that immoral act**, then he/she is likely to do it with *pīti*, *chanda*, and *viriya*., i.e., with joy, liking, and makes effort joyfully to get it done.

- Of course ignorance of law is not an excuse, as stated in the latin phrase, *Ignorantia juris non excusat.* It holds true for the natural laws stated in Buddha Dhamma as well.
- Even worse, according to Buddha Dhamma, immoral acts done with joy are the worst. That is why out of those first four *lobha citta*, those two done with joy are the absolutely worst: the "***somanassa sahagata diṭṭhi sampayutta*** *citta*" and the "***somanassa sahagata diṭṭhi sampayutta*** *sasankharika citta.*"
- In English, these mean, "**act done with joy and wrong vision** due to *gatī*" and "**act done with joy and wrong vision** prompted by other factors". The first is the worst since it comes automatically; the second *citta* arises after some deliberation, and thus has less potency, or *javana*.

12. Therefore, now we can see why some people do immoral acts with joy and make them even worse; **they simply have wrong world views or *diṭṭhi*.** This is why learning Dhamma is so important.

- As the Buddha said, "My Dhamma has never been known to the world before". So, none of us will know **precisely** what is moral or immoral, without hearing or reading about them.
- However, as humans we have the innate sense of knowing roughly what is moral/immoral. These come from our previous lives. **But depending on the environment that we grew up, we may have acquired certain "wrong visions" or "*micchā diṭṭhi*" or "*diṭṭhi*."**
- This is why teaching children to be moral and making sure they associate with only "good friends" is critical. Those habits learned at young age can last a lifetime unless changed via a determined effort.
- And since one person's *diṭṭhi* is different from another's, it is absolutely critical to spend time and verify which *diṭṭhis* are the wrong to be adhered to in the long term. Many people do not believe in rebirth, but according to Buddha that is a *micchā diṭṭhi* that can lead to the adverse outcomes in the future. One needs to examine the evidence and decide for oneself. In addition to looking at , "Evidence for Rebirth," one should also examine, "Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths".

13. Finally, the reverse is true too: Those *moral* acts that are done with joy and knowledge (wisdom) or "correct views" (*sammā diṭṭhi*) will lead to *vipāka* or outcomes with highest merits.

- Getting rid of wrong views is acquiring correct views or cultivating *sammā diṭṭhi*. The more one becomes knowledgeable in what is moral and what is not, one easily BECOMES joyful while doing

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moral deeds; joy and wisdom feed on each other. Of course, *chanda* and *viriya* will grow simultaneously too.

- Thus the "***somanassa sahagata ñāṇa sampayutta*** *citta*" or the "**thought with joy and wisdom** that comes out automatically" is the strongest *moral citta* (or *sobhana citta*). The next highest is the "***somanassa sahagata ñāṇa sampayutta*** *sasankharika citta*" or the "**thought with joy and wisdom** prompted by other factors".
- Here, wisdom starts at the mundane *sammā diṭṭhi* level, increases as one one embarks on the *Sotāpanna magga*, then *Sotāpanna phala*, and so on until becoming "fully enlightened" at the *Arahant* stage; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."
- The power or *javana* of a *kusala citta* is enhanced with enhanced wisdom. Thus the power of a *citta* of an *Arahant* is much stronger compared to that of a *Sotāpanna*, and that of a *Sotāpanna* is much stronger compared to a normal person.
- Of course the *javana* of a *citta* with strong ignorance (*moha*) is strong too, and thus makes the deed even more potent and will bring about unbearably bad outcomes (*vipāka*).

14. Even though many people perceive Abhidhamma to be complex, if started with good basics, Abhidhamma helps clarify many complex issues very clearly. Learning about types of *citta* and how different *cetasika* play roles in one's habits ("*gati*") will help clarify many issues.

Next, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power", ……

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12.7 Key to Sotāpanna Stage – Diṭṭhi and Vicikiccā

1. The attainment of the *Sotāpanna* stage accomplishes the first and foremost goal of a *Bhauddhayā*: to remove the possibility of rebirth in the lowest four realms, where suffering is unbearable.

- Even though I have analyzed different ways one can comprehend the "requirements" to be fulfilled to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage (they are all equivalent), one way to easily remember those requirements is to realize that a *Sotāpanna* has REMOVED two key immoral *cetasika*: *diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā*.
- See, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)" and "Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)" for introductions to the types of ***cetasika* or "mental factors" that highlight one's "*gathi*" in one's thoughts.**

2. *Cetasika* are inter-related. A good example is *dosa* (strong hate), which arises as a result of *lobha* (strong greed); actually *lobha* TURNS to *dosa*, **they do not arise together**. When someone kills another human, that is due to *dosa*; at the moment of the killing, only *dosa* was in that person's mind. But that *dosa* likely arose due to *lobha*, strong attachment to something at an earlier time.

- And *lobha* is strong when *diṭṭhi* is strong. In the above example, one would not have formed such strong *lobha* if one did not have *diṭṭhi*, and instead would have cultivated the moral *cetasika*, *sammā diṭṭhi,* to some extent (i.e., if one knew the consequences of such a strong attachment that can lead to hate and then killing). **Thus when *diṭṭhi* is removed, *lobha* gets to weaker strength of *rāga* (attachment to sense pleasures).**
- **Removal of *diṭṭhi* also leads to the reduction of *dosa* (strong hate) to *paṭigha* (tendency to get angry or irritable)**.
- *Vicikicchā* is related to *moha*; **when *vicikicchā* is removed, *moha* (morally blind) is reduced to *avijjā* (ignorance of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*) level.** As discussed in another post, *vicikicchā* is the tendency to do unfruitful and harmful things because of a "covered mind", i.e., not knowing the true nature.
- Those two points are stated in another way by saying that the four "*diṭṭhi sahagatha lobha citta*" and the "*vicikicchā citta*" are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage (thus 5 of the 12 akusala citta are removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage). This was discussed in the post, "Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi Is Key."

3. In other posts I have discussed how one's "*gathi*" are intimately linked to the kinds of *cetasika* that dominate in one's mind. The "*apāyagāmī gathi*" or those habits or tendencies of a person that makes the person eligible to born in the *apāyā* (the lowest four realms) are mainly in several key immoral *cetasika*: *lobha, dosa, diṭṭhi, moha*, and *vicikicchā*.

- At the *Sotāpanna* stage, the *cetasaika* of *diṭṭhi* and *vicikicchā* are REMOVED; then *lobha* is reduced to *rāga* (which can be separated out as *kāma rāga, rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga*); *dosa* is reduced to *paṭigha*, and *moha* reduced to *avijjā*.
- At the *Sakadāgāmī* stage, from those remaining above, *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are REDUCED.
- Those two, *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*, are REMOVED at the *Anāgāmī* stage.
- It is only at the *Arahant* stage that the remaining strength of those key immoral *cetasika* of *lobha* and *moha* (i.e., *rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, avijjā*) together with all other immoral *cetasika* are removed.

4. As one sheds these immoral *cetasika* and thus "immoral *gathi*," one automatically cultivates "moral *gathi*" with moral *cetasika*. We saw above that when *diṭṭhi* diminishes, *sammā diṭṭhi* (which is the same as the *paññā* or wisdom *cetasika*) grows.

- In the same way, as *vicikicchā* is reduced, *saddhā* (faith) *cetasika* grows. This is why a *Sotāpanna* has "unbreakable" faith (*saddhā*) in Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha; *vicikicchā* has been removed. However, that *saddhā* comes through not via blind faith, but via understanding.

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- Still, paying homage to Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha, via *Tiratana vanadana* or listening to *pirith* helps build *saddhā*.; see, "Buddhist Chanting – Introduction." This is why it is said that one needs to cultivate *saddhā* and *paññā* together.
- Another thing to remember is that while *alobha* (non-greed) and *adosa* (non-hate) are moral *cetasika* opposing *lobha* and *dosa*, *amoha* is NOT actually a *cetasika*. Unlike *alobha* and *adosa*, *amoha* is not cultivated; *amoha* is merely the absence of *moha*.
- Instead, what is cultivated is *paññā* (wisdom) or the *sammā diṭṭhi cetasika*. And that requires understanding of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. This is why *paññā* (wisdom) has nothing to do with "book knowledge", but is all about comprehending the "true nature of this world of 31 realms". I will have another post on this important point.

5. Another illuminating way to analyze is to look at the removal of the *āsavas* at each stage. The four types of *āsavas* are: *ditthasava* (*āsava* for *diṭṭhi*), *kamasava* (*āsava* for sense pleasures, almost the same as *kāma rāga*), *bhavasava* (*āsava* for *bhava* or existence, which is almost the same as *rūpa rāga* plus *arūpa rāga*), and *avijjasava* (*āsava* for ignorance). Of course "*āsavakkhaya*" or removal of all *āsavas* is *Nibbāna*.

- As we can see (by comparing with #3 above), *ditthasava* is removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage; *kamasava* is reduced at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage and removed at the *Anāgāmī* stage; *bhavasava* and *avijjasava* removed at the *Arahant* stage.
- Thus we can also see that it is the **combination of *ditthasava* and *kamasava*** that give rise to strong greed (*lobha*) and strong hate (*dosa*). When one loses *ditthasava* by comprehending the true nature of this world, *lobha* and *dosa* are reduced to *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* (which constitute *kamasava*).
- While such different analyses will be helpful for someone who has been studying them, all these different terms could be confusing to those who are new to these terms. But one will get used to these terms with time, and it is important to understand what they mean (not just to memorize) in the long term. With usage, they WILL become familiar.
- In the days of the Buddha, Buddha Dhamma was called "*vibhangavādī*" or "doctrine that systematically analyzes by parts". Just like medical students learn about the human body by dissecting dead bodies, it is informative to look at the mind by analyzing it in different ways. And all types of analyses are inter-consistent.

6. A *Sotāpanna*, by comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* to a certain extent, REMOVES *diṭṭhi* (i.e., achieves *diṭṭhivisuddhi*) and cultivates *sammā diṭṭhi* to a certain level. And when that happens, the strength of the *moha cetasika* is reduced to just *avijjā* level, and also the *vicikicchā cetasika* is REMOVED. Simultaneously, *lobha* is REDUCED to *rāga*, which then are removed in stages at higher stages of *Nibbāna* as stated in #3 above.

- The above paragraph briefly summarizes what happens at the *Sotāpanna* stage. It may seem simple, but it requires lot of effort to discipline the mind to get to that stage, mostly via learning and contemplating Dhamma.
- One has reduced the strength of attachment to "worldly things" to the extent that one will NOT do certain immoral actions no matter how much wealth or sense pleasure is at stake. One WILL NOT act with *vicikicchā*: there is no hesitation in trying to decide, one KNOWS such an act will lead to the birth in the *apāyā*. It is not something one has to think about at that moment; it comes out AUTOMATICALLY, because of such "*apāyagāmī gathi*" have been PERMANENTLY removed.
- Thus by getting to know some properties of key *cetasika* we can get an idea of how our minds work, and get an idea why different people respond to the same external influences in different ways. **It is because their "*gathi*" or dominant *cetasika* are different.**

7. Now let us take some examples. *Diṭṭhi* is at the forefront because one's "views" determines what one has gotten used to or one is comfortable with.

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- If we take the *diṭṭhi* (or view) that says if one bathes in a certain river one could wash away one's sins. This does not appear to be a strong *diṭṭhi*, but it is dangerous one: then one can do all sorts of immoral deeds all day along and then take a bath to "wash away" all those sins and thus get rid of any *kamma vipāka*. Yet, this *diṭṭhi* is something that has been carried from generation to generation in parts of India.
- Many people say, "I don't do immoral things and even help out others, therefore, bad things will not happen to me". That is a *diṭṭhi* too, because that person does not realize that he/she most certainly has done innumerable bad things in previous lives. That *diṭṭhi* therefore arises due to not believing in rebirth. **The "cause and effect" is a valid argument, but that argument holds only within the broader world view, that this is not the only life we have had.**

8. There are several key *diṭṭhis* that are common in Buddhist countries.

- Many "Buddhists" believe that taking and obeying the eight precepts on Full Moon days is enough to attain *Nibbāna*. There are old ladies in Sri Lanka who do not miss a single Full Moon day and dutifully take those precepts. But their minds are filled with ignorance and some of them mostly get together and gossip all day.
- While taking those precepts and mindfully disciplining oneself and meditating for a whole day is an excellent way to practice, just nominally taking precepts is not going to do anything to cleanse one's mind.
- Then there is the perception that taking even a glass of wine (or some mild alcoholic beverage) is highly immoral. While it is best to avoid taking any kind of alcohol, drinking a glass of wine or beer is not a "*akusala kamma*." Of course if one gets addicted or intoxicated, then one could be led to do *akusala kamma*. Actually, when one gains wisdom via learning Dhamma, **the tendency to crave for alcohol or anything else** gradually diminishes.
- Rituals are prevalent in most Buddhist countries. People may do all sorts of immoral deeds (gossiping, slandering, using harsh words, fishing, hunting, are a few examples) during the day and at the end of the day, they light a lamp for the Buddha, say a few verses ("*gatha*"), and believe that is all they need to do.
- All these come under one of the three *sanyojana*, "*silabbata paramasa*" (diṭṭhi that says following rituals or set guidelines can lead to *Nibbāna*), is removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- But it must be emphasized that most of such procedures CAN BE very effective in calming the mind and building *saddhā* (both of which then help cultivate wisdom by being able to comprehend Dhamma), if done properly while making an effort to cleanse one's mind; see, "Buddhist Chanting – Introduction."

9. We can also see that *vicikicchā* (tendency to do inappropriate/immoral/dangerous deeds) also arises because one is not aware of how *kamma/kamma vipāka* operate and has not comprehended *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.

- It is easy for outside influences to change the mind of someone with strong *vicikicchā* to do bad things. Since children in general are unaware of what is right and what is wrong, it is easy to manipulate their minds. This is why making sure children grow up in environments that are conducive to moral behavior is very important.
- Even adults, who are not aware of the consequences of immoral behavior have high levels of *vicikicchā*. They tend to only look at the immediate gratifications of an act rather than to have a long-term perspective.
- Learning Dhamma is the only guaranteed way to remove *vicikicchā*.

10. Some people tend to think that it is better not to even contemplate on bad consequences of bad actions, or to learn WHY bad actions are bound to lead to bad outcomes. The thinking is "as long as I don't think about such depressing things, I will feel fine".

- Just like not knowing that a certain action is unlawful is not a valid argument in a court of law, ignorance of the Nature's laws is not a valid excuse. Sometimes one can get away when a law is broken by telling

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more lies and changing the decision of a jury. **But in the Nature's court, it is one's mind that makes the decisions and one cannot fool one's own mind.**

- This is why *diṭṭhis* can be broken only by cleansing one's mind. One cleanses one's mind by first learning about *kamma* and *kamma vipāka* first and THEN reading about *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, and THEN comprehending the true meanings of those words, i.e., by comprehending the true nature of this world; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" and "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā."
- One's own mind needs to realize futility of doing immoral deeds, **not just because they are bound to bring thousand-fold bad outcomes**, but also because there is "no point", "no real benefit" of doing bad things to fulfil one's sense desires or to "own valuable things"; such sense pleasures or valuable things do not last in the long term. But the consequences can linger on for long times.

11. As I pointed out in "Why do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi is Key," we all have *diṭṭhis* that have been cultivated in us by the environment that we grew up in, whether it is cultural, social, or religious. And Buddhists are no exception. We all need to critically evaluate such *diṭṭhis* and sort out which ones are bad for oneself. Buddha has clearly stated which *diṭṭhis* are bad: "Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi."

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12.8 The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka

November 27,2015; Revised December 17, 2017; May 17, 2019; August 21, 2019; February 24, 2020; December 24, 2020

Introduction

1. *Suddhāṭṭhaka* is not even mentioned in even many *Thēravada* Texts. It is discussed in "WebLink: PDF-file: Bhikkhu Bodhi-Comprehensive Manual of Abhidhamma," by Bhikkhu Bodhi (2000); see pp. 246, 253-254. However, it does not have a deeper explanation given in this post. The explanation in #8 and #9 was given by Waharaka *Thero* and cannot be found directly even in the *Tipiṭaka*. I will discuss that in the post, "Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka – Gandhabba Example."

- Please don't read it, unless you have thought about the basic concepts of "*san,*" *gati* (pronounces "*gathi*" as in "Thailand"), *āsava*, *Paticca Samuppāda*, etc. It may not make much sense, and thus it could discourage people from proceeding any further thinking, "this stuff does not make sense."
- On the other hand, for those who have some understanding of those concepts, this could help gain more insight.
- As I publish more posts on this issue, the picture will become increasingly apparent. Please be patient. The value of the Buddha Dhamma's value will also become apparent, and that is the best way to cultivate *saddhā* (faith based on understanding).
- This topic discussed in detail in the "Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section.

Origin of Matter – Scientific Theory

2. If we accept that all matter has been created in somehow, what is the origin of matter?

- Scientists have no clear explanation of this at this point in time (November 2015). They say they can calculate the universe's evolution from a fraction of a second after the Big Bang, but physics cannot explain what happened before the Big Bang.
- Of course, the "Big Bang Theory" has not yet fully confirmed, even though most scientists believe it.
- Still, some scientists do not believe everything "popped up" all of a sudden in a Big Bang. See, for example, "Endless Universe – Beyond the Big Bang," by P. J. Steinhardt and N. Turok (2007).
- By the way, English astronomer Fred Hoyle coined the term "Big Bang" to ridicule the concept.

Buddha Dhamma – Universe Evolves

3. The Buddha discouraged people from investigating the universe in detail. However, he has taught that uncountable "planetary systems" like our Solar system exist in the universe. That model will have living beings in existence somewhere in the 31 realms. This has been discussed in detail in a few *suttā*, especially the *Aggañña Sutta* (DN 27). I have written an introductory post: "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)".The following are some key points.

(i) The universe has no traceable beginning, just like for life.

(ii) The universe has "clusters or groups" of stars. Our Solar system is one of 10,000 "star systems" (cakkavāla or planetary systems; chakrawāta in Sinhala). There is an infinite number of such cakkavāla in the universe.

(iii) When a star in the vicinity of our Sun blows up in a few billion years, that blast will destroy 10,000 other star systems in the neighborhood. Such a "star explosion" has a particular name, a supernova, in modern science.

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(iv) Such a cluster of 10,000 world-systems blows up from time to time in the universe. Again, scientists observe such supernovae every year.

(v) What science does not know yet is that those destroyed star systems re-form over billions of years.

4. Whatever the model that science eventually clarifies WILL BE consistent with Buddha Dhamma.

- Thus, the universe does not start with a "Big Bang," as many scientists believe right now. Remember that only 100 or so years ago, scientists thought the universe was in a steady state. Scientific theories change to "fit the existing data."
- Just 400 years ago, "science" believed in the geocentric model of the universe. That the Earth was at the universe and that the stars were embedded in a celestial sphere far above. See "WebLink: wikipedia.org: Geocentric model."
- But pure Buddha Dhamma has not changed since Buddha Gotama taught it 2500 years ago; see, "Historical Background."
- We will slowly go through the *Aggañña sutta* because that needs enough background material. I expect this topic will take us several years and many essays to complete.

Suddhaṭṭhaka – The Smallest Unit of Matter

5. Here we will discuss only the origin of the smallest unit of matter, called a "*suddhaṭṭhaka."* (sometimes written as *suddhāshtaka*).

- This unit of matter is a billion times smaller than "an atom" in modern science. One time, not long ago, science believed that an atom was the smallest unit of matter. But they are composites of many "elementary particles." Even many of those "elementary particles" are shown to have more structure! At present, there is no end in sight to how smaller a "basic unit of matter" can get. Now science is unable to distinguish between "matter" and "energy."
- For example, a "Higgs boson" is just a packet of energy.
- Matter and energy are essentially the same, related by the famous equation, E (energy) = m (mass) x c^2, where c is the light speed. Thus any small unit of matter is indistinguishable from a "packet of energy." For example, the light we see comes in "packets" called photons. Thus photon belongs to matter in this sense, and therefore everything in this world at the primary level can have the label "matter" or "energy."
- The distinction between "matter" and "energy" is blurred at this fundamental level.

6. A *suddhaṭṭhaka* is a "packet of energy" and is THE basic unit of matter. It is much smaller than in energy compared to a light photon that we see. A humongous number of *suddhaṭṭhaka* would have the energy of a single light photon.

- **A *suddhaṭṭhaka,* being a *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala), is created by the mind.** That may be surprising to many of you, but I will provide evidence that it is true as we progress. That is why the Buddha said, "*manō pubbaṅgamā dhammā*…", i.e., "everything has a mind as the precursor…".
- However, almost all of the matter around us was created by this "mental process" a very long time ago. That is the story in the *Aggañña Sutta*. At present also, *suddhaṭṭhaka are* being created by us all the time (via *javana citta*), but in very minute quantities.
- Anyone with higher *abhiññā* powers can create a significant amount of matter, like a flower or even larger entities. Matter (at the level of *suddhaṭṭhaka)* is created by *javana citta.* And someone with *abhiññā* powers can maintain a *citta vīthi* with *javana citta* flowing continuously to generate "significant amounts of matter." See the end of the post, "Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs."

What is *Suddhaṭṭhaka*? Roles of *Avijjā* and Taṇhā

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7. *Suddhaṭṭhaka* ("*suddha*" for "pure" or fundamental" + "*aṭṭha*" or "eight") means a unit of matter consisting of eight fundamental entities (usually translated as the "pure octad," for example, in Bhikkhu Bodhi's book per #1 above).

- Four of these are the four "*mahā bhūta*": *Pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo*. These are indeed the most fundamental units of matter, but they cannot be detected by themselves. It may be hard to believe for many at this stage, but those arise due to our "gati" (or "*gatī*") that I have discussed in several posts; see, the introductory post: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)." By the way, removal of "*āsava*" and "*gatī*" lead to *Nibbāna*: "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā." One needs to have an understanding of these concepts to grasp the material in this post.
- The mind first creates the four *mahā bhūta* with four basic "*gatī*" of humans: "*thada gatiya*" or "තද ගතිය" (in Sinhala) means the "coarseness," corresponding to *pathavi*; a defiled mind is "hard" and "coarse" and correspond to "*pathavī*" nature.
- The word *āpo* comes from the tendency to "attach or get attracted to worldly things" ("*bandena gatiya*" or "බැඳෙන ගතිය" in Sinhala means the "bind together," which leads to liquidity in science). *Tejo* comes from "fiery or energetic" ("*thējas gatī*" or "තේජස් ගතිය" in Sinhala), and *vāyo* refers to "motion" ("*salena gatiya*" or "සලෙන ගතිය" in Sinhala). They are all created in *javana citta* that arise in mind, of course, in minute quantities that cannot be detected. However, those with *abhiññā* powers can generate large amounts of matter like a flower.

8. **Those most fundamental four units (*satara mahā bhūta)* are supposed to be created by the mind due to *avijjā* or ignorance**. We like to have possession of things made out of these units because we do not comprehend the "unfruitful nature" of such impermanent things.

- **Now, the craving for these material things leads to four more *gati* due to *taṇhā*.** Due to our tendency to think highly ("*varnanā karanava"* in Sinhala), another *gati* of "*vaṇṇa*" is created as different manifestations of the four *mahā bhūta*. Similarly, three more units called *gandha, rasa*, and *oja* created due to *taṇhā. Those* correspond to our desire to be in touch with them and be "fooled" (gandha), keep them close (*rassa*), and to re-generate them (*oja*). It will take too much space to explain these in detail, but I hope you get the basic idea.

Suddhaṭṭhaka – Eight Components Do Not Arise Individually

9. Therefore, four basic units of *pathavi*, *āpo*, *tejo*, *vāyo* arise due to *avijjā*, and the other four of *vaṇṇa*, *gandha*, *rasa*, and *oja* arise due to *taṇhā*.

- These eight components never arise in isolation and thus are called "*avinibbhoga rūpa."* They always rise together and all eight are there in any *suddhaṭṭhaka.* The relative "amounts" of each component can vary, and thus some entities may be dominated by one of the eight. For example, *paṭhavī* is dominant in a stone and *āpo* is dominant in water. Even then, all eight are present to some extent.
- This very fundamental level is called the "*bhūta*" stage. *Bhūta* is another name for "ghosts" because of their elusive nature. They can never be detected and can only be "seen" by a Buddha. The Buddha explained this to *Mahā Brahma*, who thought he knew everything about the world: "WebLink: suttacentral: Brahmanimantanika Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 49)." I will explain this *sutta* in detail later.
- And a *suddhaṭṭhaka* can never be divided; thus they are called "*avinibbhöga rūpa kalapa."*

Critical Role of *Gati*

10. Thus, "*gatī*" leads to "*bhūta*," the first phase of *rūpa* that can be seen (only by Buddha). That is the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. That is where mental energy is converted to matter at the very fundamental stage. Just keep that in mind as we proceed.

- It may be hard to believe for many at this stage, but those arise due to our "*gatī*" that I have discussed in many posts. See the introductory post: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings

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(Āsavas)." By the way, removal of "*āsava*" and "*gati*" lead to *Nibbāna*: "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavā." One needs to have an understanding of these concepts to grasp the material in this post.

- More details at "Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births – Saṃsappanīya Sutta" and "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti."

Stages of Matter – *Bhūta*, *Mahā Bhūta*, *Dhātu*

11. When enormous numbers of *suddhaṭṭhaka fuse*, they get to a more condensed state of "*mahā bhūta.*" The subtle bodies of *Brahmā* and some *gandhabbā* are made of *mahā bhūta.* This level of "solidification" can be compared (in energy) to electromagnetic radiation at the long-wavelength range; thus, we cannot "see" those entities with our eyes.

- Only when vast amounts of *mahā bhūta* fuse together and become even more condensed, that we can see them. At this highly condensed state, the matter is called "*dhātu.*" Bodies of *devas* are made of finer *dhātu*. That is why we cannot see *devas*, but *Brahmā* can see them.
- Thus our bodies are made of more dense *dhātu* that we can see. That is why solid objects are called "*pathavi dhātu*." *Suddhaṭṭhaka* in such solid objects have predominantly have *pathavi*. In liquids, things are bound together and flow together because they mostly have *āpo dhātu*. Not only fire but also those objects that have an "energetic appearance," have more *tejo*. And not only the wind but also things that are prone to move, have more *vāyo*.
- Details of *gati* at, "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti."

Other Implications

12. Therefore, we can see that *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo* have much deeper meanings than just earth, water, fire, and wind. Why did the ancient Greeks also use the same terms? That is due to the same reason that Hinduism also uses terms like *karma* (which is the Sanskrit word for *kamma*), *Nirvana* (which is the Sanskrit word for *Nibbāna*), *ānāpāna*, etc.

- There have been three Buddhas in this *mahā kappa* (i.e., during the existence of our Solar system) before the Buddha Gotama; that is how those terms came to usage before Buddha Gotama. Those concepts by the previous Buddhas were transmitted down through successive generations, but the true meanings got lost.
- Human history is much longer than tens of thousands of years, as believed by many today. Whole continents can submerge, wiping out entire populations; this is not being considered seriously yet, but there is the evidence: see, WebLink: wiki: Submerged continent. Anyway, that is a topic to be discussed later when more evidence becomes available. It will be proven that one region that has not changed since the formation of the Earth is Asia encompassing Sri Lanka, India, and China. **Archeologists should focus more in that region rather than in Africa.** See, "Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory."

Three Buddhas Before Buddha Gotama in the Present Eon

13. As I mentioned above, there were three Buddhas before Buddha Gotama. That is how some of the key terms like *pathavi, āpo, tejo, vāyo* and *kamma,* and *Nibbāna* (*nirvana*) have been in use even before the Buddha Gotama. They had been transmitted down through generations, but of course, their true meanings had been lost.

- Losing the true meanings in the *Tipiṭaka* happened at least a few times, even during this Buddha *Sāsana,* within the past 2500 years. The best example is the misinterpretation of *san*, *saṃsāra*, *anicca,* and *anatta* during just the past hundreds of years; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)" and "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

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- **But the Buddha Gotama has said that his *Buddha sāsana* will last for 5000 years. We are only halfway through. That is why it is making a comeback now. And this time it will have staying power due to the presence of the internet. That is one reason why we should all be forever grateful to modern science, much more than for all other technological wonders it has brought about.**

14. Buddha Dhamma is deep but once one gets some traction, it can be an exhilarating experience to "dig deeper."

- **August 2019:** Series of posts on "Origin of Life."
- **July 31, 2020:** New series "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach."

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12.9 What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis

April 15, 2016; revised November 5, 2017; February 9, 2018

1. This is an advanced topic (yet, hopefully, made easy even for those who are not into Abhidhamma). Please don't hesitate to comment if something is not clear. A simpler version is at: "What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too!."

- In contrast to touching, smelling, and tasting, we do not directly "touch" the external world (matter) with our eyes, ears, or the mind.
- While we experience the "outside world" as it is (or objectively) with our five physical senses, what we interact with our minds are our own "perceptions, feelings, plans, and hopes" for that external world.
- We will get into more details on those two aspects in the future, but in this post, we will look at what "*dhammā*" are in relation to the mind. That will help us address those other two issues in the future.
- It is to be noted that ***dhammā*** are rūpa below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. On the other hand, ***dhamma*** as in Buddha Dhamma or Abhidhamma refers to Buddha's teachings.
- As I mentioned in the "Abhidhamma – Introduction," I very much want to make Abhidhamma easy to grasp for anyone. I also want to highlight the fact the Buddha Dhamma is well ahead of science (quantum mechanics) in understanding even our material world; science has not even begun to explore the mind.

2. Existence in this world of 31 realms is maintained via our attachments to "things" in this world. These "things" are *rūpa*.

- When a mind makes contact with an external *rūpa*, it may generate very brief sense enjoyments called *assāda*; see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana." Since we perceive these sense contacts to be long-lasting and enjoyable (and ignore the sufferings that we go through to acquire them), we willingly desire such sense pleasures.
- **However, any *rūpa* that arises is subjected to unexpected change (*vipariṇāma*) and eventual decay and destruction, which is the basis of *anicca* nature.**

3. Another factor that we have not discussed much in detail is that *rūpa* have different levels of texture or solidity.

- The *rūpa* that we experience in the human realms (and those realms below us) are the densest form called *dhātu*. The *deva* realms above us have finer *dhātu* that we cannot see. In the *rūpa lokas*, *rupi Brahmā* have even finer *rūpa* called *mahā bhūta*. And in the *arūpa loka*, there are just traces of *bhūta* (just the *hadaya vatthu*) made of the smallest unit of matter called *suddhaṭṭhaka,* and of course much finer *gati* (or *gathi*).
- You may want to review the concepts discussed in the following posts: "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)," "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."

4. It is conventional knowledge is that we experience the external world with our five physical senses: We see with our eyes, hear with the ears, smell with the nose, taste with the tongue, and touch things with our physical bodies.

- Is that all one experiences? Imagine being in a dark chamber totally isolated from the rest of the world. A good example is a punishment by the military called solitary confinement, especially in the old days. One is kept in a totally isolated dark cell for many hours at a time.
- Does such a person experience the outside world? Of course. He/she can think about all sorts of things: recall past events, think about the future, recall any place that he has been to, etc.
- In fact, we do this any given day, not only by recalling past experiences, but also by imagining desired future events.

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5. Sense contacts other than the five physical senses are due to the sixth sense: the mind. One is totally unaware of the external world only when one is totally unconscious.

- So, what are the *rūpa* that we experience with our minds? These are *dhamma*! As stated in the phrase, "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*," contacts of *dhamma* with the *mana indriya* leads to *mano viññāṇa*.

6. The arising of *viññāṇa* due to different types of sense inputs is described in *abhidhamma* (and also in "WebLink: suttacentral: Cha Chakka Sutta (MN 148)") as:

"*cakkhuñca paṭicca rūpe ca uppajjati cakkhuviññāṇaṃ*,"

"*sotañca paṭicca sadde ca uppajjati sotaviññāṇaṃ*,"

"*ghānañca paṭicca gandhe ca uppajjati ghānaviññāṇaṃ*,"

"*jivhañca paṭicca rase ca uppajjati jivhāviññāṇaṃ*,"

"*kāyañca paṭicca phoṭṭhabbe ca uppajjati kāyaviññāṇaṃ*," and

"*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*"

- Thus it is clear that *mano viññāṇa* arise when *dhamma* make contact with the *mana indriya*, just like *cakkhu viññāṇa* arise when *(vaṇṇa) rūpa* or light make contact with the *cakkhu indriya* (eyes) or *sota viññāṇa* arise when *sadda rūpa* (sound waves) make contact with the *sota indriya* (ears).
- *Kaya viññāṇa* result from contacts which are the most coarse (*pottabba* or touch due to *dhātu*), and *mano viññāṇa* result from the contacts that are extremely fine, dhamma.

7. Thus, we can categorize our six types of contacts with the external world according to the "coarseness" of the contacts.

- The body contacts (touch), taste, and smell are the coarse contacts; they involve direct touching (*pottabba*), and those involve solid particulates (taste and smell).
- Vision involves light particles (photons) interacting with the physical eye. The light was not even considered a particle until Einstein, Compton and others proved that in the early 1920's.
- In the language of physics, sound involves phonons having even less energy than light photons, i.e., they are "even softer".

8. We can also see that the **sensor elements in the body** also get less and less coarse in that order. It must be noted that the sensing elements in the ear are not the ear that we see, but a very sensitive area deep inside the ear.

- According to Buddha Dhamma (and confirmed by science), two things respond to each other and last longer when in heavy usage, if they have similar densities. For example, if a steel rod rubs against a wooden rod, the wooden rod will soon wear out. But two steel rods (or two wooden rods) can be rubbing against each for long times.
- Thus going from touch, smell, taste, sight, and hearing, both the external influences — touch, tasty things, smells, light (photons), sound (phonons) — and the sense elements (body, tongue, nose, eyes, ears) become finer in that order.

9. The finest sensing element is the "*mana indriya*" which is inside the brain. It is likely to be one of the following: thalamus, amygdala, or hippocampus. I have not had enough time to investigate the functions of these sensitive elements of the brain, but according to Buddha Dhamma, the "*mana indriya*" is inside the brain and is analogous to the eyes or the ears; more details will become clear as we discuss below.

- What come down in the legend as the "third eye" is this "*mana indriya*." It is supposed to be located behind the forehead.

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- The *rūpa* that come into contact with the *mana indriya* are finer than a *suddhaṭṭhaka*, and are still in the "*gati*" stage, but they are on the way to become *suddhaṭṭhaka*. They are not coarse enough to be "seeing" even with *abhiññā* powers, and do not make contact with other five coarse senses. Thus they are, "*anidassanaappaṭighaṃ dhammāyatanapariyāpannaṃ*". See, the last verse of "WebLink: suttacentral: 2.2.2. Mātikā" in *Dhammasaṅgaṇī* of the *Tipiṭaka*.
- Here, "*anidassana*" means "cannot be seen" and "*appaṭigha*" means "cannot be touched or sensed with even the finest instrument". And, "*dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rupan*" means "belongs to *dhammāyatana*".

10. In the post, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka," we discussed how the smallest material element, **a *suddhaṭṭhaka*, is created by the mind with origins in four basic "*gati*" of humans that arise due to *avijjā***: "*thada gatiya*" (in Sinhala) means the "coarseness", corresponding to *pathavi*; "*bandena gatiya*" means the "bind together" which leads to liquidity corresponding to *āpo*; "*thejas gatiya*" means the "fiery or energetic", corresponding to *tejo*; and, "*salena gatiya*" means the "motion", corresponding to *vāyo*.

- **craving for these material things lead to four more *gati* due to *taṇhā***: Due to our tendency to think highly ("*varnanā karanava*" in Sinhala), another *gati* of "*varna*" is created as different manifestations of the *satara mahā bhūta*. Similarly, three more units called *gandha, rasa*, and *oja* are created due to *taṇhā* corresponding to our desire to be in touch with them, keep them close (*rassa*), and to re-generate them. [**rassa**: [adj.] short; dwarfish; stunted]

11. Before these eight inseparable units solidify into what we call matter, there is the precursor stage of *gati*: cultivation of *gati* leads to *bhūta,* which are in the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage. Further solidification of *bhūta* leads to *mahā bhūta.* The fine *rūpa* of *Brahmā* are composed of *mahā bhūta*.

- The *gati* stage of *rūpa* — the origins of *rūpa* — are also called "*mano rūpa*": these are really what we visualize in our minds. We can visualize scenes from the past, and those are *mano rūpa*. In the process of making *gati,* we constantly think about associated material things; those are *mano rūpa*.

12. *Mahā bhūta*, upon further condensation, become *dhātu*. The bodies of *devas* are made of finer *dhātu*, and our bodies — as well as all material things we see — are composed of denser *dhātu*.

- Therefore, the origins of all matter is *gati*! But our *gati* (of normal humans) actually do not lead to the formation of significant amounts of even *suddhaṭṭhaka*. So, we still have a long way to go before we can explain how these solid objects in our world were formed as described in the *Aggañña Sutta*.

13. Just like the eye is receiving visual information or the ear the sounds, the "*mana indriya*" is receiving "*dhammā*." And *dhammā* are much finer than light or sound *rūpa*. In fact, all five physical senses deal with signals transmitted via solidified particles made out of *suddhaṭṭhaka,* but *dhammā* are just energy, below what we call "matter". Actually, even most physicists do not consider light as matter or "particles"; I will write a post on why light photons are indeed particles according to quantum mechanics.

- As we discussed in the post, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka," even a single light particle (photon) is made of a very large number of *suddhaṭṭhaka.*
- As we discussed there, a *suddhaṭṭhaka* is made by the mind. *Dhammā* can be considered the early stages of a *suddhaṭṭhaka*. They are in fact *kammic* energy packets made by the mind in *javana citta*, and arise due to our *gati*. This is really the link between mind and matter!

14. Therefore, all six senses allow our minds to interact with the material world. We actually interact with two worlds: the material world and the mental world or the *mano thalaya*.

- Different types of *rūpa* (*varna, gandha, rasa, oja, phoṭṭhabba*) in our physical world (*rūpa loka*) are built with *suddhaṭṭhaka*. *Dhammā* or *kamma bīja* (in the *mano loka*) are basically "energy packets" not yet solidified to the state of a *suddhaṭṭhaka.*
- The *pañcakkhandha* of a living being has "components" from both worlds. The *rūpakkhandha* are our mental impression of the material world (as mental records); see, "Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates –

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A Misinterpreted Concept." The other four *khandha* (*vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) are our mental impression of the mind world.

- Each and every living being is associated with its own *pañcakkhandha*., because one makes one's own mental impression. The Buddha said that one cannot define a living being with less that five *khandhā*.
- To repeat: **One's *pancakkhadha* is not one's body as is commonly described.** It is not even physical. It is all mental: "Pancupādānakkhandha – It is All Mental."

15. The creation of *suddhaṭṭhaka* by the mind in *javana citta*, starts first by enhancing one's *gati*. As we will discuss in a future post on the "*Asevana Paccaya*," the more one does activities related to a given *gati*, that *gati* grows. [**Āsevana-paccayā**: repetition, is one of the 24 conditional relations paccayā.]

- The growing of a *gati* is really the accumulation of a *kamma bīja* (seed), and that is deposited in the *kamma bhava* in the mind plane. These are really *dhamma* that is in "*manañca paṭicca dhamme ca uppajjati manoviññāṇaṃ*."
- And they (*dhamma* or *kamma bīja*) can come back to one's mind when the mind is in a receptive state for such a *gati*. Thus it is a self-feeding feedback loop.
- This is an important point to contemplate on. This is why a drunkard gets the urge to drink, or a gambler gets the urge to visit a casino. People who don't have such *gati*, do not get such urges because they do not have corresponding *dhammā* repeatedly coming back to impinge on the *mana indriya*.
- By the way, as discussed in the "Living Dhamma" section, any such "bad *gati*" can be reduced and eventually eliminated by a two-step method: (i) forcefully stop activities — and conscious thoughts about them — that contribute that *gati* when one becomes aware DURING such an act OR a conscious thought, (ii) keep learning Buddha Dhamma to comprehend how that process can actually work (as discussed starting with basic fundamentals of Buddha Dhamma in the "Living Dhamma" section); one key aspect here to contemplate on the bad consequences of such actions/thoughts.

16. To emphasize, *dhammā* arise due to *kamma* that we commit. The more *kamma* we do, the corresponding *dhammā* will grow, and become *gati*.

- *Dhammā* means "to bear"; one bears what one likes and what one engages in.
- When one cultivates "dog *gati*" that is what one bears. And that is what comes back to one's mind at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment and can lead to the next *bhava,* and thus birth (*jāti*) as a dog.

17. However, the creation of a *suddhaṭṭhaka* requires trillions of *citta vīthi* running consecutively. Thus it does not happen significantly by a normal human being. It requires not only *jhānā*, but being able to get into *samāpatti*. Those with *abhiññā* powers have the ability to get into *samāpatti* very quickly.

- When in *jhānā*, *cittā* can still switch back to five physical senses in between. When one is in a *jhāna*, one can hear external sounds, for example.
- However, when one is in a *samāpatti*, the *jhānic cittā* can flow unceasingly for long times. Thus, *pañcadvāra citta vīthi* cannot run in between, and thus, one is totally unaware of the external environment when in *samāpatti*.

18. Furthermore, when in *samāpatti, jhānic citta* flow unceasingly and make each new *javana citta* stronger than the predecessor with the "*Āsevana Paccayā*." We will discuss this in detail in the future.

- This is how those with *abhiññā* powers (i.e., who can easily get into *samāpatti* and have practiced it well) can even make physical objects: One can start off with a picture of a flower in one's mind and then by creating more and more *suddhaṭṭhaka* with each new *javana citta*, create an actual flower in a very short time!

19. Finally, *dhamma* in the *nāma loka* are the same as those *viññāṇa* established in the *kamma bhava*. This is a subtle point; see, "Viññāṇa Aggregate."

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- *Dhamma* or *viññāṇa* are called *anidassana, appaṭigha rūpa* (*rūpa* that cannot be seen or made contact with) and they are just energies lying below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage; see, "Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."
- *Kamma bhava* is the same as the *nāma loka*; *Dhamma* in the *nāma loka* are the same as *viññāṇa* that are established in the *kamma bhava*.; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

12.9.1 24 conditional relations Paccaya

From Dhamma Wiki

Paccaya: 'condition', is something on which something else, the so-called 'conditioned thing', is dependent, and without which the latter cannot be. Many are the ways in which one thing, or one occurrence, may be the condition for some other thing, or occurrence. In the Paṭṭhāna, the last book of the Abhidhamma Piṭaka comprising 6 large vols. in the Siamese edition, these 24 modes of conditionality are enumerated and explained, and then applied to all conceivable mental and physical phenomena and occurrences, and thus their conditioned nature is demonstrated.

The first two volumes of the Paṭṭhāna have been translated into English by the Venerable U Nārada mūla paṭṭhāna Sayadaw of Burma, under the title Conditional Relations Published by the Pāli Text Society, London 1969, 1981.

The 24 modes of conditionality are:

1. Root condition: *hetu paccayā*
2. Object: *ārammana*
3. Predominance: *adhipati*
4. Proximity: *anantara*
5. Contiguity: *samanantara*
6. Co-**nascence**: *sahajāta*
7. Mutuality: *aññamañña*
8. Support: *nissaya*
9. Decisive Support: *upanissaya*
10. Pre-nascene: *purejāta*
11. Post-nascene: *pacchājāta*
12. Repitition: *āsevana*
13. Kamma: *kamma*
14. Kamma-result: *vipāka*
15. Nutriment: *āhāra*
16. Ability: *indriya*
17. Jhāna: *jhānā*
18. path: *magga*
19. Associaton: *sampayutta*
20. Dissociation: *vippayutta*
21. Presence: *atthi*
22. Absence: *natthi*

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*23.*Disappearance: *vigata*

*24.*Non-disappearance: *avigata*

1: Root-condition *hetu-paccayā* is that condition that resembles the root of a tree. Just as a tree rests on its root, and remains alive only as long as its root is not destroyed, similarly all kammically advantageous and disadvantageous mental states are entirely dependent on the simultaneity and presence of their respective roots, i.e, of greed *lobha*, hate *dosa* confusion *moha* or greedlessness *alobha* hatelessness *adosa* unconfusedness *amoha* For the definition of these 6 roots, see: *mūla*.

The roots are a condition by way of root for the mental phenomena associated with a root, and for the material phenomena produced thereby e.g. for bodily expression; Patth.

2: Object-condition *ārammaṇa-paccayā* is called something which, as object, forms the condition for consciousness and mental phenomena. Thus, the physical object of sight consisting in colour and light 'light-wave', is the necessary condition and the sine qua non for the arising of visual-consciousness *cakkhu-viññāṇa* etc.; sound 'sound wave' for ear-consciousness *sotā-viññāṇa* etc.; further, any object arising in the mind is the condition for mind-consciousness *mano-viññāṇa* The mental-object may be anything whatever, material or mental, past, present or future, real or imaginary.

3: Predominance-condition *(adhipati-paccaya)* is the term for 4 things, on the preponderance and predominance of which are dependent the mental phenomena associated with them, namely: concentrated intention *(chanda)*, energy *(viriya)*, consciousness *(citta)* and investigation *(vīmamsā)*. In one and the same state of consciousness, however, only one of these 4 phenomena can be predominant at a time. "Whenever such phenomena as consciousness and mental concomitants are arising by giving preponderance to one of these 4 things, then this phenomenon is for the other phenomena a condition by way of predominance" (Patth.). Cf. *iddhi-pāda*.

4-5: Proximity and contiguity or immediacy-condition *anantara* and *samanantara-paccayā* - both being identical - refer to any state of consciousness and mental phenomena associated with them, which are the conditions for the immediately following stage in the process of consciousness. For example, in the visual process, visual-consciousness is for the immediately following mindelement - performing the function of receiving the visible object - a condition by way of contiguity; and so is this mind-element for the next following mind-consciousness element, performing the function of investigating the object, etc. Cf. *viññāṇa-kicca*.

6: Co-nascence condjtion sahajāta-paccayā i.e. condition by way of simultaneous arising, is a phenomenon that for another one forms, a condition in such a way that, simultaneously with its arising, also the other thing must arise. Thus, for instance, in one and the same moment each of the 4 mental groups feeling, perception, mental constructions and consciousness is for the 3 other groups a condition by way of co-nascence or co-arising; or again each of the 4 physical elements solid, liquid, heat, motion is such a condition for the other 3 elements. Only at the moment of conception in the mother's womb does materiality physical base of mind serve for the 4 mental groups as a condition by way of conascence.

7: Condition by way of mutuality aññāmañña-paccayā All the just mentioned associated and co-nascent mental phenomena, as well as the 4 physical elements, are, of course, at the same time also conditioned by way of mutuality,;just like three sticks propped up one by another.; The 4 mental groups are one for another a condition by way of mutuality. So also are the 4 elements, and also mentality and materiality at the moment of conception.

8: Support-condition nissaya-paccayā This condition refers either to a pre-nascent see: 10 or co-nascent see: 6 phenomenon which is aiding other phenomena in the manner of a foundation or base, just as the trees have the earth as their foundation, or as the oil-painting rests on the canvas. In this way, the 5 sense-organs and the physical base of the mind are for the corresponding 6 kinds of consciousness a prenascent, i.e. previously

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arisen, condition by way of support. Further all co-nascent see: 6 phenomena are mutually see: 7 conditioned by each other by way of support.

9: Decisive-support or inducement condition upanissaya-paccayā is threefold, namely a by way of object ārammanūpanissaya-paccayā b by way of proximity anantarūpanissaya c natural decisive support pakatupanissaya These conditions act as strong inducement or cogent reason.

a. Anything past, present or future, material or mental, real or imaginary, may, as object of our thinking, become a decisive support, or strong inducement, to moral, immoral or kammically neutral states of mind. Evil things, by wrong thinking about them, become an inducement to immoral life; by right thinking, an inducement to moral life. But good things may be an inducement not only to similarly good things, but also to bad things, such as self-conceit, vanity, envy, etc.

b. is identical with proximity condition No. 4.

c. Faith, virtue, etc., produced in one's own mind, or the influence of climate, food, etc., on one's body and mind, may act as natural and decisive support-conditions. Faith may be a direct and natural inducement to charity, virtue to mental training, etc.; greed to theft, hate to murder; unsuitable food and climate to ill-health; friends to spiritual progress or deterioration.

10: Pre-nascence-condition purejāta-paccayā refers to something previously arisen, which forms a base for something arising later on. For example, the 5 physical sense-organs and the physical base of mind, having already arisen at the time of birth, form the condition for the consciousness arising later, and for the mental phenomena associated therewith.

11: Post-nascence-condition pacchā-jāta-paccayā refers to consciousness and the phenomena therewith associated, because they are - just as is the feeling of hunger- a necessary condition for the preservation of this already arisen body.

12: Repetition-condition āsevana-paccayā refers to the kammical consciousness, in which each time the preceding impulse moments javana-citta are for all the succeeding ones a condition by way of repetition and frequency, just as in learning by heart, through constant repetition, the later recitation becomes gradually easier and easier.

13: Kamma-condition kamma-paccayā The pre-natal kamma i.e kamma-intentions, kamma-cetanā in a previous birth is the generating condition cause of the 5 sense-organs, the fivefold sense-consciousness, and the other kamma-produced mental and material phenomena in a later birth. - Kammical intention is also a condition by way of kamma for the co-nascent mental phenomena associated therewith, but these phenomena are in no way kamma-results.

14: Kamma-result-condition *vipāka-paccayā* The kamma-resultant 5 kinds of sense-consciousness are a condition by way of kamma-result for the co-nascent mental and material phenomena.

15: Nutriment-condition *āhāra-paccayā* For the 4 nutriments, see: *āhāra*.

16: Ability-condition *indriya-paccayā* This condition applies to 20 abilities (*indriya*), leaving out No. 7 and 8 from the 22 abilities. Of these 20 abilities, the 5 physical sense-organs 1 - 5, in their capacity as abilities, form a condition only for unmaterial phenomena visual-consciousness etc.; physical vitality 6 and all the remaining abilities, for the co-nascent mental and material phenomena.

17: Jhāna-condition jhāna-paccayā is a name for the 7 so-called jhāna-factors, as these form a condition to the co-nascent mental and material phenomena, to wit:

- (1) thought-conception *(vitakka),*
- (2) discursive thinking *(vicāra),*
- (3) interest *(pīti),*

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- (4) joy *(sukha)*,
- (5) sadness *(domanassa)*,
- (6) indifference *(upekkhā)*,
- (7) concentration *(samādhi)*. (For definition s. Pāli terms)

1, 2, 3, 4, 7 are found in 4 classes of greedy consciousness see: Tab. I. 22-25; 1, 2, 5, 7 in hateful consciousness ib. 30, 31; 1, 2, 6, 7 in the classes of confused consciousness ib. 32, 33.

This condition does not only apply to jhāna alone, but also to the general intensifying 'absorbing' impact of these 7 factors.

18 path-condition magga-paccayā refers to the 12 path-factors, as these are for the kammically advantageous and disadvantageous mental phenomena associated with them, a way of escape from this or that mental constitution, namely: 1 knowledge paññā = sammādiṭṭhi right understanding, 2 right or wrong thought-conception vitakka 3 right speech sammā-vācā 4 right bodily action sammā-kammanta, 5 right livelihood sammā-ājīva 6 right or wrong energy viriya 7 right or wrong awareness or mindfulness sati 8 right or wrong concentration samādhi 9 wrong views *micchādiṭṭhi* 10 wrong speech *micchā-vācā* 11 wrong bodily action micchā-kammanta 12 wrong livelihood *micchā-ājīva* Cf. magga

19: Association-condition *sampayutta-paccayā* refers to the co-nascent see: 6 and mutually see: 7 conditioned 4 mental groups *khandha* as they aid each other by their being associated, by having a common physical base, a common object, and by their arising and disappearing simultaneously; Patth. Com..

20: Dissociation-condition vippayutta-paccayā refers to such phenomena as aid other phenomena by not baving the same physical base eye, etc. and objects. Thus material phenomena are for mental phenomena, and conversely, a condition by way of dissociation, whether co-nascent or not.

21: Presence-condition atthi-paccayā refers to a phenomenon - being pre-nascent or co-nascent - which through its presence is a condition for other phenomena. This condition applies to the conditions Nos. 6, 7, 8, 10, 11.

22: Absence-condition natthi-paccayā refers to consciousness, etc., which has just passed, and which thus forms the necessary condition for the immediately following stage of consciousness by giving it an opportunity to arise. Cf. No. 4.

23: Disappearance-condition vigata-paccayā is identical with No. 22.

24: Non-disappearance-condition avigata-paccayā is identical with No. 21.

These 24 conditions should be known thoroughly for a detailed understanding of that famous formula of the dependent origination (*paticcasamuppāda*).

Mahā Thera Nyanatiloka. *Manual of Buddhist Terms and Doctrines*, Buddhist Publication Society, first edition 1952.

See The Significance of Dependent Origination, by Nyanatiloka (WHEEL 140).

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12.10 Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavanga

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It is a good idea to read the posts, "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)" and "Viññāṇa – What It Really Means" first.

1. Billions of *citta* flow in a second, and what we experience is the cumulative effect of billions of *citta*, which we call a "thought". Let us start at the base state of a *citta* (loosely translated as a thought, but it is really not). Each and every *citta* has 7 universal *cetasika* (mental factors); those universal *cetasika* are discussed in, "What is in a Thought? Why Gathi are so Important?."

- Those 7 universal *cetasika* are: *Phassa* (contact), *saññā* (perception), *vedanā* (feeling), *cetanā* (intention), *ekaggata* (one-pointedness), *jivitindriya* (life faculty), and *manasikāra* (memory). This is the "baseline" state of a *citta*, which lasts only a billionth of a second.
- And during that brief time, many other *cetasika* (good or bad) can be incorporated into a *citta*. **But let us consider the simpler case where no other *cetasika* are incorporated.**
- Even such a simple *citta* is still contaminated or defiled at the end of that brief time. This contamination is manifested in *vedanā* and *saññā cetasika*.

2. **Each INDIVIDUAL *citta* — during its existence for a billionth of a second — undergoes change in 9 stages!** Such a fast process cannot be seen by any human other than a Buddha; see, "Citta, Mano, Viññāṇa – Stages of a Thought."

- At the end of the 9 stages, it has evolved and has become affected by the whole of the *viññāṇakkhandha* (including past *viññāṇa*).
- The contamination of a *citta* is manifested in *saññā* and *vedanā;* **a contaminated *citta* is called *viññāṇa*.**
- *Vedanā* at the base level is "discerning that an event took place" ("*veema*" + "*danaveema*" or "දැනවීම" in Sinhala). Actual "feelings" about the event will be incorporated as the *citta* evolves in 9 stages, as we will discuss below.

3. The other critical universal *cetasika* that evolves in 9 stages is *saññā*. Even though it has become standard to write is as "saññā", that is not how it is pronounced "sangngā":

WebLink: Play the word "saññā"

- Some do indicate the correct pronunciation by writing as *saññā*. Even though it does not really matter how one writes it ("sanna" or *saññā* or "sangnga"), it is critically important to understand what is meant by it; see, "What is Saññā (Perception)?."
- *Saññā* provides one's perception about a given event that led to the arising of the *citta*. For example, if we see an object, the identification of that object proceeds via those 9 stages (and *vedanā* evolves accordingly).
- So, let us briefly go through the 9 stages of the evolution of a *citta* using *saññā* as the basis.

4. Each *citta* gets contaminated in those 9 stages due to *anusaya* that comes to the surface as *āsava* (or *asaya*), which are also related to one's *gathi*. There are many posts at the site with details on those entities.

- Those nine stages of contamination during the lifetime of the *citta* itself (in a billionth of a second) are: ***citta, mano, mānasan, hadayan, pandaran, mano manāyatanam, mana indriyam* (or *manindriyam*), *viññāṇa, viññāṇakkhandha.*** [*Yaṃ cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ hadayaṃ paṇḍaraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññāṇaṃ viññāṇakkhandho*...]
- This rapid contamination of a *citta* is explained in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Paticcasamuppāda Vibhaṅga," in Section 2.5.1. Akusalacitta : "*Tattha katamaṃ saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇaṃ? Yaṃ*

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cittaṃ mano mānasaṃ hadayaṃ paṇḍaraṃ mano manāyatanaṃ manindriyaṃ viññāṇaṃ viññāṇakkhandho tajjāmanoviññāṇadhātu—idaṃ vuccati "saṅkhārapaccayā viññāṇaṃ".

- Those 9 stages are also listed in the original commentary, section 1.3.5.3. Tatiyacatukkaniddesa in WebLink: suttacentral: 1.3. Ānāpānassatikathā or Patisambhidamaggapakarana (or Part I, p. 360 of Buddha Jayanati Tipiṭaka): "*..yam cittan mano manasan hadayan pandaran manomanayatanan manindriyan vinnanan vinnakkhandho...*" I trust only three commentaries and all three are in the *Tipiṭaka*: *Patisambhidamagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana.*
- All other commentaries that are in existence today were written much later and are not reliable; see, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background."
- What we actually experience is *vinnanakkhandha*. Even after going through the 9 stages it is still called a *citta* for convenience; see, "Citta, Mano, Viññāna – Stages of a Thought" and "Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)."

5. Let us consider the example of seeing one's mother. At the initial *citta* stage, the only perception is that a person is there. In the next step of "*mano*" (which stands for "calibrating with respect to other persons; "*maneema*" in Sinhala), it is realized that the person is woman.

- In the third stage of "*mānasaṃ*," "*san*" comes to the picture and extra information (which is personal) is incorporated; see, "What is "San"?." Now, one identifies the person as one's mother.
- By the way, we cannot live in this world without at least reaching the "*mānasaṃ*" stage of a *citta*. Otherwise, we will not be able to distinguish a given person in a crowd.
- Actual contamination of the *citta* starts at the next stage of "*hadayan*," which means identifying whether that person is "close one's heart" and then getting attracted or repulsed. In our example, one identifies the person as "one's mother" and of course corresponding *vedanā* of an attachment arises as well.

6. An *Arahant*'s *citta* does not evolve beyond the '*mānasaṃ*' stage. So, the Buddha was able to identify different people, but he did not form any attachment/dislike based on that identification.

- This is what is stated in the *Karaniyamatta Sutta*: "*..mānasaṃ bhāvaye aparimāṇaṃ...*" One needs to cultivate "*mānasaṃ*" as much as possible ("*aparimāna*" or "*appramāna*" or without limit), but not let the *citta* contaminate beyond that.
- That can be done only via reducing and finally removing one's bad *gathi, āsava*, and *anusaya,* as we discuss below.

7. The next step after "*hadayan*" is "*pandaran*," which means to "add more power", i.e., one's mind will look back at past events (yes, within a billionth of a second), recall how loving she was, and "attach more". It is done automatically by the *manasikāra cetasika*.

- So, the *citta* gets more and more contaminated and gets to the *viññāṇa* stage. Thus *viññāṇa* is actually a *citta* that is very much contaminated due to one's *anusaya, āsava,* and *gathi.*
- Finally, it becomes part of the *viññāṇakkhandha*, which includes 11 types of *viññāṇa:* past, present, future, near, far, fine *(sukuma),* coarse *(olārika),* likes *(paneeta),* dislikes *(appaneeta),* internal *(ajjatta),* and external *(bahidda).*
- A *viññāṇakkhandha* has incorporated not only one's *anusaya, āsava*, and *gathi*, but also one's past memories and future hopes, etc.

8. Now we can address the issue of a "*pabhassara citta.*" First, what is meant by "*pabhassara*"?

- The word comes from three sounds at the root: "*pa*" means again and again, "*bha*" is related to"*bhava*"; and "*sara*" or "*chara*" means to "*sarisareema*" in Sinhala or "to participate". Thus a "***pabhasara*** *citta*" with only one "s" in the word (NOT *pabhassara*) is a contaminated *citta* that will lead to *sansāric* journey or the rebirth process.

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- The opposite of "***pabha sara***" is "*pabha assara*," where "*assara*" means "not take part in". It rhymes as "***pabhassara***."
- This is why I say that Pāli is phonetic language. Meanings come based on sounds. I have given many examples throughout the website.

9. Therefore, a "***pabhassara citta***" is that base state, or the **pure state** of a *citta*, BEFORE it goes through the 9 stages of contamination. It has only the 7 universal *cetasika*.

- Each and every *citta* of a given person starts off as a *pabhassara citta,* but gets contaminated to varying degrees depending one's personality or one's advancement along the Path.
- Even an *Arahant*'s *citta* is not a *pabhassara citta;* it will contaminate to the level of "*mānasaṃ*," as we discussed above. However, *Arahant phala citta*, which lasts for only one *citta*, is a *pabhassara citta.*
- When an *Arahant* is in *Arahant phala samāpatti,* he/she knows that one is alive, but has no awareness of outside events. This is called *animitta, appanihita*, *suññata samādhi*. That is different from the *nirodha samāpatti*, where the flow of *citta* stops.
- In Buddha Dhamma, defilements are associated with "dark", and pure states are associated with "bright" or "radiant". So, we could call a *pabhassara citta* a "radiant *citta*," and a mind that generates AND maintains citta at that state a "radiant mind".
- The only time such radiant or pure *citta* flow occurs, is when an *Arahant* is in *Arahant phala samāpatti*, with the *Arahant phala citta* flowing continuously.

10. This process of contamination of a *citta* is what stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Pabhassara Sutta (AN 1.51)": "*Pabhassaramidaṃ, bhikkhave, cittaṃ. Tañca kho āgantukehi upakkilesehi upakkiliṭṭhaṃ. Taṃ assutavā puthujjano yathābhūtaṃ nappajānāti. Tasmā 'assutavato puthujjanassa cittabhāvanā natthī'ti vadāmī ti.*"

- First, "*Pabhassaramidaṃ"* is "*Pabhassara idaṃ"*. As I keep saying, words are sometimes combined or even a bit changed to rhyme in *suttā*. So, the first sentence says, "Bhikkus, *citta* (the first stage) is *pabhassara* or does not contribute to rebirth process".
- The next sentence says how it is defiled: "*āgantuka*" (which is also a Sinhala word "ආගන්තුක") means "introduced". What is introduced is "*upakilesa*" or defilements (that are in one's *gathi, anusaya, āsava*). That leads to "*upakilitta*" or contamination. Again. "*kilitī*" in Pāli and Sinhala means "dirty".
- The next sentence says, "those *puthujjano* who do not understand this, cannot comprehend the reality (*yathābhūta*)". Here *puthujjana* means a normal human who has not been exposed to Buddha Dhamma; specifically, one who does not comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*. Thus the last sentence says, "therefore, I do not recommend *citta bhāvanā* to those who do not comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*."

11. Another famous quote from the WebLink: suttacentral: Kevaṭṭa Sutta in the *Digha Nikāya* (DN 11), says, "*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ anantaṃ sabbato pabhaṃ...*" This could be written as "*Viññāṇaṃ anidassanaṃ, anantaṃ, sabbato pabhaṃ..*" in order to break into three components.

- Here, "*anidassana*" means "cannot be seen". *Viññāṇa* is more than a *nāma dhammā* and has "*kammic* energy". But it is below the "visible *rūpa*"; see, "Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter."
- And, "*ananta*" is infinite; *viññāṇa dhātu* is infinite.
- "*sabbato*" means "in every way/for all".
- As we discussed above in #8, "*pabbha*" means "repeated *bhava*" (*pabhaṃ* comes for that).
- Therefore, the above verse means, "*viññāṇa* is unseen, infinite and leads to the rebirth process for all".
- To emphasize: ***viññāṇa* is a defiled *citta*. We all experience *viññāṇa*, not pure *citta*. Even more accurately, we experience *viññāṇakkhandha* (*viññāṇa* aggregate). However, we loosely call "a thought" a *citta*.**

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- One stops the rebirth process by removing one's bad *gathi, āsava*, and *anusaya* and not letting *citta* contaminate beyond the "*mānasaṃ*" stage.

More details at this post: "Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means."

12. Some commentaries say that *bhavaṅga citta* are *pabhassara citta*. **That is absolutely incorrect.** All living beings have *bhavaṅga citta* that depend on one's *bhava*; see "Bhava and Bhavaṅga – Simply Explained! ."

- *Bhavaṅga* comes from "*bhava*" + "*anga*," where "*anga*" is "a part". So, *bhavaṅga* means "associated with a given *bhava*." *Bhavaṅga* is obviously different for different *bhava*.
- An animal also get into the *bhavaṅga* state. **Does that mean an animal has a "radiant mind" when it is in the *bhavaṅga* state?**
- Furthermore, sometimes "*anidassana viññāṇa*" is also incorrectly explained as the base level of *viññāṇa*. Per #11 above, it is clear that *anidassana viññāṇa* just explains that *viññāṇa* cannot be "seen".

13. In fact, it is not correct to say *bhavaṅga citta*. *Bhavaṅga* is a "state of mind", no *citta vīthi* run during *bhavaṅga*.

- For example, a living being in the *asañña* realm does not experience any thoughts. There are absolutely no *citta vīthi* running during the whole time there. However, the body is maintained by *bhavaṅga* that corresponds to that *bhava*.

14. So, the point here is that as long as one has bad *gathi* (or *anusaya*, *āsava*, etc., which are all inter-related and can be just called *avijjā*), one's thoughts **will be contaminated as they arise.**

- Therefore, we cannot control our thoughts as they arise: **a *citta* is contaminated to the *viññāṇa* stage in a billionth of a second, which is unimaginably fast.** This is why the Buddha said a *citta* is the fastest entity in the world (we loosely call "a thought" a *citta*, even though it is really *viññāṇakkhandha* that we experience).
- All we can do is to REDUCE *avijjā* (and thus all those related entities of *gathi, āsava, anusaya*) by learning *Dhamma* and then practicing *Ānāpāna* (not breath meditation) and *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditation.
- As one proceeds in the Path, one's had *gathi* (and *āsava* and *anusaya*) will start decreasing, one's *citta* will tend to be more "cleaner and brighter".
- Once one gets to a certain level, one can start contemplating on those key concepts like *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, i.e., *vipassana* meditation, and attain *magga phala*.

15. Not all *citta* get contaminated at the same level. A *citta* arises when one of our six sense faculties makes a sense contact, and the level of contamination of the *citta* depends critically on what that sensory input is.

- Let us take some examples. When we taste a delicious food or see an attractive object, greedy thoughts may arise. But we know that we all don't have the same cravings for a given object. Some foods that some people crave can be repulsive to some others. In another example, a given person may be liked by some but disliked by others (think about a famous politician).
- Furthermore, we don't generate defiled thoughts in many cases. Billions of *citta* flow through our minds as we look at scenery passing by while riding in a car; they are mostly neutral, but still are contaminated to a certain level.
- But the level of contamination will be stronger when one sees an eye-catching object.

16. I have seen some people say *citta* that arise in a baby are *pabhassara citta*. One's *anusaya* are ALWAYS with oneself, whether it is a baby, animal, *brahma*, or any living being.

- A baby's brain has not developed so it cannot experience the world as we do, and it also cannot express itself. But a baby's *citta* are also contaminated due to *anusaya* being there.

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- Only when one attains *magga phala* that a part of one's *anusaya* (and *āsava* and *saṃyojana*) is removed permanently; see, "Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna."

17. As one starts at the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*, and advance through *Sakadāgāmī*, *Anāgāmī* stages to the *Arahant* stage, one's *avijjā* (and thus bad *gathi*, *anusaya*, *āsava*, etc) decrease permanently.

- Thus a *Sotāpanna*'s thoughts will not be defiled beyond a certain level of contamination. Certainly, a *Sotāpanna* will not generate strong *akusala citta* that are capable of leading to rebirth in the *apāyā*.
- By the time one gets to the *Anāgāmī* stage, one has removed all *kāmāsava* (*kāmā āsava*), and thus will not be tempted by any sensual object in the *kāmā loka*. Thus he/she will not be reborn anywhere in the *kāmā loka* (four *apāyā*, human realm, and the six *deva* realms).
- When one gets to the *Arahant* stage, one has removed all *avijjā* (and all bad *gathi*, *anusaya*, *āsava*, etc): One has attained *Nibbāna*, and thus one will not reborn anywhere in the 31 realms at death.
- All the above have been discussed in detail in many posts at the site. One can use the site map "Pure Dhamma – Sitemap" or use the "Search" box on top right to look for posts for given keyword(s).

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XIII Historical Background

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13.1 Historical Background – Introduction

One of the earliest posts: Revised May 27, 2017

1. Today, we have three main "sects" of "Buddhism" that include the Theravāda Buddhism in Sri Lanka, Burma, Thailand, and few other South Asian countries, Mahayana Buddhism in the form Zen in Japan, China, and several other Asian countries, and Vajryana Buddhism in Tibet.

- All sects are being practiced in other countries in varying degrees. How the original teachings of the Buddha got branched out over 2500 years is discussed in, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze."

2. The vast literature in Theravāda Buddhism, which is contained in the Tipiṭaka (three baskets of Sutta, Vinaya, and Abhidhamma) are mostly self-consistent.

- Considering the vastness of the material in these documents, the consistency is amazing, and gives one confidence that any "contamination" would be small indeed.

3. However, even the *Theravāda* literature has been contaminated with incorrect interpretations of the *Tipiṭaka*.

- The root causes of misinterpretations of key terms are discussed at several posts below in this section, but specifically two major historical events can be pointed out: "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis" and "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- These inconsistencies were first pointed out by my teacher *Thero* who recently passed away, and my goal with this website is to point out those errors and illustrate that those correct interpretations provide a fully-consistent picture: "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."

4. It is hard for me to fathom how a normal human being, regardless of how intelligent he is, could teach the doctrine in such different ways over forty five years, yet be so consistent in multiple ways (the discourses range from simple one-to-one question answer sessions with individuals to lengthy discourses delivered to audiences of thousands of people, not to mention the complex Abhidhamma material).

- Even with the help of a computer, it is hard for me to keep track of the intricacy of Abhidhamma. The complex workings of the mind has been analyzed in multiple ways, and they are all consistent within the Abhidhamma and also with the Suttā.

5. Teachings of the Buddha, as given in the Theravāda Tipiṭaka, are confirmed and solidified with each new scientific discovery (in contrast, the mythical aspects introduced in various forms of Mahayana Buddhism are facing problems in light of scientific progress).

Buddha Dhamma is like a diamond covered in the dirt of ignorance. The more we find about the world through scientific methods (thus removing more dirt from the diamond), the more of the diamond's luster become apparent. Not too far into the future, Buddha Dhamma will shine brightly and will greatly help the humanity all over the world.

6. It is ironic in a way how the "materialistic science" is helping to clarify and confirm the teachings of the "mind-based" Buddha Dhamma. Yet the humanity is still only enamored with the truly amazing materialistic advances based on scientific discoveries, and is for most part unaware of its primitive stage compared to ultimate knowledge contained in Buddha Dhamma.

- The real breakthrough may come when science will be forced to embrace the mind as yet another fundamental property of nature.
- The discovery of quantum mechanics has clearly laid the foundation for this next breakthrough. It has been more than hundred years since the advent of quantum mechanics, but it is only within the past two to three decades that real progress has been made in this direction. I discuss these developments in detail in the "Dhamma and Science" section.

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Next, "Methods of Delivery of Dhamma by the Buddha", …….

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13.2 Methods of Delivery of Dhamma by the Buddha

1. Buddha Dhamma is undoubtedly the most complex "theory" in the world. It is truly amazing that such a deep philosophical doctrine has survived over 2500 years.

- However, we can be confident that the pure Dhamma still survives, because the three baskets of *sutta, vinaya,* and *abhidhamma* were written down in 29 BCE when there were still numerous *Arahants* were present.
- After about 100 - 200 CE, people started translating the *Tipiṭaka* into *Sanskrit* and also the *Mahāyāna* sect started writing their own *suttā* in *Sanskrit*; see, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze."

2. Another important point to remember is that there is no single discourse in which the Buddha has drawn together all the elements of his teaching and assigned them to their appropriate place within some comprehensive system; see, "Sutta – Introduction."

- Therefore, the same material was delivered in a variety of different ways over the 45-year "ministry" of the Buddha. If some mistakes were made in the transmission of one of the *suttā* or discourses, that would become apparent when compared with the numerous other discourses or the *Abhidhamma*.

3. The Buddha tailored his discourses to his audience at hand. Thus his teachings that have been transmitted encompass a broad spectrum, ranging from one-to-one conversations with people who had particular questions in mind to long discourses to audiences consisting of groups with wide-ranging mental capabilities.

- If the Buddha realized that it was not fruitful to explain a deep concept to an individual, he remained silent. One example cited is Buddha's silence when a certain wanderer named Vacchagotta asked him whether there was an *Atman* or *āthma* (permanent soul) or not. Even though Buddha had clearly explained in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* that the concept of a lifestream with changing "*gathi*," in this case, he remained in silence when Vacchagotta asked him the question twice. Vacchagotta then left.
- After Vacchagotta left, Buddha's personal attendant, Ven. Ānanda, asked him why Buddha did not explain the concept that it is not correct to say "there is no soul" or "there is a soul" to Vacchagotta. The Buddha told Ānanda that he did not think Vacchagotta was mentally capable at that time to understand the concept, and that he did not want to confuse him. See the post, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Lifestream" for the correct explanation.
- It turned out that Vacchagotta later became a disciple and even attained *Nibbāna* through his efforts.

4. Other times, he would enunciate invariable principles that stand at the heart of the teaching: for example, *Abhidhamma* is a complete description of the working of the mind. The Buddha delivered this *Abhidhamma* material in summary form to his chief disciple, Ven. Sariputta, and it was Ven. Sariputta and his followers who expanded that summary to the form that we have today in the *Tipiṭaka*; see, "Abhdhamma – Introduction."

- But in most cases, instead of trying to provide the most thorough and intellectually deep answers, he tried to find the best way to steer people to the truth according to their mental capabilities. Some recent books have misrepresented such isolated one-to-one correspondence as indications that some fundamental issues have not been addressed by the Buddha. They are probably unaware that such questions have been answered in other *suttā*. I will point such instances as they come up in other posts.

Next, "Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer"", …..

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13.3 Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer"

Coming back to the literature on the Theravāda Dhamma, the Buddha seems to have followed four ways of treating questions: (1) Some should be answered directly, (2) others should be answered by way of analyzing them, (3) yet others should be answered by counter-questions, and (4) there are questions that should be put aside. As mentioned in the above section, depending on the audience he chose the method that he deemed was appropriate.

He always told his disciples that they should not waste time worrying about such questions on the universe, since they should be using the precious little time on the Earth in pursuit of Nibbāna. So, questions on the characteristics of the universe was one that Buddha chose to put aside in REGULAR question and answer sessions. A good example is when a monk named Malunkayaputta came to the Buddha and asked a number of questions regarding the universe and stated that he will leave the order if the Buddha refuses to answer them. The Buddha's following answer illustrates the urgency with which he asked the followers to "follow the path" diligently instead of wasting valuable time on metaphysical questions.

The Buddha told Malunkayaputta, "Suppose Malunkayaputta, a man is wounded by a poisoned arrow, and the friends and relatives bring him to a surgeon. Suppose the man should then say: "I will not let this arrow be taken out until I know who shot me; whether he is a Ksatriya or a Brahmana or a Vaisya or a Sudra (i.e., which caste); what his name and family may be; whether he is tall, short, or of medium stature; whether his complexion is black, brown, or golden; from which village, town, or city he comes. I will not let this arrow be taken out until I know the kind of bow with which I was shot; the kind of bowstring used; the type of arrow; what sort of feather was used on the arrow and with what kind of material the point of the arrow was made". Malunkualputta, that man would die without knowing any of these things. Even so, Malunkulaputta, if anyone says: "I will not follow the holy life under the Blessed One until he answers these questions such as whether the universe is eternal or not, etc." he would die with these questions unanswered by the Blessed One".

We have to look at this from the perspective of the "knowledge base" that existed at the time of the Buddha. Think about the fact that starting with the Greek philosophers at the time of the Buddha (a coincidence), the Western science took over 2500 years to reach the current level of understanding of the universe. Even a mere two hundred years ago, the scientific understanding was limited to the Solar system and basically nothing beyond that. Now we know that there are billions of galaxies, each with billions of stars (most of which have planetary systems like our Solar system), and that all this started with the big bang. This transition was slow and took the genius and courage of people like Galileo who sometimes sacrificed their lives to bring out the truth.

Twenty five hundred years ago, there was no rational way that the Buddha could have "explained" concepts such as the origin of the universe, extent of the universe, etc. Therefore, even though he clearly stated the existence of "innumerable world systems" in order to lay down the basis of consciousness (see "Consciousness – A Dhamma Perspective"), he refused to discuss such concepts with individuals simply because it would have been a waste of time given the limited base knowledge existed at that time. If the Buddha was teaching his doctrine today, I believe that he would have answered such questions directly, because the vocabulary and background knowledge for doing so is available today.

However, Buddha's perspectives on the universe is apparent in his teachings on Abhidamma (and also in some main Suttā). This is because the fundamental aspects of the universe (infinite in space and time) are inherent in the doctrine. Those principles are embedded in the teachings, but the Buddha avoided giving answers to specific questions, especially from individuals, because it would have totally confused those people.

Some people used examples as mentioned above to state that the Buddha refused to answer any questions related to the origin of the universe or that his position on the existence of a soul was not very clear. That is not the case at all. The Buddha's main concern at any given instance was to provide an answer that the audience at hand was able to comprehend. If the correct answer would have befuddled the audience, he remained silent on that particular question. He has described the evolvement of life on this planet in the

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Agganna Sutta. But please do not read the published translated versions, because the translations are embarrassingly flawed.

Therefore, one should not come to certain conclusions by reading just a few discourses, and needs to pay attention in what context the discourse was delivered. It is always possible to refer to Abhidhamma to clarify issues, since it is written in a methodical way. So, the texts of the oldest Pāli texts contain Buddha's teachings in a variety of forms, ranging from simple interpretations of Dhamma to its very deep philosophical aspects in the Abhidhamma as well as some of the Suttā. Yet the contents in all this vast material remains self-consistent when one examines the contents with the correct perspective. We owe a deep gratitude to the Saṅgha of Sri Lanka for keeping this material intact.

Next, "Preservation of the Dhamma"

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13.4 Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma

Revised October 5, 2016

1. It is said that the Buddha advised not to translate the *Tipiṭaka* material word-by-word into any other language. Instead, commentaries were written to explain the Pāli material in the *Tipiṭaka* in condensed form fit for listening, retention, recitation, memorization, and repetition – the five major elements in oral transmission.

- This is a very important point. For example, the Buddha orally delivered the main Suttā over many hours; the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta* was delivered over several days to the five ascetics. For easy transmission, these discourses were SUMMARIZED in *Magadhi* (and that particular format of "lining up" was termed *Pāli*); see, "Sutta – Introduction."
- Each line, sometimes even a word in a *Sutta* needs a further explanation; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure" and follow-up posts. Such "explanatory texts" or "commentaries" were originally written in *Sinhala* and were called "*Sinhala Atthakata*".
- Commentaries in *Sinhala* accumulated for centuries and in the fourth or fifth century CE, these commentaries were translated to Pāli **(and edited with his own ideas incorporated)** by Buddhaghosa. **Subsequently, most of the original *Sinhala* commentaries were lost, and today we only have the edited summaries of Buddhaghosa where he incorporated his own ideas.**
- Fortunately, three of the original commentaries ("*Sinhala Atthakata*") have been preserved in the Tipiṭaka; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

2. Among the commentaries to the *Tipiṭaka*, those on the Abhidhamma are dominated by the three commentaries of Buddhaghosa: (i) the *atthasalini*, "The Expositor", the commentary to the *Dhammasangani*, (ii) the *Sammohavinodani*, "The Dispeller of Delusion", the commentary to the *Vibhanga*, and (iii) the *Pancappakarana Atthakatha*, the combined commentary to the other five treatises.

- But it must be remembered that Buddhaghosa wrote those commentaries with his own ideas as a former Hindu Brahmin. **The original *Tipiṭaka* remains unaltered, including those three original commentaries ("*Sinhala Atthakata*") mentioned above.**

3. In addition to writing those commentaries on the *Tipiṭaka* while he was in Sri Lanka, Buddhghosa also wrote the *Visuddhimagga* (The Path of Purification) around 430 CE, which is considered to be an important treatise on *Theravāda* doctrine. This is wrongly considered to be a comprehensive manual condensing the theoretical and practical teaching of the Buddha, and some consider it to be the most important *Theravāda* text outside of the *Tipiṭaka* Canon of scriptures.

- I will point out many problems with Buddhaghosa's writings – including Visuddhimagga — at this site.
- The most common problems include: misinterpretation of *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā* as "breath meditation"; see, "7. What is Ānapāna?" and "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."
- He also incorporated *kasina* meditations, which are *anāriya* meditations and are not *Ariya* meditation techniques. In *Ariya* (or true Buddhist) meditations, the object of meditation is *Nibbāna,* not a mundane object like a *kasina* object.

4. This is critical issue since most current *Theravāda* institutions teach mainly the works of Buddhaghosa, since those works are supposed to be reliable summaries of the teachings in the *Tipiṭaka*. Therefore, it is good to have the works of Buddhaghosa reviewed extensively.

- I will point out the most important misrepresentations on this website, based on what I have learned from my teacher *Thero* in Sri Lanka. The Dhamma that I present here is, in my opinion, the correct interpretation of the *Tipiṭaka*. I hope you will come to that conclusion on careful examination of the material.
- More details can be found in "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline" and other posts in the "Historical Background" section.

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5. After Emperor Asoka's reign, no further steps were taken to hold back the inevitable *Brahminic* influence on Buddhism in India, and Buddhism went through a gradual decline in India (despite or even because of the resurgent philosophical activity led by Nagarjuna, Asanga, Vasubhanudhu, and others around the beginning of the first millennium) and virtually disappeared from India during the first millennium.

6. The Mahayana version of Buddhism started with the works of Nagarjuna, who, in all likelihood had best intentions for the promotion of Buddhism (even though he was naive enough to assume that Buddha Dhamma can be refined for the "new ages").

- These refinements became major revisions by the time D. T. Suzuki's books were written in the early 1900's, and the original teachings were badly distorted. This is the reason why I am so obsessive about making sure that my essays are compatible with the original teachings of the Buddha.

7. All these distortions in both Mahayana and Theravāda versions have their origins in various philosophers (such as Nagarjuna and Buddhaghosa) trying to interpret Buddha Dhamma in terms of mundane concepts; see, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

- However, as pointed out in that post, it is easy to point out the inconsistencies with such mundane interpretations by Nagarjuana, Buddhaghosa, and others, especially with the evidence gained by the scientific advances made during the past few hundred years.
- And such scientific evidence and the ones that are yet to be discovered will only confirm the pure Dhamma that stays intact in the *Tipiṭaka* to the day, as also pointed out in that post.

Next, "Preservation of Dhamma", ……

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13.5 Preservation of the Buddha Dhamma

Revised October 28, 2017; November 11, 2017; January 9, 2019; re-written January 26, 2020

Tipiṭaka – The Pāli Canon

1. Buddha's teachings were handed down verbally from one generation to the next over three to four hundred years. That material is in the Pāli Canon, *Tipiṭaka*.

- *Tipiṭaka* was composed into a form that is suitable for easy verbal transmission, in many cases in SUMMARY form. See, "Sutta – Introduction."
- That is the reason that it survived almost entirely in content over this long period.
- It was written down at the turn of the first century, 2000 years ago, in Matale, Sri Lanka. See, "Welcome to Aluvihāra Rock Cave Temple" for information about the location where the *Tipiṭaka* writing took place.
- The other earliest written Buddhist documents are from Gandhāra in modern northwestern Pakistan; see, "The Buddhist Literature of Ancient Gandhāra" by Richard Salomon (2018.) However, those do not provide a complete version of the *Tipiṭaka*; see p. 83 of the book.
- All other documents in Chinese, Tibetan, etc. date later and derived from the Pāli *Tipiṭaka*.

Initial Oral Transmission

2. The discourses of the Buddha were said to have been delivered in *Māgadhi* language.The written form was called Pāli. But Pāli does not have its own script, so it was written down with Sinhala script.

- **That provides a clear way of sorting out the Mahāyāna literature, which was written in Sanskrit, and never written in Pāli. thus all the Sanskrit *suttā* were written by Mahāyānic philosophers in Sanskrit.**
- Around the turn of the first millennium, translations of the *Tipiṭaka* to Chinese and subsequently to Tibetan also took place. The original manuscripts in Pāli can be expected to contain most of the original discourses delivered by the Buddha.

3. Today, it is hard to fathom (especially for Westerners) that such a level of accuracy could have been maintained in a verbally-transmitted material.

- However, we need to understand the background traditions and also the determination of the monks over thousands of years that helped preserve most of the original teachings.
- Even today, there are people who have memorized large sections of the *Tipiṭaka*, especially in Myanmar (formerly Burma). In Myanmar, there are special examinations to test memorizations. See, "WebLink: myanmarnet.net: TIPITAKADHARA SAYADAWS OF MYANMAR (BURMA) IN FIVE DECADES." Also see, "WebLink: dhammadharo: Memorizing the Tipitaka."
- During the period of oral transmission, there were groups of *bhikkhus* who memorized (overlapping) sections of the *Tipiṭaka*. Then during a *Sangāyanā* (Buddhist Council), they all got together and compared each other versions to make sure they were all compatible.

It Took Three Councils to Finalize the *Tipiṭaka*

4. A major reason for the assembly of the First Buddhist Council within three months of the Buddha's *Parinibbāna* was to organize the vast material.

- Within the next two hundred years, two more Councils were held to recite and verify the teachings and to finalize the *Tipiṭaka* in three broad categories ("*ti*" + "*piṭaka*" or "three baskets"). The second was held about a century after the first one.

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- The third was held in 250 BC at Pataliputra under the patronage of King Asoka. The "three baskets" were completed at this Council with the finalization of the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*.
- It was this completed *Tipiṭaka* that was written down in 29 BCE at the Fourth Buddhist Council, in Matale, Sri Lanka.

The authenticity of the *Tipiṭaka*

5. Another important point is hidden in the history of the *Tipiṭaka*. Even up to the 20th century, the whole *Tipiṭaka* was written on specially prepared ola (palm) leaves. They deteriorate over 100 years or so and needed to re-written. Even though that was a very labor-intensive process (there are about 60 large volumes in the modern printed version of the *Tipiṭaka*), it served another important purpose.

- Sinhala language (both spoken and written) changed over the past 2000 years. **The need to re-write it every 100 or so years made sure that the changes in Sinhala script were taken into account.** Of course Pāli language has not changed.
- The following video gives an idea about how those leaves were prepared and what tools were used to write with:

  WebLink: youtube: Ola Leaf manuscripts

Most *Suttā* Condensed Versions of the Discourses

6. **A critical point here is that a *sutta* is a CONDENSED version of discourse in many cases.** For example, the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta* was delivered to the five ascetics overnight. Imagine how many written pages would be if written verbatim! Yet it was summarized in a few pages. The same is true for all the important *suttā*. Otherwise it would, have been impossible to transmit all those thousands of *suttā*;

- The Buddha delivered most of his discourses in the *Māghadhi* (*māghadhi* = "*maga*" + "*adhi*" or Noble path) language. *Tipiṭaka* was written in Pāli with Sinhala script. Pāli is a version of *Maghadhi* suitable for writing down oral discourses in summary form suitable for transmission.

- Each Pāli word is packed with a lot of information, and thus commentaries (called "*Attha Katha*") were written to expound the meaning of important Pāli words and to explain the key phrases in the *suttā*.

Importance of the Commentaries

7. **Thus the *Tipiṭaka* was meant to be used with the commentaries. Pāli *suttā* are not supposed to be translated word-by-word. See, "Sutta – Introduction."**

- Most of those Sinhala commentaries were burned down in the Anuradhapura era; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline."
- Fortunately, three original commentaries written by the main disciples of the Buddha (Ven. Sariputta, Ven. Kaccayana, etc.) during the time of the Buddha had been included in the *Tipiṭaka* (in the *Khuddhaka Nikāya*), and thus survived. The current revival of pure Dhamma by the *Theros* in Sri Lanka is partially due to their perusal of these three documents (*Paṭisambhidāmagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana*).

8. With the loss of most of the commentaries and the non-prominence of the surviving three commentaries mentioned above, people started translating the *Tipiṭaka* word by word. The problem was compounded by the increasing usage of the Sanskrit language beginning around the first century CE.

- For example, "*anicca*" was translated first to Sanskrit as "*anitya*" and then the same Sanskrit word "*anitya*" was ADOPTED as the Sinhala translation for *anicca*. Similarly, "*anatta*" was translated to Sanskrit as "*anathma*" and again was adopted as the Sinhala word for "*anatta*." **This itself has been responsible for preventing millions of people attaining *Nibbāna* for all these years;** see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

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- Another good example is the translation of *paṭicca samuppāda* to Sanskrit as *Pratītyasamutpāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda." I think it is NOT POSSIBLE to translate some key Pāli words to Sanskrit or English or any other language without losing the true meaning. This is the reason that I am going to just keep the original words in some cases and just explain what it is; also see, "Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā" or words like *taṇhā* and *Nibbāna*.

Direct Translation of the *Tipiṭaka* Is Dangerous

9. The Buddha had foreseen this and warned not to translate the *Tipiṭaka* to ANY LANGUAGE, and particularly to Sanskrit. There were two *Brahmins* by the names of Yameḷu and Kekuṭa who were experts on the *Vedic* Texts; they became *bhikkhus* and asked the Buddha whether they should translate the Pāli *suttā* to Sanskrit.

- That is when the Buddha admonished them that Sanskrit was a language with musical overtones developed by the high-minded *Brahmins* and thus it was not possible to convey the true meanings of *Māghadhi* (Pāli) words in Sanskrit; see, WebLink: suttacentral: Chulavagga 5.33.
- In the Sutta Central English translation, the Pāli word for *Sanskrit* (*chandasa*) is translated incorrectly as, "metrical"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: 15. Minor matters (Khuddaka)" which is the translation of "WebLink: suttacentral: 1. Khuddakavatthu." The relevant Pāli text is located close to the end, and starts as, "*Tena kho pana samayena yameḷakekuṭā nāma…*".

10. **One grave problem we have today is the many people try to translate a given *sutta* word by word to another language. Thus the Dhamma *Cakka Pavattana sutta* that we mentioned above is translated to a few pages.** \

- For a comprehensive translation of that *sutta*: "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."
- **That is why most of the existing translations are inadequate at best and erroneous in most cases; see,** "Sutta – Introduction."

Buddhaghosa's Commentaries

11. Finally, just before the Sinhala commentaries were burned down, Buddhaghosa translated **and edited** those commentaries back to Pāli in his *Visuddhimagga* and other books.

- Even though he had made many errors (like including *kasina* meditation and substituting the *ānāpānasati bhāvanā* with "breath meditation"), he had actually used the words *anicca* and *anatta* in the Pāli version of the *Visuddhimagga;* see, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background" and"Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."
- Thus the incorrect translations of the words "*anicca*" and "*anatta*" may have happened long before him probably in the first to second century CE; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

Timeline and Organization of the *Tipiṭaka*

First Buddhist Council

12. That first Buddhist council was held three months after the *Parinibbāna* at Rājagaha the capital of Māgadha.

- Shortly after the Buddha passed away, Ven. Mahakassapa, the *de facto* head of the Saṅgha, selected five hundred monks, all Arahants (those who have attained Nibbāna), to meet and compile an authoritative version of the teachings.

This first Buddhist council was held three months after the *Parinibbāna* at Rajagaha the capital of Magadha.

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13. The *cullavagga*, one of the books of the Pāli *Vinaya Piṭaka*, gives an account of how the authorized texts were compiled at the First Buddhist Council:

- On the basis of Venerable Upali's recitation of *Vinaya*, the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, the compilation on disciplinary matters was compiled.
- Venerable Ānanda then recited "the Dhamma" or the *Sutta Piṭaka*, i.e., the discourses, and on the basis of this recitation the *Sutta Piṭaka*, the Compilation of Discourses, was compiled (Venerable Ānanda was supposed to have an amazing memory and had memorized all the *Suttā* preached by the Buddha).
- The *Abhidhamma* was rehearsed by all the *Arahants* present at the Council. Although parts of the *Abhidhamma* were recited at these earlier Buddhist Councils, it was not until the Third Council that it became fixed into its present form as the third and final *Piṭaka* of the Canon.

Finalization of *Tipiṭaka* at the Third Council

14. The proceedings of the Third Council compiled by the Moggaliputta-Rissa *Thero* in the Kathavatthu, which became part of the *Tipiṭaka* (Three Baskets). It was during the Third Council that the final version of the *Tipiṭaka* (as available today) was compiled. It finalized the *Abhidhamma piṭaka*, and added several books on the *Khuddhaka Nikāya*, in addition to the *Kathavatthu*.

The composition of the *Tipiṭaka* is as follows:

1. The Vinaya Piṭaka is composed of five books: Major Offenses (*Prajika Pāli)*, Minor Offenses (*Pacittiya Pāli*), Greater Section (*Mahavagga Pāli*), Smaller Section (*Culavagga Pāli*), and Epitome of the Vinaya (*Parivara Pāli*).

2. The *Sutta Piṭaka* consists of five *Nikāyas*: *Digha Nikāya* (Collection of Long Discourses), *Majjhima Nikāya* (Collection of Middle-Length Courses), *Saṃyutta Nikāya* (Collection of Kindred Sayings), *Aṅguttara Nikāya* (Collection of Discourses arranged in accordance with number), and *Khuddaka Nikāya* (Smaller Collection).

3. The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* consists of the following categories: *Dhamma Sanghani* (Classification of Dharmas), *Vibhanga* (The Book of Divisions), *Kathavatthu* (Points of Controversy) which was actually compiled by venerable Moggaliputta Tissa at the Third Buddhist Council, *Puggala Pannatti* (Description of Individuals), *Dhatukatha* (Discussion with Reference to Elements), *Yamaka* (The Book of the Pairs), and *Paṭṭhāna* (The Book of Relations).

- That collection is the *Tipiṭaka* (Three Baskets) or the Pāli Canon.

Writing Down the *Tipiṭaka* at the Fourth Council

15. It is this enlarged Canon completed at the Third Council that was committed to writing in Sri Lanka in the first century BCE (29 BCE) at the Aluvihara Monastery at the Fourth Buddhist Council. The material in Pāli was written down in Sinhala language (Pāli does not have its own script).

This huge collection was written down on palm leaves with a styluses, a pointed steel dagger-like instrument, which scratched the letters into the soft leaves. Ink made from berries was rubbed over the whole page and then gently removed, so that only the indentations retained the color. It is said that *Tipiṭaka* was also written down on gold leaves as well.

16. It is to be noted that Theravāda Buddhism was brought to Burma and Thailand from Sri Lanka in the first century CE. Over the next two centuries, it diffused into adjoining countries of Laos, and Cambodia, and survives in its purity in those countries as well to the present day. (In Cambodia, the Khmer Rouge regime in the 1970's massacred most of the monks, and the Buddha Dhamma is virtually extinct).

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- While the *Saṅgha* (with the aid of most of the kings) in Sri Lanka took pride and honor in keeping the teachings intact, Buddhism went through many changes in India, as well as in China, Japan, and Tibet, and then finally disappeared altogether from India around 1200 CE.

Next, "Historical Timeline of David Conze", …….

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13.6 Historical Timeline of Edward Conze

Edward Conze was a Mahayana scholar, and translated the Mahayana Prajnaparamita or *Perfection of Wisdom* sutras from original Sanskrit to English. See, WebLink: WIKI: Edward Conze

(It must be noted that any Sanskrit *suttā* are Mahayana *suttā* that were composed by Mahayana philosophers like Nagarjuna (who were just intellectuals, and not Arahants) and are NOT original *suttā* delivered by the Buddha).

Conze was impressed with those Mahayana *suttā*, and in the book, "On Indian Mahayana Buddhism" (1968) he compiled works of the Mahayana/Zen scholar D. T. Suzuki. Even though his bias towards Mahayana *suttā* are clear, I selected his timeline which clearly shows how Mahayana scholars wrote their own *suttā* and tried later to attribute those to the Buddha.

This historical timeline is discussed in detail by Edward Conze in his book, "A Short History of Buddhism" (1980). According to Conze, the history of Buddhism can be conveniently divided into four periods:

1. The old Buddhism, which largely coincided with what later came to be known as Theravāda
2. Rise of Mahayana,
3. Rise of the Tantra (Vajryana) and Ch'an (Zen),
4. No further divisions.

The first period is roughly 500 years; second and third periods roughly cover the first thousand years of the current era (CE); the last thousand years can be considered as the fourth period. During this whole period the Theravāda Dhamma was kept mostly intact. In the following description, it is also clear some of the differences between the original teachings and the Mahayana ideology.

In the following I will present this story verbatim as told by Conze (starting at p. 45 of his book):

"……About 100 BCE (roughly 400 years after the Buddha's Parinibbāna) a number of Buddhists in India felt that the existing statements of the doctrine had become stale and useless. In the conviction that Dhamma required ever new re-formulations so as to meet the needs of new ages, new populations and new social circumstances, they set out to produce new literature which ultimately came to known as Mahayana Buddhism. The creation of this literature is one of the most significant outbursts of creative energy known to human history and it was sustained for about four to five centuries. Repetition alone, they believed, cannot sustain a living religion. Unless counterbalanced by constant innovation, it will become fossilized and lose its life-giving qualities, they believed.

So far the Mahayanistic attitude seems quite logical. What is more difficult to understand is that they insisted in presenting the new writings, manifestly composed centuries after the Buddha's Parinibbāna, as the very words of the Buddha himself. They followed the Mahasanghikas in minimizing the importance of the historical Gautama Buddha, whom they replaced by the Buddha who is the embodiment of Dhamma (dharmakaya). In the "Lotus of the Good Law", we are told that the Buddha, far from having reached his enlightenment at Bodhgaya, abides for eons and eons, from eternity to eternity, and that He preaches the Law at all times in countless places and innumerable disguises.

……..Not content with this, the Mahayanists tried to link their own writings with the historical Buddha by a number of mythological fictions. They asserted that they had been preached by the Buddha in the course of his life on Earth, that parallel to the (First Buddhist) Council at Rajagaha, which codified the *Suttā* of the Theravāda, the Mahayana *suttā* had been codified by an assembly of Bodhisattvas on the mythical mountain of Vimalasvabhava; that the texts had been miraculously preserved for five centuries and stored away in the subterranean palaces of the Nagas, or with the king of the Gandharvas, or the king of the Gods. Then, as Nagarjuna puts it, "five hundred years after the Buddha's Nirvana, when the Good Law, after having

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gradually declined, was in great danger", these treasures from the past were unearthed, revealed and made known, so as to revivify the doctrine.

What then were the main doctrinal innovations of the Mahayana? They can be summarized under five headings:

1. As concerns the goal there is a shift from the Arhat-ideal to the Bodhisattva-ideal;
2. A new way of salvation is worked out, in which compassion ranks equal with wisdom, and which is marked by the gradual advance through six "perfections" (*paramita*);
3. Faith is given a new range by being provided with a new pantheon of deities, or rather of persons more than divine;
4. "Skill in means" (*upayakausalya*), an entirely new virtue, becomes essential to the saint, and is placed even above wisdom, the highest virtue so far;
5. A coherent ontological doctrine is worked out, dealing with such items as "Emptiness", "Suchness", etc".

We will now consider these one by one.

1. The goal of Arhantship is now relegated to the second place. The Mahayanists strive to to be a "Bodhisattva". A Bodhisattva is distinguished by three features: (a) In his essential being he is actuated by the desire to win the full enlightenment of a Buddha, (b) He is dominated by two forces, in equal proportion, i.e., by compassion and wisdom. From compassion he selflessly postpones his entrance into the bliss of Nirvana so as to help suffering creatures,…….. (c) Although intent on ultimate purity, a Bodhisattva remains in touch with ordinary people by having the same passions they have. His passions, however, do not either affect or pollute his mind.

2. A Bodhisattva's compassion is called "great", because it is boundless and makes no distinctions….. This enlightenment does not automatically entail the desire to assist others. Among the enlightened they distinguish three types, two of them "selfish", one "unselfish". The "selfish" types are Arhants and Pratyekabuddhas, who are said to represent the idea of the Hinayana, of the "inferior vehicle". The "unselfish" ones are the Buddhas, and the pursuit of the unselfish quest for enlightenment on the part of a Bodhisattva is called the "Buddha-vehicle", of the "Great Vehicle" (*mahā-yana*).

A Bodhisattva must be a patient man. He wants to become a Buddha, but his distance from the transcendental perfection of a supreme Buddha, who both knows and is everything, will obviously be infinte. In one life it could not possibly be traversed. Countless lives would be needed and a Bodhisattva must be prepared to wait for eons and eons before he can reach his goal. Yet, he is separated from the Buddhahood only by one single obstacle, i.e., his belief in a personal self. To get rid of himself is the Bodhisattva's supreme task. By two kinds of measures he tries to remove himself – actively by self-sacrifice and selfless service, cognitively by insight into the objective non-existence of a self. The first is due to compassion, the second to wisdom.

The unity of compassion and wisdom is acted out by the six "perfections", or "paramita", the six "methods by which we go to the Beyond". A person turns into a Bodhisattva when he first resolves to win full enlightenment for the benefit of all beings. The six are: the perfections of giving, morality, patience, vigor, meditation, and wisdom".

This ends the quotation from Edward Conze's book. (I have not added or edited anything other than to skip some text in order to make it concise).

I agree with Conze's analysis except for the statement in the very first paragraph: "The creation of this literature is one of the most significant outbursts of creative energy known to human history and it was sustained for about four to five centuries." This literature, even though voluminous, only made a simple theory much more seemingly confusing, and contradictory. We will discuss this in a follow-up post. The only

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fortunate thing about is that it is written entirely in Sanskrit, and thus is easy to distinguish from the original teachings written in Pāli Tipiṭaka.

In addition to the "improvements" that were added in India, further material associated with national customs were added when Mahayana Buddhism spread to China, Japan, and Tibet (and came to known by different names such Zen, Vajrayana, etc.).

So, the premise of the Mahayana re-formulation of the Buddha Dhamma was to "refine and improve" the Dhamma of the Buddha. This is in sharp contradiction with one of the most fundamental concepts in Dhamma that only a Buddha can discover these laws of nature and BY DEFINITION, it is not possible to improve upon them. They themselves admit that a Buddha appears in the world after long times, and thus their attempt to change Buddha Dhamma is one of the basic contradictions in Mahayana.

What we need to understand is the basic difference between Buddha Dhamma and any other human endeavor: All other human endeavors involve cumulative effort of many, whether it is science, philosophy, engineering, etc.; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction." And all those efforts are made within the system, using the knowledge acquired by the experience within the system; see, "Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem." A Buddha transcends the human realm, and discovers the "whole existence" of the 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." The Mahayanists took that world view, which is not accessible to normal human beings but only to a Buddha, and then added their own theories that only complicates that "already seemingly esoteric" picture. This is why there are so many apparent contradictions in "Buddhism" today. Adding more "pluff", which is wrong anyway by definition, only distorts the correct picture. My goal here is to provide a consistent picture using the accepted scientific methods.

Next, "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma", ……

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13.7 Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?

1. In 2014, I participated in an online discussion group on "Buddhism" for a few days. Couple of things that struck me were:

- There are a lot of people out there who see that there is something valuable in Buddha Dhamma. But there is lot of confusion, because there are so many conflicting ideas brought up and discussed without reaching a conclusion.
- Each person seems to have their own version, their own "theory" what Dhamma really is. In many forums, instead of having a honest discussion about what ideas are right and what are wrong, many people use the forums for "entertainment". It is their "coffee break" to sit around and show off their "knowledge" and "wisdom". **(I must say that I regularly participated in a couple of other discussion groups in 2014 where people seemed to be genuinely interested in having an open exchange of ideas; due to lack of time, I don't participate in such discussions any more).**

2. It is a good idea to first decide what the goal of such a forum is. I think the goal should be to find and confirm the core ideas that the Buddha taught 2500 years ago. Let us get rid of all these different labels, Mahayana, Theravāda, etc.. Since it does not appear to happen any time soon, I have decided to just present what I have found. I call it Buddha Dhamma. And that is what was called until the term "Buddhism" came into vogue in the 19th century.

3. I have two key points to make:

- We can remove many bad ideas that crept into Dhamma by looking at the historical "evolution" of "Buddhism"; The main problem of "evolution" of Dhamma is that it is not a germ idea that needs to be nurtured and refined: **Buddha Dhamma is the set of ultimate natural laws that a Buddha DISCOVERS after long times.** Now, one can be skeptical about that, and that is perfectly fine. Confidence in that belief comes by critically examining the evidence, and it may come later. But let us make that assumption, because that is a key idea in Buddha Dhamma: That it is a rare event that a human being can discover the ultimate laws of nature; see, "Power of the Human Mind – introduction," and the follow-up posts.
- Modern science can be another useful tool in finding the truth or fallacy of some concepts involved; the "theories" of science are continually being tested and verified by thousand of independent scientists, so even though they are not infallible, they are better than many speculations by individuals. And there is a key difference in finding the nature's laws via the scientific method and the way a Buddha finds them; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction."

I will use both these tools in presenting my case.

4. The goal (and the motivation) in finding true Dhamma (or any kind of true salvation for those who believe in any other religion or belief system) is different compared to a philosophical debate. One could possibly "win an argument" in a philosophical debate especially if "winning" means persuading more people in the audience. One could thus "win a debate", but deep inside one knows the argument has flaws. It is like winning court case, and freeing a criminal. The criminal (and may be even the lawyer) knows that he/she committed the crime. Even though the consequences will not be paid in a prison, they will be paid according to the Dhamma or the nature's laws.

5. If we can recover those correct laws that the Buddha taught, then we can gain the benefits of knowing those laws and following them for our benefit. It is not about winning an argument. It is ALL about finding the truth for oneself. If what Buddha said is true, then this world is much more complex than most people think, and there is much more suffering to be had, if one does not use the remaining time in this life wisely.

6. Then there is this naive argument out there that says: "All religions work for the good of the mankind. Do not criticize any religion or any sect within Buddhism". But some of those people also say, "Our sect of Buddhism is the best version because we are so compassionate that we will not attain Enlightenment until

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EVERYONE is ready". As we will see below, this oath itself is against one of the five precepts in Buddha Dhamma, that of promising not to lie. I am not going to talk about other religions, but I am going to point out the flaws in many existing versions of "Buddhism" today, because **that is the compassionate thing to do.**

7. If one is truly compassionate, one should try to find the true Dhamma (because there is only one set of natural laws), and then SHARE it with anyone who would be interested. Dhamma is not something that anyone can GIVE to anyone else. Even the Buddha could only teach those who would listen to him. Some people even question the compassion of the Buddha when they hear this story from the Tipiṭaka:

- There was a butcher named Cundasukara who lived right next door to the Jetawanaramaya, where the Buddha resided for a long time. Some may wonder why the Buddha did not try to "save" Cundasukara by teaching him the right path. Actually, there were some *bhikkhus* who could hear the screams of the pigs being slaughtered and asked the Buddha why he would not try to teach Dhamma to Cundasukara. The Buddha told them that Cundasukara would accrue much more bad kamma if he tried to do that. Killing pigs leads to accumulation of much bad kamma, but unimaginable bad kamma could be accumulated by having hateful thoughts towards a Buddha: see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma." One could accumulate more bad kamma by hurting the feelings of a human being than by killing an animal, and hateful thoughts towards a Buddha can be infinitely worse than hurting a normal human being. Therefore, sometimes the true compassion can be hidden.
- In my way of thinking, I would not be acting compassionately if I did not point out these flaws in both Mahayana and Theravāda, because I have experienced the benefits of the true and pure Dhamma.
- My goal is not to try to "convert" anyone to anything. The Buddha did not try to convert anybody. It is up to each person to make their own decisions, because one is responsible for one's own future, and no one else is. Most of us are lucky to live in societies where we can make our own decisions.
- As I keep emphasizing, Buddha Dhamma describes the ultimate laws of nature. Anyone with any religious background, or an atheist, can follow Dhamma and should be able to see that it does describe the laws of nature. However, it is critical to find the true Dhamma. The only way to do that is to check for consistency at ALL TIMES, and to weed out the bad versions.

8. In the following few posts we will examine the problems in many different versions of Mahayana and also in Theravāda. If you see any flaws in my arguments, please send me a comment. **It is possible that I could make a mistake, and if so I will correct them.** I hope all those who read these posts will keep an open mind, because all of us should have the same goal: finding the pure Dhamma which will be beneficial to us all.

Next, "Key Problems with Mahayana Teachings", …….

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13.8 Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings

Revised September 2, 2019

1. The main problem is a conflict with a very fundamental tenet of Buddha Dhamma. That a Buddha comes to this world after very long times and DISCOVERS the laws of nature by his efforts. Mahāyānists agree that it takes eons of time to fulfill the "*paramitas*" and to become a Buddha.

- Then they turn around and say that Buddha Dhamma needed to be "refined" for the changing times; see "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma." How can the ultimate laws of nature discovered by a Buddha be "refined" or "revised"? **No one has answered this basic question.**

2. The first thing one is supposed to do in becoming a "Mahāyāna Buddhist" is to take the "*Bodhisattva* vow." They say each being should endeavor to become a Buddha, i.e., each person should be a *Bodhisattva*.

- Those who initiated this idea a long time ago probably did not have any idea that there is an infinite number of sentient beings in this world. Each human body has an amazingly large number of microscopic beings. See, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!."
- There are 1000 trillion of just ants on this Earth: WebLink: ASK: Q: How many ants are there in the world?. Or do they not count other living beings?
- We know that there have not been a significant number of *Arahants* for past 1800 years. Is there any realistic way for trillions of beings to attain *Aranhathood*, let alone *Buddhahood*?
- In this eon (basically the time duration of a universe or about 30 billion years), there have been four Buddhas. One more Buddha is to appear. That is truly an exception. Before this eon, there were 30 eons (trillion years!) that did not have a single Buddha appearing. So, how long would one to have wait to become a Buddha, i.e., remain a *Bodhisattva*? **And will all beings (or even the human population today) be able to become Buddhas in the same eon let alone at the same time? Are they serious?**

3. Within 500 years of the passing away of the Buddha, the Indian Mahāyānists started not only refining but incorporating concepts that were alien to Buddha Dhamma. If it needed refining just after 500 years, how come they have not kept up with the updating process? **One would think they would be doing a signigicant revision these days with so much changes in science and technology.**

4. Those who started this revision process did not understand the central idea of Nibbāna. They never mention concepts like *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. So, they defined those in their own terms and then got into a slippery slope in trying to explain those terms by inventing more concepts. It snowballed, and in the words of Edward Conze, who translated many Mahāyāna texts to English:

- "……About 100 BCE (roughly 400 years after the Buddha's Parinibbāna) a number of Buddhists in India felt that the existing statements of the doctrine had become stale and useless. They were convinced that Dhamma required ever new re-formulations so as to meet the needs of new ages, new populations, and new social circumstances. So they set out to produce new literature which ultimately came to known as Mahāyāna Buddhism. The creation of this literature was one of the most significant outbursts of creative energy known to human history and it was sustained for about four to five centuries. Repetition alone, they believed, cannot sustain a living religion. Unless counterbalanced by constant innovation, it will become fossilized and lose its life-giving qualities, they believed".
- (see, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze").

For someone who is not familiar with the original teachings of the Buddha, those philosophical arguments could look impressive, as they did for Edward Conze. We will examine those concepts in detail in upcoming posts. I have discussed the concept of "emptiness"; see the link below.

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5. None of the Mahāyānist "authors" such as Nagarjuana, Vasubhandhu, Asanga, is documented to be *Arahants* or even *Sotāpannas*. They were like philosophers of today, putting forth their theories. Not only that, they had an aversion to the concept of an *Arahant*.

- The Mahāyāna *sutras* have their origin with Nagarjuna, who lived 150-250 CE in India. Thus the original teachings of the Buddha went underground somewhere before 200 CE, within about 700 years of the *Parinibbāna* (passing away) of the Buddha.
- **Thus those Indian intellectuals like Nagarjuna were just like the philosophers from the time of Socrates. They make all kinds of speculations consistent with the "knowledge" about the "world" at any given time.**
- The Buddha did warn of this outcome: He said: "there will be other versions that look like Dhamma and feels like Dhamma. Just like when there are imitations of gold coming to the market, the real gold goes underground" (WebLink: suttacentral: Saddhamma Patirupaka Sutta (SN 16.13)). That has been the case for over 1800 years.
- But the truth comes out eventually. That time could well be now. The correct interpretations of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* have been hidden for many hundreds of years.

6. So what are these revisions that the Mahāyāna forefathers made?

Edward Conze has listed five doctrinal "innovations" of the Mahayanists; see, "Historical Timeline of Edward Conze." They are:

- As concerns the goal, there is a shift from the Arahant-ideal to the *Bodhisattva*-ideal;
- A new way of salvation was worked out, in which compassion ranked equal with wisdom.
- Faith is given a new range by being provided with a new pantheon of deities.
- "Skill in means" (*upayakausalya*), an entirely new virtue, becomes essential to the practitioner. That is placed even above wisdom, the highest virtue in the Buddha Dhamma.
- A coherent ontological doctrine was worked out, dealing with such items as "Emptiness", "Suchness", etc.

We will point out the critical contradictions of each of these revisions with the Buddha's original teachings (see i-v below) and will go into details later on.

i. The basic idea of Buddha Dhamma is that each human being has a unique mind. But greed, hate, and ignorance defile a mind. Because of that, each person commits immoral acts and subsequently "pay for those actions", suffering is the net result in the cycle of rebirths. One gets out this cycle of rebirths by purifying one's mind; one who has accomplished this task is an *Arahant*. No person can purify another person's mind. *Nibbāna* is not an abstract concept. See the subsection "Nibbāna."

ii. One attains *Nibbāna* when one purifies the mind of ALL defilement. That is when one has ultimate wisdom, or *paññā*. There is no way to equate compassion with *paññā*. One can be compassionate to the maximum, but that does not mean one has gotten rid of ignorance. Those beings in the Brahma worlds do not generate any hateful thoughts; they have perfected the four *Brahmavihara: metta, karuna, mudita, upekkha*. They don't have a trace of hateful thoughts. Yet they have ignorance (of the Four Noble Truths), and thus will one day be reborn in the four lower realm. Therefore, this is also a significant contradiction. See, "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna."

iii. Buddha said life in the human realm is better than life any other (except for the ones reserved for the *Anāgāmīs*). That is because the easiest to attain *Nibbāna* is from the human realm. Some beings in higher realms can be helpful to us, and we should share merits with them. However, a human is not supposed to worship any other being. One has to have faith only in the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha. No other being can help with our goal of attaining *Nibbāna*.

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iv. "Skill in Means" or whatever other term anyone comes up runs into the same problem as compassion above in (ii). Such ideas run against the core teachings of the Buddha. Even if one gets rid of greed and hate, but still has ignorance, then one will end up getting back greed and hate DUE TO ignorance. One attains *Nibbāna* by cultivating wisdom.

v. Mahāyāna descriptions on all these philosophical concepts like emptiness or *sunyāta* are just a lot of empty words. They have much simpler explanations that are consistent with original teachings; see the links below. The Mahāyānists had to re-invent alternate descriptions for these terms. The original meanings came to conflict with their "revisions" discussed in i-iv.

7. Those who follow the Mahāyāna version do that due to a couple of reasons. (1) They are born into Mahāyāna tradition (just like I was born to Theravāda). (2) They have had no exposure to other versions of Buddhism. The problems with Mahāyāna versions are not due to their making. But it is time at least to start changing those features that are in stark contradiction not only with the original teachings of the Buddha, but also with modern science.

- The oath in most Mahāyāna traditions to, "not to seek Enlightenment until ALL BEINGS ARE READY for Enlightenment" is the most visible contradiction. As I pointed out in #2 above, at least these days, we know that this is an outright lie. That itself is an apparent break of the precept not to lie knowingly.
- There needs to be an open discussion about how to weed out the inconsistent material from all sects, and to recover the pure Buddha Dhamma for the benefit of all.

Before discussing the problems with the wrong interpretations in Theravāda, let us discuss the concept of *sunyāta;* see, "What is Sunyāta (Emptiness)?." Mahāyāna Buddhism tries to make a big deal out of *sunyāta*, because their forefathers (those who started Mahāyāna tradition) could not understand the concept of *Nibbāna*. Mahāyāna teachings believe that *Nibbāna* is an abstract concept. However, it is a simple concept; see, "Nibbāna – Is It Difficult to Understand?"

Also see: "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis"....

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13.9 Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis

Revised August 13, 2019; July 26, 2020

Difference Between a *Sutra* and *Sutta*

1. This ***sutrā***, written by several Indian philosophers over hundreds of years, led to the gradual formation of Mahāyāna Buddhism over that period. Note that I am NOT referring to it as a ***sutta***. *Suttā* are the original teachings of the Buddha delivered in *Māghadhi* language. They were subsequently written down in Pāli, and are available in the *Tipiṭaka*.

- In contrast, all Mahāyāna *sutrās* were written after the *Parinibbāna* (passing away) of the Buddha. Furthermore, they all are in Sanskrit without exception.
- Thus at least we have a clear way of distinguishing the original discourses by the Buddha (***suttā***) and those Mahāyāna ***sutrās*** written by laypeople hundreds of years after the Buddha.
- Even in the Theravāda tradition, the question often arises regarding the interpretation of key concepts. As mentioned in the *Tipiṭaka*, this problem was there, even DURING the time of the Buddha.

How to Verify the Authencity of Buddha Dhamma

2. Once Mahā Prajapathi Gotami *bhikkhuni*, who was Prince Siddhartha's stepmother, approached the Buddha and pointed out that some *bhikkhus* were teaching incorrect interpretations of the Dhamma. She fears that things will really get out of hand after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. "How can the future generations figure out the correct version of Dhamma?" she asked the Buddha.

- The Buddha agreed that it is inevitable that wrong interpretations will always be there, but said that there is a way to clarify identify the correct version. He always said to look for consistency with the Four Noble Truths, as explained in the *suttā*. The Buddhist principle of Cause and effect is defined in the *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. How to live a moral life by getting rid of *lobha*/*rāga* (greed), *dosa* (anger/hate), *moha*/*avijjā* (ignorance of the Four Noble Truths) is laid out in the *Vinaya.*
- These teachings lead to *rāgakkhaya, dosakkhaya, and mohakkhaya* (getting rid of *rāga, dosa, moha*).
- If a version of Dhamma does not lead to *rāgakkhaya* (reduction of greed), *dosakkhaya* (reduction of hate), and *mohakkhaya* (reduction of ignorance), then that version should be discarded. Internal consistency must be there too.

Three Ways to Attain *Nibbāna*

3. A bit of background material before we discuss this *sutrā*. According to the Buddha, there are **three ways** to attain *Nibbāna*:

- A **Sammā Sambuddha** (like Buddha Gotama) discovers the Noble Eightfold Path and axhieves Nibbāna through his efforts, AND he can teach the doctrine to others.
- A second way to attain *Nibbāna* is to learn the Dhamma from a *Sammā Sambuddha* or a true disciple of his. That is how **an *Arahant*** reaches *Nibbāna*.
- Then there are ***pacceka Buddhas*** who discover the Path by themselves but are not capable of explaining it to other people.

Only One Vehicle to *Nibbāna* (the "Great Vehicle" or Mahāyāna)?

4. Now let us discuss how this *sutrā* paved the way for the *Bodhisattva* concept in Mahāyāna.

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This *sutrā* starts by the Buddha saying that even though he had taught that there were three paths to *Nibbāna* but now he is admitting that there is only one. When Ven. Ānanda asked why he says that he did not think people were "ready" for this higher doctrine. Instead of there being three vehicles (or paths) that one can take, there is the only one. It is the great vehicle or the Mahāyāna ("*mahā*" is great, and "*yāna*" is a vehicle). And this is the path that he himself took by striving for eons as a *Bodhisattva* to become a Buddha.

- Continuing with this *sutrā*, now he (the Buddha) was advising everyone to become a *Bodhisattava* and to attain the Buddhahood. Then he assures all those *Arahants* present there, including Ven. Sariputta, that they themselves will become Buddhas. That is a complete lack of understanding of the concept of an *Arahant*. An *Arahant* is not going to be reborn, and thus, there is no way for an *Arahant* to become a Buddha.

Now let us go through a few more "obvious inconsistencies" in the *sutrā*.

The *Sutrā* Opens With a Lie (*Musāvāda*)

5. It is astonishing to see that the *sutrā* opens with, "Thus have I heard…", a big *musāvāda* (an untruth) that Ven. Ānanda is providing the details of the *sutrā*.

First, a brief background is in order. Venerable Ānanda, who knew all the *suttā* by heart, recited them at the First Buddhist Council. Thus any given *sutta* in the *Tipiṭaka* starts off with clarification, "Thus have I heard…" to indicate that this was what Venerable Ānanda had heard himself. In trying to give the impression that this *sutrā* was also one delivered by the Buddha, the authors of the *Lotus sutra* attempted to deceive the readers.

- The historians have generally accepted that the *Lotus sutra* was written much later after the passing away (*Parinibbāna*) of the Buddha Gotama. That is true of all other *sutras* written in Sanskrit
- The oldest parts of the text (Chapters 1–9 and 17) were probably written down between 100 BCE and 100 CE, and most of the text was complete by 200 CE. See, for example, WebLink: WIKI: Lotus Sutra. Thus it was written by several authors over 100 years or more. A translation was made from Sanskrit to Chinese in 255 CE, and this is the earliest historical documentation of its existence.

Reads Like a Fairytale

6. The middle of the *sutrā* is devoted to describing the "universal accessibility" of the Buddhahood to anyone. Here it reads like a fairytale with astounding stories of accomplishments. For example, the daughter of the dragon king Sagara astonishes the assembly by performing various supernormal acts and says she can attain the Buddhahood "in an instant."

- However, these *sutrā* also stress the importance of faith and devotion as a means to the realization of Enlightenment. There is less emphasis on the need for wisdom.

The *Bodhisatta* Vow

7. A critical problem is the *Bodhisatta* vow that a Mahāyāna Buddhist agrees in advance to take (see, WebLink: WIKI: Bodhisattva vow). That is the promise to wait until "everyone is ready to attain the Buddhahood." It is not clear how or who can determine WHEN everyone is ready.

- Current scientific facts point to the existence of an innumerable number of living beings; see, "There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!." Therefore, it is a critical question as to how all these beings can attain the Buddhahood at the same time.
- Furthermore, it seems contradictory that Buddha Gotama and many other previous Buddhas did not wait for anyone else.

A Buddha is Eternal?

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8. The story gets even more fascinating in Chapter 16 (presumably as a different writer of the *sutrā* comes up with another idea). That is when the Buddha Gotama reveals that he is an eternal being. He had attained the Buddhahood an incalculably distant time in the past. Even though he seems to pass away at times to *nirvāna* (Sanskrit word for *Nibbāna*), he periodically makes appearances in the world.

- This declaration makes the Buddha more like a Creator God, who has been there at all times! And there is no discussion on the issue of whether there was a beginning to this world.
- It seems to me that the philosophers who wrote these Mahāyāna *sutras* had no idea of the concept of *Nibbāna*! By the very definition, the whole idea of attaining *Nibbāna* is to dissociate from this suffering-filled material world: There are several posts at this site ranging from, "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?" to "What are Rūpa? – Relation to Nibbāna" on the concept of *Nibbāna*.
- Then there is the issue of there being other Buddhas present at that assembly too. And they all seem to be "at the same level." Thus the question arises as to who was the first Buddha and then why those other Buddhas "did not wait until everyone else was ready for the Buddhahood."

Absence of Key Doctrinal Concepts

9. Most of the sections of the *sutrā* hyperbolize the value of the single, great vehicle (Mahāyāna) to attain *Nibbāna*. That is in contrast to the three vehicles of *Sammā Sambuddha, Pacceka Buddha*, an *Arahant*; see #3 above. **There is no discussion on the actual distinguishing doctrinal concepts of the single vehicle, other than just saying that it has the advantage of "easy accessibility of the Buddhahood."** What makes this "single-vehicle" approach different from the original "three-vehicle" approach in terms of details in Dhamma? For example, does it have a new way of describing the Noble Eightfold Path, *Paṭicca Samuppāda*, or the Four Noble Truths?

- The *sutrā*, like many other Sanskrit *sutrās*, only mentions those critical foundational concepts of Buddha Dhamma in passing. There is no discussion on them, let alone pointing any difference from the original doctrine. **I am amazed that no one even refers to this glaringly obvious point. What sets the "single-vehicle" approach apart from the original "three-vehicle" approach other than the name change?**
- But the real problem is that in changing some key concepts. For example, getting rid of the *Arahant* concept and making the Buddha effectively a Creator God. This *sutrā* paved the way to distort the Buddha Dhamma for generations to come.
- In terms of the necessary conditions set forth by the Buddha, does this *sutrā* clarify how to reduce greed, hate, and ignorance? Can anyone point to such aspects? Other than the usage of grandiose descriptions, there is nothing substantial in terms of doctrine, let alone a revised doctrine. All it does is to gravely distort foundational concepts like *Nibbāna*, *Buddhahood*, and *Arahanthood* with the concept of a "single-vehicle".

Numerous Untruths, Inconsistencies, and Exaggerations

10. There are so many untruths, inconsistencies, and exaggerations in this *sutrā* that I only have space in this essay to point out the gross problems that are vividly displayed. That is why the post is a "focused analysis."

- Here is an English translation of the *sutrā* available online, so that anyone can peruse through and see the apparent difference between this *sutrā* and any Pāli *sutta* that is in the *Tipiṭaka*: WebLink: PURIFYMIND: Lotus Sutra
- One could compare this *sutrā* with the actual Pāli *suttā* that I started discussing; see, "Sutta – Introduction," and the posts on the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* below that.
- I must emphasize that one needs to evaluate this *sutrā* in the context of the profound and self-consistent Buddha Dhamma. One can get a glimpse of this by examining the "Key Dhamma Concepts," "Paticca

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Samuppada," and "Abhidhamma" sections at this website, where I have only begun to layout the teachings, especially in the Abhidhamma section.

11. I would be happy to respond (and to correct any legitimate errors in the analysis) if anyone can point out any problems with my analysis. Please send me a comment to lal@puredhamma.net.

- This analysis is consistent with the central theme of this website. To point out problems with both Mahāyāna and Theravāda versions as being practiced today. It is for the benefit of everyone that we should remove (or at least be aware of) all inconsistencies and untruths. Then the current and future generations will have a version of Buddha Dhamma that is close to the original version.

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13.10 What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?

Revised (added #6) December 28, 2015; November 26, 2017; December 16, 2017

1. In Mahayana Buddhism, there are books written about *Suñyāta* (actually it is *Suññāta* in Pāli) or emptiness. Mahayana Buddhism tries to make a big deal out of *suñyāta*, because their forefathers (those who started Mahayana tradition) could not understand the concept of *Nibbāna*. It is unfortunate that many people who are only introduced to Mahayana teachings (and are not aware of the original teachings of the Buddha) believe that *Nibbāna* is an abstract concept.

- However, *Nibbāna* is a very simple concept if one understands pure Buddha Dhamma; see, "Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?."
- But it can be examined at deeper levels too: "Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World."
- See more at "Nibbāna."

2. What is emptiness?

- When an entity A is devoid of entity B, then it can be said that entity A is devoid of B, or empty of B. That is the emptiness or *suñyāta*.
- For example, if we take a water bottle and pour the water out, we say we have an empty bottle. But in reality there is air in the bottle, so the bottle is empty only with regard to water; it is not empty regard to air.
- Emptiness is relative. One has to say what it is empty of. There is no absolute "emptiness". It is meaningless to say "this is emptiness", because there may be something there that we are not aware of.
- For example, up until recently scientists thought deep space is "empty". But now they know that it is full energy. Still, one could say that "deep space is empty of tangible matter" to a good approximation.

3. The Buddha said when the mind becomes empty of greed (*rāga*), hate (*dosa*), and ignorance (*moha*) it becomes empty of those defilements: "*ragakkhayo Nibbanan, dosakkhayao Nibbanan, mohakkhayo Nibbanan*," and that mind has attained *Nibbāna*. That is emptiness, *suñyāta* with respect to defilements, and also with respect to anything material in this world of 31 realms; see below. VERY SIMPLE explanation, even though it is not easy to get there.

- When one attains the *Arahant phala*, one's mind becomes *sunya* of *rāga, dosa, moha*. But one still has *saññā* (perception), *vedanā* (feelings), etc. and lives like a normal human being until death.
- But his/her mind is devoid of greed, hate, and ignorance, so that h/she will not do any immoral act, under any circumstances.
- At the death of an *Arahant*, "this world of 31 realms" becomes devoid of any trace of that lifestream, except for the *Arahant*'s *nama gotta* (*mano* imprints or memory records, for previous lives; see, "Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra (Sankata)"); there is no rebirth. So that is another *suñyāta*.

4. There is a *sutta* in *Tipiṭaka* that is about *sunnata* (emptiness), and was delivered by the Buddha, called the *Cula-Suññāta sutta*. I actually wrote the original post before I knew about this *sutta*. When a friend of mine told me about the *sutta*, I was glad to see that the *sutta* described emptiness very similar to the way I described it above. This does show that the Dhamma is internally self-consistent.

- Please click the link below for its translation that I extracted from, WebLink: ACCESSTOINSIGHT: Cula-suññata Sutta: The Lesser Discourse on Emptiness. Normally, I come across many English translations that are bad and even erroneous, but fortunately this translation is fairly good.

The highlighting in the link below is mine, and I have made some comments:

WebLink: Cula-Suññāta Sutta

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There is no need to write books on emptiness that are full of meaningless words. The above *sutta* says it all.

5. In an online discussion forum in 2014, I saw a comment saying that emptiness describes *paṭicca samuppāda*. This was really a surprise, because in Mahayana texts it is not explained what *paṭicca samuppāda* is.

- I have not seen the *paṭicca samuppāda* explained in even a remotely sensible way in a Mahayana text, Zen, Vajrayana, or any other form. If you know of such a book, please send me a comment giving the name of the book (or any other source), and I would appreciate it.

6. Anything in this world of 31 realms arise due to *avijjā* (ignorance of the real nature of that world): This is the step, "*bhava paccayā jathi*" in *paṭicca samuppāda.* See the Paṭicca Samuppāda section for details.

- When *avijjā* is dispelled through the removal of greed, hate, and ignorance via comprehending Dhamma, NOTHING in this material world can arise, because it all starts with "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra*," i.e., via thinking, speaking, and doing things with *avijjā*.
- At *Arahanthood*, even the slightest bondage to anything material in the 31 realms is discarded, and all causes for anything material (which is the cause of suffering at a deeper level) to arise. This is real emptiness or *Nibbāna*. Also see, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."

7. The Buddha said, *"Yo paticcasamuppadam passati, so Dhammam passati"* or, "One who understands *paṭicca samuppāda*, understands Dhamma"

- The Mahayana sects have moved so far away from Buddha Dhamma, I cannot fathom why they still call it Buddha's Dhamma.
- It is very easy to get the idea behind *paṭicca samuppāda*, because it is in the words; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppada"," and follow-up posts. Buddha Dhamma is all about cause and effects, and that is what is described in *paṭicca samuppāda*.

8. There is a deeper way to analyze *Suññata.* However, one needs to know the meanings of the Three Characteristics of Nature (*Tilakkhaṇa* or *anicca, dukkha, anatta*) first. It is not possible to attain *Nibbāna* without knowing *Tilakkhaṇa* or the real nature of this world; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

- One can get to *Nibbāna* (also called *vimokkha*) via contemplating on *anicca, dikkha*, or *anatta* (of course they are inter-related). Contemplation of *anicca* leads to *animitta vimokkha*. Contemplation of *dukkha* leads to *appanita vimokkha*. Contemplation of *anatta* leads to *suññata vimokkha*. [***vimokkha*** : *(m.)* liberation, deliverance; release; emancipation.] [The 3 liberations are: 1. the conditionless (or signless) liberation (*animitta-vimokkha*), 2. the desireless liberation (*apanihita-vimokkha*), 3. the emptiness (or voidless) liberation (*suññatā-vimokkha*).]
- However, regardless of the path taken, the end result is the same: one gets to *Nibbāna*, release (or freedom) from this world.

9. Finally, at the very basic level, *Nibbāna* means getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance. That REQUIRES comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* or the real nature this world.

- Put in a different way, greed, hate, and ignorance need to be removed via *Ānāpāna* and *Satipaṭṭhāna* meditations; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure." But those meditations need to be done with the comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*
- More details on the correct versions of those meditations can be found at: "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" and "Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."

Next, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline", …….

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13.11 Incorrect Theravada Interpretations – Historical Timeline

April 29, 2017

1. Degradation of *Theravāda* Buddha Dhamma occurred gradually over the past 1500 years, but two drastic changes took place during that time: (i) Buddhaghosa's introduction of Hindu meditation techniques 1500 years ago, (ii) misinterpretation of *anicca* and *anatta* by the European scholars when they translated both *Tipiṭaka* and *Visuddhimagga* to English in the late 1800's.

- In several posts following this post in this section, I will provide evidence for the above (see bullet #7 below).
- In this post I will discuss the historical timeline, which is critical to the discussion. I have combined two previous posts, "Theravada: Problems with Current Interpretations of Key Concepts" and "Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka – End of Sinhala Commentaries" (and removed them) to come with this more concise post.
- As I explained in earlier posts in this section, much worse distortions to Buddha Dhamma took place with branching out of various sects based on Mahayana, Zen, and Tibetan (*Vajrayana*). It started with the rise of Mahayana in India about 500 years after the Buddha. Here we are focusing only on ***Theravāda* Buddha Dhamma.**

2. Here we look at the timeline of Theravāda Buddha Dhamma from the beginning, and see whether we can discern when the pure Dhamma started going underground. There are a few historical facts that most people agree on.

(BCE = Before Current Era, CE = Current Era = AD):

- **563 – 483 BCE:** Buddha Gotama
- **377-307 BCE**: The city of Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, was established by King Pandukabhaya. But there is evidence that human colonization in Sri Lanka goes back to at least 30,000 years; see the detailed article on Sri Lanka on Wikipedia : WebLink: Wikipedia: History of Sri Lanka
- **247 BCE**: Buddha Dhamma was introduced to the Sinhala Kingdom in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka by Ven. Mahinda Thero.
- **161-137 BCE**: For the first time in history, King Dutugemunu united all of Sri Lanka under one kingdom.
- **29 BCE**: *Tipiṭaka* (the version recited at the Third Buddhist Council —*Dhamma Sangayana* — around 247 BCE), was written down in Sri Lanka at the Fourth *Sangayana,* which was the last *Sangayana* attended by all *Arahants*. This is the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* that has survived to this date.
- **100-200 CE**: Ven. Maliyadeva, Last *Arahant* by some accounts, lived in Sri Lanka : WebLink: Wikipedia: Maliyadeva (However, it is likely that there have been "*jāti Sotāpannas*" who attained *Arahanthood* since then, but may not be that many).
- **100 BCE**: It is likely that Mahayana Buddhism actually originated when the earliest Mahāyāna sūtras to include the very first versions of the *Prajñāpāramitā* series, along with texts concerning *Akṣobhya* Buddha, which were probably written down in the 1st century BCE in the south of India : WebLink: Wikipedia: Mahayana
- **150-250 CE**: Life of Nagarjuna; considered to be the founder of Mahayana Buddhism. Nagarjuna's central concept was the "emptiness" (*shunyata*) of all *dhammas*. Most influential work is *Mulamadhyamakakarika* (Fundamental verses on the middle way).

2. It is clear that the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* that we have today has the original teachings of the Buddha, since it was written down by *Arahants*. However, Buddha Dhamma started to decline within 100-200 after it was written down.

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- Still, there was no significant impact on *Theravāda* Buddhism up to the writing of *Visuddhimagga* by Buddhaghosa around 450 CE.
- The other major work that influenced *Theravāda* teachings to date was *Abhidhammattha Sangaha* by *Acariya* Anuruddha, who was there around the same time as *Acariya* Buddhaghosa. However, since not many people are knowledgeable in Abhidhamma, it has not impacted *Theravāda* to the same extent as *Visuddhimagga.*
- The last, and most important misinterpretation took place much later, in the late 1800's when early European scholars started translating the *Tipiṭaka* to English. That was when the key Pāli terms *anicca* and *anatta* were incorrectly translated as impermanence and "no-self".

3. In order to first discuss the influence of Buddhaghosa, let us look at the timeline of events that led his visit to Sri Lanka roughly 950 years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. Here is a timeline compiled by *Bhikkhu* Nyanamoli, taken from his introduction to Ref. 1 (see the references below).

King Devanampiyatissa (307-276 BCE):

- Arrival of Ven. Mahinda in Anuradhapura and establishing Dhamma in the kingdom of King Devanampiyatissa.
- *Mahavihara* monastery founded by Ven. Mahinda.

King Vattagamini (104-88 BCE):

- Abhayagiri monastery founded by the King and becomes separate from Mahavihara monastery.
- Sensing insecurity, Mahavihara monastery writes down *Tipiṭaka* (away from the royal capital).

King Bhatikabhaya (20 BCE-9 CE):

- Public disputes started to break out between Abhayagiri and Mahavihara monasteries.

King Vasabha (66-110 CE):

- Sinhala commentaries on *Tipiṭaka* ended being recorded at any time after his reign.

King Voharika-Tissa (215-237 CE):

- King supports both Mahavihara and Abhayagiri monasteries.
- Abhayagiri adopts Vetulya (Mahayana?) *piṭaka*.
- King suppresses Vetulya doctrines.

King Gothabhaya (254-267 CE):

- King supports Mahavihara monastery.
- 60 bhikkkhus in Abhayagiri banished by King for upholding Vetulya doctrines.
- Indian Bhikkhu Sangamitta supports Abhayagiri monastery.

King Jettha-Tissa (267-277 CE):

- King favors Mahavihara monastery; Sangamitta flees to India.

King Mahasena (277-304 CE):

- King supports Sangamitta, who returns from India.
- Persecution of Mahavihara by King; its Bhikkhus driven from capital for 9 years.
- Mahavihara with its libraries of seven stories burnt to the ground.
- Sangamitta assasinated.

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- Rebuilding of Mahavihara.

King Sri Meghavanna (304-332 CE):

- King favors Mahavihara.
- Sinhala monastery established at Buddha Gaya in India.

King Jettha-Tissa II (332-334 CE):

- Dipavamsa composed.
- Some of Buddhadatta Thera's works.

King Mahanama (412-434 CE):

- Buddhaghosa arrives in Sri Lanka and composes *Visuddhimagga* and other works.

4. I really recommend reading the Introduction to the English translation of Visuddhimagga by Ven. Nyanamoli (Ref. 1). To quote Ven. Nyanamoli (starting on p. xxvii of Ref. 1):

"…Now by about the end of first century B.C. E. (dates are very vague), with Sanskrit Buddhist literature just launching out upon its long era of magnificence, Sanskrit was on its way to become a language of international culture. In Ceylon the Great monastery (Mahavihara), already committed by tradition to orthodoxy based on Pāli, had been confirmed in that attitude by the schism of its rival, which now began publicly to study the new ideas from India. ……In the first century C.E., Sanskrit Buddhism ("Hinayana", and perhaps by then Mahayana) was growing rapidly and spreading abroad. The Abhayagiri monastery would naturally have been busy studying and advocating some of these weighty developments while the Mahavihara has nothing new to offer. …….King Vasabha's reign (66-110 CE) seems to be the last mentioned in the Commentaries as we have them now, from which it may lie dormant, nothing further being added. Perhaps the Mahavihara, now living only on its past, was itself getting infected with heresies. ……in King Mahasena's reign (277-304 CE) things came to a head. With the persecution of Mahavihara with royal assent and the expulsion of its *bhikkhus* from the capital, the Abhayagiri monastery enjoyed nine years of triumph. But the ancient institution rallied its supporters in the Southern provinces and the king repented. The *bhikkhus* returned and the king restored the buildings, which had been stripped to adorn the rival".

"Still, the Mohavihara must have foreseen, after this affair, that unless it could successfully compete with the "modern" Sanskrit in the field of international Buddhist culture by cultivating Pāli at home and aboard it could assure its position at home. **It was a revolutionary project, involving the displacement of Sinhala by Pāli as the language for the study and discussion of Buddhist teachings, and the founding of a school of Pāli literary composition.** ……It is not known what was the first original Pāli composition in this period; but the *Dipavamsa* (dealing with historical evidence) belongs here (for it ends with Mahasena's reign and is quoted in the *Samantapasadika*, and quite possibly the *Vimuttimagga* (dealing with practice), was another early attempt by the Mahavihara in this period (4th century) to reassert its supremacy through original Pāli literary composition".

5. Here is another account of the destruction of the original Mahavihara during the reign of King Mahasena (277-304 CE) from Ref. 2 (p. 46): "..the Mahā-Vihara, the Brazen Palace, and all such religious edifices, built by generosity of devout kings and pious noblemen for the use of the orthodox Saṅgha, were razed to the ground. Some three hundred and sixty-four colleges and great temples were uprooted and destroyed, says an ancient chronicle (Nikāya-Sangraha, p.14), ..."

6. **Thus it is clear that the historical tradition of compiling Sinhala commentaries (on *Tipiṭaka*) was abandoned somewhere in the 4th century or even before that,** and many of the original Sinhala *Atthakatha* could have been burnt when the original Mahavihara was burned. A concerted effort was initiated by the Mahavihara to compile literature in the Pāli language to counter the onslaught by Sanskrit Mahayana literature in India that was benefiting the Abhayagiri monastery. The appearance of Buddhaghosa on the scene in the early fifth century accelerated this effort to compile Pāli literature.

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- More details can be found in the *Mahavamsa*, the Pāli historical account of the history of Sri Lanka compiled in the 5th century (Ref. 3).

7. In the next two posts, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background" and "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis," I will discuss the events leading to Buddhaghosa's writing of *Visuddhimagga*, and how it introduced the **first major contamination** of Buddha Dhamma by incorporating Hindu *vedic* meditations — breath meditation and *kasina* meditation.

The second major contamination — which has been even more damaging — was the incorrect translation of *anicca* and *anatta* as impermanence and "no-self". This is discussed in the last two posts: "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma" and "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."

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Next, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background."

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13.12 Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background

April 8, 2017; Revised April 29, 2017

1. *Acariya* Buddhaghosa has had a strong influence on *Theravāda* Buddhism for the past 1500 years. Before examining his commentaries — especially the *Visuddhimagga* (Path of Purification) — we will discuss some significant events that took place prior to his time, and why he came to Sri Lanka to compose those commentaries.

- The historical timelines up to the arrival of Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka is given in the previous post in this section: "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline."
- I have used material from the three references given below in putting together this post.

2. First, we note that only *Arahants* participated in the first four Buddhist Councils (*Sangayana*), and the fourth one was held at the Aluvihara Monastery (a rock temple) near present-day Matale in the Central Province of Sri Lanka in 29 BCE; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

- The *Tipiṭaka* was **written down fully** (as exists today) for the first time in this fourth *Sangayana* in Pāli with Sinhala script (Pāli does not have its own alphabet).
- So, it is important to keep three things in mind: (i) Genuine *Dhamma* existed in 29 BCE with *Arahants* also completing the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, (ii) What we have in the *Tipiṭaka* today is this version and therefore we can have confidence that the true teachings of the Buddha are in the *Tipiṭaka,* (iii) *Tipiṭaka* was written down in Pāli with Sinhala alphabet.

3. Secondly, many parts of the *Tipiṭaka* are in a condensed form as discussed in "Sutta – Introduction." **Today, there is a tendency to translate *Tipiṭaka suttā* word-by-word**, and this has led to significant confusion and many contradictions as discussed in that post.

- **Starting at the time of the Buddha, commentaries were written to expand and explain the key concepts that are in a condensed form that was designed for easy oral transmission.** We need to remember that the *Tipiṭaka* was not written down for around 500 years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, and during that whole time it survived only because it was in a form that was designed for ease of remembering; thus many details were omitted.
- For example, *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta* took many hours to deliver, but the *sutta* was condensed to just a few pages of verse. It is not possible to condense all that information in a *sutta* for mostly oral transmission that was available at the time. In those early days, *Bhikkhus* explained the details when they delivered *desanā* or discourses to the public.
- **Therefore, in addition to the *Tipiṭaka* being orally transmitted through generations, the details were also orally transmitted.** However, when Buddha Dhamma started declining around 100-200 CE, those details stopped being transmitted (there were not enough *Ariyā,* or those who attained *magga phala*, to pass down correct explanations). Of course, the easy-to-memorize verses of the *Tipiṭaka* were faithfully transmitted.
- That last bullet explains a key problem that we have today. Even though the *Tipiṭaka* remains intact, there have not been many *Ariyā* within the past hundreds of years to explain the key concepts in the *Tipiṭaka*; but thanks to late Waharaka Thero, that has changed; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."

4. Even though a few commentaries were composed in the time of the Buddha in Pāli (we have three in the *Tipiṭaka;* see below), most of them were written later on in Sinhala (especially after the time of Ven. Mahinda), when written language became more common.

- Up to the time of Buddhaghosa (after about 700 years from the time of Ven. Mahinda), there would have accumulated a vast number of such commentaries called Sinhala *Atthakathā* which means "accounts of the truth" (*attha* + *kathā*). However, it is likely that most of those were destroyed when the *Mahavihara* was burned before Buddhaghosa's arrival in Sri Lanka; see below.

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- **Buddhaghosa's task was to translate those from Sinhala to Pāli, but instead he just made a few of his own commentaries — especially the *Visuddhimagga* — where he incorporated his own *Vedic* concepts in them; see below.**

5. As given in the timeline in the post mentioned in #1, an important event took place before the arrival of Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka which led to the possible destruction of many original commentaries; this was the establishment of the *Abhayagiri Vihara* in Anuradhapura around 100 BCE. This led to degrading of Buddha Dhamma in Sri Lanka, which then was accelerated by the writing of the *Visuddhismagga*, as we discuss below.

- Over a number of decades, *Abhayagiri Vihara* became a rival to the *Mahavihara*, which had been the center of religious activity since Ven. Mahinda (King Devanampiyatissa).
- The arrival of a body of monks from Pallarama in India, who belonged to the *Vajjiputta Nikāya*, apparently started this schism between the two *Vihara* (p. 29, Ref. 3). This sect descended from those who were expelled from the *Theravāda* by Ven. Moggaliputta Tissa Thero at the Third *Sangayana*.

6. Later, during the reign of King Voharaka Tissa (215-237 CE), *Abhayagiri Vihara* adopted the *Vaitulya Piṭaka*. It is no coincidence that by this time *Mahayana* had become dominant in India.

- When the *Mahavihara* raised objections to this new development, King Voharaka Tissa appointed minister Kapila to investigate, and on his recommendation ordered all *Vaitulya* books be burnt.
- A key point to remember is that, "Literary activity in Ceylon (Sri Lanka) declined and, it seems, fell into virtual abeyance between 150 CE and 350 CE, as will appear below" (Ref. 1, p. xxiii).

7. During King Gothabhaya's reign (254-267 CE), the *Vaitulyan* heresy raised its head again, and the King again took action. He not only burnt their books, but branded 60 of their leaders and expelled them.

- Those expelled settled down at Kavira in South India. While they were there, a new recruit by the name of Sangamitta joined them.
- One day, while bathing, Sangamitta saw the branding on the backs of the others and learned what had happened in Sri Lanka. He vowed to take revenge.

8. Sangamitta went to Sri Lanka, and was able to win the confidence of King Gothabhaya, who appointed Sangamitta to be the tutor of his two sons.

- When King Gothabhaya died, his elder son Jettha Tissa became King, but he was not that much attached to Sangamitta, so Sangamitta went back to India. When Jettha Tissa died 14 years later, the younger brother, Mahasena, became King.

9. Mahasena was very much attached to Sangamitta, and Sangamitta decided to come back to Sri Lanka, realizing that his time to take revenge had come.

- On Sangamitta's advice, King Mahasena started a process that was very damaging to the *Mahavihara* and to the Buddha Dhamma in Sri Lanka in general. He prohibited providing alms to Mahavihara, and over time *bhikkhus* at *Mahavihara* migrated to other parts of the country.
- By this time, Buddhism in Sri Lanka was in decline due to other factors too, one being the rise of *Mahayana* in India. *Arahants* were scarce in the Island, and if there were some they would have been in remote regions.

10. For 9 years, Sangamitta lived in glory, plundering the properties of Mahavihara, and eventually burning down the seven story building with its libraries (p. 47 of Ref. 3). People became angry with what happened to *Mahavihara*, and a rebellion was started by a minister of the King named Meghavaranabhaya.

- However, before a battle took place, the minister was able to meet the King and explain why he needed to make amends to the *Mahavihara* to appease the populace. The King apologized and rebuilt the *Mahavihara*.

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- However, people were quite angry at Sangamitta, and he was killed on the orders of a queen of the King, probably without the knowledge of the King.

11. The damage had been done. It is also said that when the King rebuilt the *Mahavihara*, it was mostly those who were at the *Abhayagiri* who took residence at the restored *Mahavihara*. **Therefore, when Buddhaghosa visited the *Mahavihara*, the *bhikkhus* there could have been those originally belonging to the *Abhayagiri* sect.**

- Furthermore, It is possible that many of the original Sinhala *Atthakathā* were destroyed when the *Mahavihara* was burned to the ground. Even though copies of the *Tipiṭaka* were at many different locations scattered throughout the country, it is not known how many of the *Atthakathā* had copies.
- In any case, none of those original Sinhala commentaries is in existence today.
- *Mahayana* was taking root in India and possibly contributed to the degrading of *Theravāda* in Sri Lanka as well. Sanskrit became the "language of the pundits" (with many new Sanskrit *sutra* written by Nagarjuna, Vasudeava, etc), and Pāli was losing the battle; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline."

12. By the time of Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka (during the reign of King Mahanama between 412-434 CE), it is possible that some of those *Atthakathā* were still there.

- Ven. Nyanamoli says (p. xviii of Ref. 1), "..There are references in these works (by Buddhaghosa) to "Ancients (*Porana*) or "Former Teachers (*Pubbacariya*)" as well as to a number of Sinhalese Commentaries additional to the three referred to in the quotation given earlier. The fact is plain enough that a complete body of commentary had been built up during the nine centuries or so that separate Bhandantacariya Buddhaghosa from the Buddha.." and "..This body of material — one may guess that its volume was enormous — Bhandantacariya Buddhaghosa set himself to edit and render into Pāli (the *Tipiṭaka* itself had been left in the original Pāli).."
- By the way, "*Porāna*" is a Sinhala word (now *Purāna*), meaning ancient.
- Apparently, the detailed explanations in those *Atthakathā* were held in high esteem among the remaining Buddhists in India, and as we see below, this is where Buddhaghosa came to the picture.
- So, it appears that even though some of the Sinhala *Atthakathā* were burned with the destruction of the *Mahavihara*, some had survived in other locations and brought back to the rebuilt *Mahavihara*.

13. Buddhaghosa was born into a *vedic brahmin* family who lived close to the *Bodhi* Tree in India. He mastered the three *Vedas* and was a well-known *vedic* scholar. He was converted to Buddhism by a *Bhikkhu* Revata who lived in that region in India.

- Law (p. 6 of Ref. 2) writes that Ven. Revata told Buddhaghosa, "..The Sinhalese *Atthakatha* are genuine. They were composed in the Sinhala language by the inspired and profoundly wise Mahinda, who had previously consulted the discourse of the Buddha, authenticated at the three convocations (*Sangayana*), and the dissertations and arguments of Sariputto and others, and they are extant among the Sinhalese. Repairing thither, and studying the same, translate (them) according to the rules of the grammar of the Maghadhas (Pāli). It will be an act conducive to the welfare of the whole world". Malalasekara (p.66 of Ref 3) gives a very similar account of that request.
- Ven. Nyanamoli also gives a detailed account of how Ven. Revata recruited Buddhaghosa for the project on pp. xxxiv-xxv (Introduction) of Ref. 1. Also see, pp. 31-39 of Ref. 2 and pp. 64-69 of Ref. 3.

14. The important position assigned in the *Theravāda* tradition to the work of Buddhaghosa is evident from the following quote from Ref. 1 (p. xli):

- "..The doctrines (*Dhamma*) of the Theravāda Pāli tradition can be conveniently traced in three main layers. (1) The first of these contains the main books of the Pāli *Sutta Piṭaka*. (2) The *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, notably the closely related books, the *Dhammasangayani*, *Vibhanga Paṭṭhāna*. (3). The

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system which the author of the Visuddhimagga completed, or found completed, and which he set himself to edit and translate back into Pāli ..."

- Even today, many *Theravadins* just use the *Visuddhimagga* and don't bother to consult the *Tipiṭaka*.

15. Sinhala tradition assigns the arrival of Buddhaghosa in Sri Lanka 965 years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, according to Malalasekara (p. 66). This is consistent with the above timeline.

- Upon arriving at the Mahavihara in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka, Buddhaghosa requested those *Atthakathā* from the authorities. They were reluctant first, but after verifying that he was indeed a scholar, they gave him access to the books (Refs. 1-3).
- Law (p. 8 of Ref 2) says, "..Taking up his residence in the secluded Ganthakaro viharo at Anuradhapura, he translated, according to the rules of the *Maghdhas*, **which is the root of all languages**, the whole of the Sinhalese *Atthakathā* (into Pāli)".

16. This assertion that Buddhaghosa "**translated** Sinhalese *Atthakathā* into Pali" is obviously not correct.

- It is clear that he incorporated many of his *vedic* concepts (breath meditation, *kasina* meditation, etc) and made his own commentaries, as I will discuss in the next post.
- Furthermore, in the next post, I will point out obvious inconsistencies of the *Visuddhimagga* with the *Tipiṭaka* and with the remaining three original Pāli commentaries that are still in the *Tipiṭaka*.

17. Law makes the following interesting statement (p. 38 of Ref. 2): "..Buddhaghosa's task of translating was finished in three months. Having observed the *Pavarana*, he informed the chief of the congregation of the completion of his task. **The Samgharaja praised him much and set fire to all the works written by Mahinda in Sinhalese**..." We can make two observations:

- If indeed the work was completed in three months as Law says, Buddhaghosa obviously did not have even time to go through the whole of the Sinhalese *Atthakathā,* even if only a part of it was left.
- It is hard to believe that the chief *Bhikkhu* set fire to the original books. However, it is true that ALL those Sinhalese *Atthakathā* were lost after the time of the Buddhaghosa.

18. In the next post in this section, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis," I will discuss the key reasons why *Visuddhimagga* does not represent Buddha Dhamma.

- However, as we discussed above, all of the Sinhala *Atthakathā* were lost soon after the publication of *Visuddhimagga*, and *Visuddhimagga* became the sole source for explaining *Tipiṭaka* material.
- In fact, it became customary to just use the *Visuddhimagga* and not even consult the *Tipiṭaka* until recent times, especially until the "discovery of Buddhism" by the Europeans who started translating the *Tipiṭaka* as well as Buddhaghosa's works; see detail in the "Historical Background" section.

19. Furthermore, When Europeans started translating the *Tipiṭaka* (starting with Rhys Davis and others), they translated *suttā* word-by-word to English, a practice that continues today.

- However, It is not a good idea to translate Pāli *suttā* word-by-word, and those early commentaries were critically important in order to expand on the *Tipiṭaka* material. This is discussed in "Sutta – Introduction."
- In addition, those early European scholars made a huge mistake by incorrectly translating the Pāli words *anicca* and *anatta* as impermanent and "not-self"; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- This is why the work of late Waharaka Thero is so important. He was able to "re-discover" the meanings of the key Pāli words by perusing through the remaining three original Pāli commentaries of *Patisambhidamagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana*; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

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13.13 Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis

April 29, 2017

1. In the previous post in this series, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background," we discussed the reason for Buddhaghosa to travel to Sri Lanka. Here is a brief summary of that post:

- Many parts of the *Tipiṭaka* are in condensed form. Starting from the time of the Buddha, commentaries were written to expand and explain the key concepts in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- Most of those commentaries — at least from the time of Ven. Mahinda — were written in Sinhala language by Ven. Mahinda himself and many Sinhalese *Arahants* for over 950 years up to the time of Buddhaghosa. These were called Sinhala *Atthakatha* (true accounts).
- A certain *bhikkhu* by the name of Ven. Revata in India recruited Bhuddhaghosa to travel to Sri Lanka and translate those Sinhala *Atthakatha* to Pāli (This is detailed in Refs. 2-4 below as well).
- In this post, I will point out that instead of translating those Sinhala *Atthakatha,* Buddhaghosa incorporated his own *vedic* ideas into his commentaries in Pāli, especially describing *Ānāpānasati* as breath meditation.

2. Those Sinhalese *Atthakatha* disappeared from existence not long after Buddhghosa completed his work (it is likely that most of them were burnt with the *Mahavihara* well before Buddhaghosa's time). Regardless of what happened to those original *Atthakatha*, *Theravāda* tradition accepted *Visuddhimagga* to represent those original *Atthakatha* as well as the *Tipiṭaka*, and to date *Visuddhimagga* is regarded in high esteem.

- When he edited those Sinhala *Atthakatha* and composed the *Visuddhimagga*, Buddhaghosa — who was a scholar in *Vedic* literature — incorporated Hindu *Vedic* concepts to the *Visuddhimagga*.
- In particular, he replaced real Buddhist *Ānāpāna bhāvanā* with breath meditation and also introduced Hindu *kasina* meditation.
- Buddhaghosa also disregarded the importance of the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), but I will show evidence that he never distorted the meanings of them. That happened only when the Europeans translated the both the *Tipiṭaka* and the *Visuddhimagga* to English; see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- He also reportedly wrote other commentaries on *Tipiṭaka*, but they are not widely used.
- My guess is that Buddhaghosa did not consult the Sinhala *Atthakatha* even for the *Visuddhimagga*. Certainly, *Visuddhimagga* is not compatible with the remaining original three commentaries, as well as the *Tipiṭaka*, regarding meditation techniques.

3. As I discussed in the post, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background," pure Dhamma existed at least up to the fourth Buddhsit Council (*Sangayana*) held in 29 BCE in Matale, Sri Lanka.

- By the time Buddhaghosa arrived in Sri Lanka roughly 450 years later, drastic changes had taken place (with the Buddhist center of Anuradhapura *Mahā Vihara* burnt down once and a Mahayanist sect dominated the landscape for a while; see the above post) among other things.
- **So, the degradation of Theravāda Buddha Dhamma occurred gradually over two thousand years, but two drastic changes took place during that time: (i) Buddhaghosa's introduction of Hindu meditation techniques in the fifth century, (ii) misinterpretation of *anicca* and *anatta* by the European scholars when they translated both *Tipiṭaka* and *Visuddhimagga* to English in the late 1800's.**
- Even though there was a resurgence of Buddha Dhamma since late 1800's due to the efforts of those Europeans like Rhys Davids, Eugene Burnouf, and Thomas Huxley, unfortunately it was this "distorted Dhamma" that spread throughout the world in the past 200 years.

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4. Even though those old Sinhala commentaries were lost, three commentaries composed in Pāli (*Patisambhidamagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana*) at the time of the Buddha remained intact with the *Tipiṭaka;* see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

- After Buddhaghosa composed *Visuddhimagga*, *Theravadins* almost exclusively used *Visuddhimagga* instead of the *Tipiṭaka,* and those original Pāli commentaries were totally neglected.
- With help of those three original Pāli commentaries, Waharaka Thero was able to "re-discover" the original teachings of the Buddha over the past 25 years or so. Unfortunately, Wahraka *Thero* attained *Parinibbāna* recently; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."
- After the "re-discovery" of the true teachings of the Buddha by Waharaka *Thero* over the past 25 years or so, it became clear that several key misinterpretations crept into Buddha Dhamma over the past two thousand years. But the actual timeline of contamination was not clear.
- For example, it was not clear whether Buddhaghosa himself was responsible for the misinterpretations of *anicca* and *anatta.* In this post, I will show that Buddhaghosa was not responsible for that part. In the post, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars", I presented evidence that it was done by the Europeans pioneers when they assumed that the Pāli words *anicca* and *anatta* were derived from *anitya* and *anathma* in Sanskrit.

5. First, I will show evidence that Buddhaghosa did not distort the meanings of the words *anicca* and *anatta,* even though he did not realize the importance of the *Tilakkhaṇa*.

- **We need to remember that what Buddhaghosa was supposed to do was to take material from Sinhala *Atthakatha* and to compose his own commentary, *Visuddhimagga*, in Pāli.** One can purchase that original Pāli version, Ref. 1 below, from Amazon.
- When comparing the Pāli and English texts below, I will be using the English translation of Ref. 2.

6. On p. 271 of the Pāli Visuddhimagga (Ref. 1), for example, it says, "*Catutthacatukke pana aniccanupassi ettha tava aniccama veditabbam. Aniccata veditabba. Aniccanupassana veditabba. Aniccanupassi veditabbo*."

- This is translated in the book by *Bhikkhu* Nyanamoli (p. 282, vol. I) as, "But in the fourth tetrad, as to *contemplating impermanence*, here firstly, the impermanent should be understood, and impermanence, and the contemplation of impermanence, and one contemplating impermanence."
- So, in this case Buddhaghosa used the correct Pāli words anicca, but *Bhikkhu* Nyanamoli incorrectly translated it as "impermanence" following the misinterpretation by the European pioneers before him, as we discussed above.

7. Buddhaghosa's original Pāli version also states the relations among the three characteristics, as I discussed in the post, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations." On p. 617 of Ref. 1, "*Yadaniccam tam dukkha'nti (SN 3.15) vacanato pana tadeva khandhapancakam dukkham. Kasma? Abhinhapatipilana, abhinnapatipilanakaro dukkhalakkhanam.*" AND

"*Yam dukkham tadanatta'ti (SN 3.15) pana vacanato tadeva khandhapancakam anatta. Kasma? Avasavattanato, avasavattanakaro anattalakkhanam*."

- Which, combined to yield, ""if something is *anicca*, *dukkha* arises, therefore *anatta*", as I explained in my post too.

8. However, Bhikkhu Nynamoli, following the incorrect interpretation by the early European pioneers in the 1800's, translates those two verses as (p.663 of Ref.2): "Those same five aggregates are painful because of the words, '**What is impermanent is painful**' (S. iii,22). Why? Because of continuous oppression. The mode of being continuously oppressed is the characteristic of pain.", AND

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"Those same five aggregates are not-self because of the words, '**What is painful is not-self**' (S. iii,22). Why? Because there is no exercising of power over them. The mode of insusceptibility to the exercise of power is the characteristic of not-self."

9. Thus, it is very clear that it was not the Buddhaghosa who interpreted *anicca* as impermanent and *anatta* as not-self, but those early Europeans in the late 1800's. As explained in those previous posts, subsequent scholars from Sri Lanka and other Asian countries propagated those two incorrect interpretations.

- For example, those early Sinhala scholars like Malalasekara, Jayathilaka, and Kalupahana, learned Buddhism (and received Doctoral degrees on Buddhism!) from those European pioneers at universities in United Kingdom.
- One needs to contemplate on how the authority of those early Europeans on Buddha Dhamma. They were merely translating the *Tipiṭaka* word-by-word (using perceived etymologies to Sanskrit), as explained in those other posts.
- We must realize that translating *Tipiṭaka* is not the same as translating any other book from one language to another. One has to have a deep background in Buddha Dhamma to do that.
- **The key mistake made by Rhys Davids, Bernouf, and others, was to assume that Pāli *anicca* and *anatta* are the same as Sanskrit *anitya* (which does mean impermanence) and *anathma* (which does mean no-self).**

10. Now we turn to the issue of Biddhaghosa introducing Hindu *Vedic* meditation techniques to Buddha Dhamma in his *Visuddhimagga*.

Here is a key passage from Buddhaghosa's original Pāli *Visuddhimagga* (p. 254 of Ref. 1): "*Tattha dighama va assasantoti digham va assasam pavattayanto.* ***Assasoti bahi nikkhamanavato. Passasoti anto pavisanavatoti vinayatthakathayam vuttam.*** *Suttantatthakathasu pana uppatipatiya agatam. Tattha sabbesampi gabbhaseyyakanam matukucchito nikkhamanakale pathamam abbhantaravato bahi nikkhamati. Paccha bahiravato sukhumarajam gehetva abbhaantaram pavisanto talum ahacca nibbayati. Evam tava assapassasa veditabba.*"

Bhikkhu Nyanamoli correctly translates this passage to English as follows (p. 265 of Ref. 2): "Herein, breathing in long (*assasanto*) is producing a long in-breath. **'*assasa* is the wind issuing out; *passasa* is the wind entering in'** is said in the *Vinaya* Commentary. But in the *Suttanta* Commentaries it is given in the opposite sense. Herein, when any infant comes out from the mother's womb, first the wind from within goes out and subsequently the wind from without enters in with fine dust, strikes the palate and is extinguished [with the infant's sneezing]. This, firstly, is how *assasa* and *passasa* should be understood".

- So, above is concrete evidence that Buddhaghosa himself referred to *Ānāpānasati* as breath meditation. He specifically talked about the inhaling and exhaling air.
- However, actual Buddhist *Ānāpāna bhāvanā* is not breath meditation; see, "7. What is Änapäna?."

11. The second problem that Buddhaghosa introduced in his *Visuddhimagga* was to present mundane *kasina* meditation as a viable path to *Nibbāna*. He gives detailed explanations on how to make kasina objects in the chapters 4 and 5 in Ref. 1.

- For example, he goes to minute details in describing how to make an "earth kasina" starting on. 118 of Ref. 1: "..*Nilapitalohitaodatsambhedavasena hi cattaro pathavikasinadosa. Tasma niladivannam mattikam aggahetva gangavahe mattikasadisaya arunavananaya mattikaya kasinam katabbam...*"
- Bhikkhu Nyanamoli translates (p. 123 of Ref. 2): "..Now the four fruits of the earth *kasina* are due to the intrusion of blue, yellow, red, or white. So instead of using clay of such colours, he should make the *kasina* of clay like that in the stream of Ganga, which is the colour of the dawn..."

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- In the same way, Buddhaghosa goes to great details to describe how to make other types of *kasina* objects.

12. The critical point is that true Buddhist *kasina* meditation does not involve any physical *kasina* objects. If anyone can find a reference in the *Tipiṭaka* where it is described how to make a physical *kasina* object, I would appreciate receiving that reference.

- The true Buddhist *kasina* meditation was described by the Buddha to *Ven*. Rahula in the Mahā Rahulovada Sutta (*Majjhima Nikāya*, MN 62). It was explained to him as a part of *Ānāpānasati bhāvanā*, which can be done in many ways, but here by contemplating on internal body parts made of *satara mahā bhūta* and realizing that external objects are also made with the same *satara mahā bhūta.* Furthermore, that means there is nothing to be considered in one's body as. "me, myself, etc".

"*..Ekamantaṃ nisinno kho āyasmā rāhulo bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: "kathaṃ bhāvitā nu kho, bhante, ānāpānassati, kathaṃ bahulīkatā mahapphalā hoti mahānisaṃsā"ti? "Yaṃ kiñci, rāhula, ajjhattaṃ paccattaṃ kakkhaḷaṃ kharigataṃ upādinnaṃ, seyyathidaṃ—kesā lomā nakhā dantā taco maṃsaṃ nhāru aṭṭhi aṭṭhimiñjaṃ vakkaṃ hadayaṃ yakanaṃ kilomakaṃ pihakaṃ papphāsaṃ antaṃ antaguṇaṃ udariyaṃ karīsaṃ, yaṃ vā panaññampi kiñci ajjhattaṃ paccattaṃ kakkhaḷaṃ kharigataṃ upādinnaṃ—* ***ayaṃ vuccati, rāhula, ajjhattikā pathavīdhātu****. Ya ceva kho pana ajjhattikā pathavīdhātu yā ca* ***bāhirā pathavīdhātu, pathavīdhāturevesā****. Taṃ 'netaṃ mama, nesohamasmi, na meso attā'ti—evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya daṭṭhabbaṃ. Evametaṃ yathābhūtaṃ sammappaññāya disvā pathavīdhātuyā nibbindati, pathavīdhātuyā cittaṃ virājeti..*"

- The other three, *āpo, tejo, vāyo* are discussed in the same way there. One does not need to make *kasina* objects for true Buddhist *kasina* meditation, and as I said there is nowhere in the *Tipiṭaka* that discusses **preparing *kasina* objects**.

13. In the next post, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars," we will wrap up this section on "Historical Background." With that post, I would have summarized the historical background starting from the time of the Buddha to the present day. This is probably the only section that can be said to be "finished", even though I may edit the posts in this section as needed.

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Next, "Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma", ..

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13.14 Background on the Current Revival of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma)

Revised April 29, 2017; January 27, 2020

Critical Role of the British Civil Servants

1. Ironically, the current revival of Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma) is also due to the same reason that led to the decline in Buddha Dhamma in most Buddhist countries for hundreds of years. That decline was in the latter part of the second Millennium, i.e., the colonization of Asia by the Western powers starting with the Portuguese and ending with the British.

- The civil servants of the British East India Company came across ancient Buddhist literature in various Asian countries in the 1800s. Some of them realized the importance of these documents and started deciphering the documents themselves (e.g. Thomas W. Rhys Davids, 1843-1922.) They became motivated and learned Pāli and Sanskrit languages.
- Others sent documents universities in Europe. There, mostly French and English philosophers (e.g., Eugene Burnouf, 1801-1852) studied them and translated them to French and English.
- A thorough account of the efforts by the British civil servants in India, Sri Lanka, and other Asian countries in uncovering the "lost knowledge" has been given by Charles Allen in his excellent book, "The Search for the Buddha" (2003). It also covers restoration of historical Buddhist sites in India.

Early European Scholars

2. These Westerners realized that there was something profound in this ancient doctrine which exposed them for the first time to a religion that was not based on a Creator.

- Thomas Huxley captured the essence this new religion brilliantly as follows (Thomas H. Huxley, Evolution and Ethics and Other Essays, 1894, pp. 68-69): "A system which knows of no God in the Western sense; which denies a soul to man; which counts the belief in immortality a blunder and the hope of it a sin; which refuses any efficacy to prayer and sacrifice; which bids men look to nothing but their own efforts for salvation; which, in its original purity, knew nothing of vows and obedience, abhorred intolerance, and never sought the aid of the secular arm; yet spread over a considerable moiety of the Old World with marvelous rapidity, and is still, with whatever base admixture of foreign superstitions, the dominant creed of a large fraction of mankind".
- It is amazing that even at that early stage, when there must have been some confusion about the mythical aspects of especially the Tibetan and Zen Buddhist practices, Huxley was able to express the essence of Buddha Dhamma.

3. Based on their interest in the documents from Asia on Buddhism and Hinduism, Madame Helena Petrovna Blavatsky and Colonel Henry Steel Olcott founded the Theosophical Society in New York City in 1875. They subsequently traveled to India and Sri Lanka and became Buddhists.

- Olcott published "A Buddhist Catechism" in 1881. This book together with the "Light of Asia" by Edwin Arnold in 1871 (which went through 100 printings), led to much interest in Europe and America about Buddhism. Colonel Olcott opened several Buddhism-oriented schools in Sri Lanka in order to revive the religion. I was fortunate to be able to attend one of those schools.
- These efforts were subsequently augmented by a number of Sri Lankan intellectuals such as Anagarika Dharmapala, G. P. Malasekara, K. N. Jayatilleke, Narada Thera, Walpola Rahula Thera, David Kalupahana, and also by several more Westerners who were impressed by the Buddhist teachings to a point that they came to Sri Lanka, became monks, and wrote many excellent treatises on Theravāda Buddhism; these include Nyanatiloka Thera, Nyanyaponika Thera, and Bhikkhu Bodhi.

A surge of Zen Buddhism

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4. Even though those early publications by Rhys Davids, Arnold, and Olcott in the late 1800s were mainly on the Theravāda Buddhism, beginning in the early part of the 1900s, Zen Buddhism became an object of fascination in the West and continues to be a significant presence in the West.

- In contrast to the earlier introduction of (Theravāda) Buddhism to the West by Westerners, Zen made its way into the Western consciousness via the efforts of an elite group of Japanese intellectuals – most notably D. T. Suzuki. Suzuki, who came to America in 1897, wrote several books including "An Introduction to Zen Buddhism"; this book emphasized the transcendent and mystical nature of Zen.

5. Here is an excerpt from the above book by Suzuki, which clearly states the belief of the Mahāyāna thinkers that the original teachings of the Buddha are "primitive" and Mahāyāna provided the needed improvements (p. 1, footnote 1):

- "..to be accurate, the fundamental ideas of the Mahāyāna expounded in the Prajnaparamita group of Buddhist literature, the earliest of which must have it appeared at the latest within 300 years off the Buddha's death. The germs are no doubt in the writings belonging to the so-called primitive Buddhism. Only their development, that is, a conscious grasp of them as most essential in the teachings of the founder, could not be effected without his followers' actually living the teachings for some time through the variously changing conditions of life. **Thus enriched in experience and matured in reflection, the Indian Buddhists came to have the Mahāyāna form of Buddhism as distinguished from its primitive or original form.** In India two Mahāyāna schools are known the Madhyamika, of Nagarjuna and the Vijnaptimatra or Yogacara of Asanga and Vasubandhu. More schools developed in China: the Tendai, the Kegon, the Jodo, the Zen, etc. In Japan, we have besides these the Hokke, the Shingon, the Shin, the Ji, etc. All of these schools or sects belong to the Mahāyāna wing of Buddhism". (Highlighting is mine).

Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings

6. This is in sharp contrast with the basic presumption in Buddha Dhamma that only a Buddha can discover the laws of nature and those teachings CANNOT be improved upon:

I have discussed key problems with Mahāyāna teachings in "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis" and "What is Suñyāta or Suññāta (Emptiness)?."

- There is only ONE set of natural laws and those were discovered by the Buddha. As one goes through the content in this website, I hope one would be able to see that statement is justified. Also see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction"

Role of Dalai Lāma

7. More recently, Tibetan Buddhism (*Vajrayāna*) has gained prominence in the West. This is no doubt the result of the publicity of the Chinese invasion of Tibet in 1953 and the incredible personal charisma of the Dalai Lāma.

- It is unfortunate that the Dalai Lāma has to state that, "My confidence in venturing into science lies in my basic belief that as in science so in Buddhism, understanding the nature of reality is pursued by means of critical investigation: **if scientific analysis were conclusively to demonstrate certain claims in Buddhism to be false, then we must accept the findings of science and abandon those claims."**(highlighting mine) – cited from "The Universe in a Single Atom: The Convergence of Science and Spirituality" (2005).

8. Both the *Mahāyāna* and *Vajrayāna* sects are now realizing that some concepts in those forms of "Buddhism" have to change with the new findings of science. The fundamental teachings of the Buddha as stated in the Theravāda Dhamma, in contrast, remain unchallenged because no such "improvements" were incorporated to "keep up with the times and cultures".

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- The **Pāli *Tipiṭaka*** has remained the same since it was written down 2000 years ago. The reality is that science is only now beginning to confirm many things that the Buddha stated 2500 years ago; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction" and the subsequent links.
- Regrettably, the **translated and edited versions** of the *Tipiṭaka*, especially those by Acariya Buddhaghosa, have many misinterpretations.

Scientists' Role in Recent Years

9. Beginning at the end of the twentieth century, there is a renewed interest in "Buddhism" in the West, based on several books by Western scientists.

- It seems to have started with the publication of "The Tao of Physics" by physicist Fritjof Capra (1975). In the book he describes how, one day quietly sitting by the ocean, he realized that there may be a connection between the subtleties of quantum mechanics and Eastern "mysticism," in which he included "Hinduism, Buddhism, Chinese Thought, Taoism, and Zen." It appears that he was trying to make a connection between the world of matter described by quantum mechanics and the "mind" that is predominant in "Eastern mysticism." Even by the time of the 5th edition (2010), he had not realized that Zen was a branch of Buddhism, and had not been exposed to any Theravāda literature. However, the connection he was trying to establish apparently made an impact on the Western audience and this trend will hopefully continue and be directed in the right direction.
- There are others who have contributed to the recent interest in "Buddhism" in the West: "The Art of Happiness" and other books by Dalai Lāma, "The Embodies Mind" by Francisco Varela et al., "Confession of a Buddhist Atheist" and other books by Stephen Batchelor, are some examples.
- However, most these books have incorrect interpretations of Buddha Dhamma because they are heavily influenced by *Mahāyāna* Buddhism, which has totally veered away from the original teachings of the Buddha, as I have discussed in this section, "Historical Background."

Sorting Out the True Teachings of the Buddha

10. The books that I mentioned at the beginning of the essay and several other books by Ven. Ledi Sayadaw, Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, Ven. Walpola Rahula, and others (see the References below), are providing the much needed material on *Theravāda* Buddhism to the Western audience, even though they themselves use some incorrect interpretations due to **two main "contamination problems"**.

- One happened 1500 years ago when Buddhaghosa distorted *Ānāpāna Bhāvanā* as "breath meditation" and also introduced Hindu *kasina* meditation to Buddha Dhamma in his commentary, *Visuddhimagga*.
- The other problem of misinterpreting *anicca* and *anatta* as impermanence and "no-self" was done by those early European scholars who translated *Tipiṭaka* to English; see, "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?." These incorrect interpretations were adopted by the whole world since the late 1800s.
- **Therefore, all Buddhist literature published in all languages since the late 1800s have both these problems. This is a critical point, see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."**
- We need to resort to the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* that still contains the original teachings of the Buddha, and it is the goal of this website to systematically present those original teachings of the Buddha.

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13.15 Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars

April 29, 2017;revised next day (#12); revised August 14, 2018; February 3, 2020

Introducation

1. **Degradation of *Theravāda* Buddha Dhamma occurred gradually over the past 1500 years, but two drastic changes took place during that time:**

(i) Buddhaghosa's introduction of Hindu meditation techniques 1500 years ago,

(ii) misinterpretation of *anicca* and *anatta* by the European scholars when they translated both *Tipiṭaka* and *Visuddhimagga* to English in the late 1800s.

2. To understand the current situation, one needs to have an understanding of the historical background in this section, "Historical Background," but at least the posts starting with, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline."

- As I explained in earlier posts in this section, much worse distortions to Buddha Dhamma took place with branching out of various sects based on *Mahāyāna*, Zen, and Tibetan (*Vajrayāna*). It started with the rise of *Mahāyāna* in India about 500 years after the Buddha.
- Degradation of *Theravāda* Buddha Dhamma occurred gradually over the past 1500 years. Still, two drastic changes took place during that time: (i) Buddhaghosa's introduction of Hindu meditation techniques 1500 years ago, (ii) misinterpretation of *anicca* and *anatta* by the European scholars when they translated both *Tipiṭaka* and *Visuddhimagga* to English in the late 1800s.

Background for This Discussion

3. To set up the context for the present discussion on (ii) above, we also need to know at least the following facts (Detail in posts in this section).

- Pāli is a "phonetic language" (sounds give the meanings in most cases, especially for keywords). It comes from *Māgadhi* (*Maga Adhi* or Noble Path) language that the Buddha spoke.
- Furthermore, Pāli does not have its alphabet. The Sinhala script was used to write down the *Tipiṭaka* 2000 years ago. Details at. "Historical Background."

4. The root problem of writing a given Pāli word in English must have been a critical issue to address for those English, German, and French scholars who took on the daunting task of translating the *Tipiṭaka* in the late 1800s.

- **Now there are two separate key issues:** First is to just write the Pāli text in English, like writing "අත්ත" as "atta" instead of "aththa" as one would write in "Standard English." **A "*Tipiṭaka* English" convention was adopted before 1900**, to preserve the Pāli sounds and also to keep the text not too long. See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1."
- The second issue is even more important: The actual translation of the Pāli word to English. In this particular case of the word "අත්ත", they translated it as "self". That translation is incorrect, and now let us see why those early translators like Rhys Davids, Eugene Burnouf, and Edward Muller chose that meaning.

Tipiṭaka Had Not Been Translated Until Recently

5. Going back to our main discussion, *Tipiṭaka* was not even TRANSLATED to the Sinhala language until 2005. It had remained in Pāli language (written with Sinhala script) since first written down in 29 BCE (2000 years ago).

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- Before written down 2000 years ago, the *Tipiṭaka* was transmitted orally for over 500 years. It is composed in a special, condensed, way to make it easier to recite and remember.
- It is not POSSIBLE to just translate the *Tipiṭaka* word-by-word. That is discussed in detail in "Sutta – Introduction."
- Furthermore, Sinhala commentaries (called Sinhala *Atthakathā*) were composed to expand and explain the key concepts in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- But all those were lost and we only have commentaries written after about 500 CE (including *Visuddgimagga*) and they have many errors. See, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background."

Confusion on Pāli and Sanskrit Texts

6. **Those Europeans first came across Sanskrit *vedic* texts in India.** Later on, they found the Pāli texts in Sri Lanka, Burma, and other countries. This is very important to note.

- By the time of the arrival of English, Buddhism in India had totally vanished. There were no Pāli texts in India except those inscribed on the "WebLink: Wikipedia: Pillars of Ashoka," the stone columns made by Emperor Ashoka about 300 years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha.
- So, when they tried to interpret those inscriptions, they were very much confused, because that language (Pāli) was not in existence in India. Furthermore, there were Sanskrit texts which were written well before the Buddha's time.
- Another important point is that Pāli was never a widely-used language in India. It appeared in India for a relatively brief time while Buddhism flourished for a few centuries encompassing Emperor Ashoka's reign.

The Book "The Search of the Buddha" by Charles Allen

7. In order to get an idea of how those European pioneers struggled with first interpreting the inscriptions on Ashoka pillars and later translating the *Tipiṭaka* itself, I highly recommend the book "The Search of the Buddha" by Charles Allen (2003). His family had been in India for generations serving in the British governments and he was born in India.

- The book has a lot of information and also pictures of many historical sites in India before they were restored; even though not shown in that book, historical sites in Sri Lanka and other Buddhist countries were in similar bad shape. It is truly fascinating to read about the efforts of those who dedicated their lives to the effort of uncovering Buddha Dhamma.
- All those Asian countries (Sri Lanka, India, Burma, Thailand, etc) were in decline and Buddhism itself was in a much worse shape than today. Those European scholars are really responsible for the current revival of Buddhism.

8. However, the only bad outcome was that they mistranslated most of the key concepts of Buddha Dhamma. We cannot really blame them. They were doing their best and there were no *bhikkhus* (even in Sri Lanka) who were knowledgeable at that time.

- At least, in the beginning, those pioneers thought Sanskrit and Pāli were very much related. They are related, but not in a useful way. Sanskrit adapted many Pāli terms, but made them "sound sophisticated". But the true meanings were not as apparent.
- For example, *pabhassara* in Pāli Pāli became *prabhasvara* in Sanskrit. While the meaning of *pabhassara* can be discerned from its Pāli roots (see, "Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga"), as far as I know, that is not true for the Sanskrit word *prabhasvara.*

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- Another example is *paṭicca samuppāda* (see, "Paticca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda""), which was adapted to Sanskrit as, "*Pratittyasamutpada",* which sounds more sophisticated, but does not convey anything useful.

Wrong Translation of *Anicca* and *Anatta*

9. **The most significant damage was done with the translation of the two Pāli words of "*anicca*" and "*anatta*" when those pioneers took those two words to be the same as the two Sanskrit words "*anitya*" and "*anathma*."**

- Sanskrit word "*anitya*" does mean "impermanent", but that is not what is meant by the Pāli word "*anicca*." Similarly, Sanskrit word "*anathma*" does mean "no-self" but "*anatta*" means something totally different; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."
- **This itself has been responsible for preventing millions of people from attaining *Nibbāna* for the past 200 years.**

10. Let me show just two verses that obviously do not make any sense if "*anatta*" is interpreted as "no-self":

- Many people translate, "*Sabbe dhammā anattā*" as "all things are not-self." How can *dhamma* have a self in any case? For example, it is necessary to say that "Buddha Dhamma has no self?".
- Another example from the WebLink: Suttacentral: Anatta Sutta: "..*Rūpaṃ, bhikkhave, anattā, vedanā anattā, saññā anattā, saṅkhārā anattā, viññāṇaṃ anattā*."
- If we translate that verse with "*anatta*" as "not-self," it says, "*bhikkhus*, there is no self in any *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, or in *viññāṇa*..."
- How can an inert *rūpa* (or *vedanā, saññā,* etc.) have be "self" anyway? Those are nonsensical statements IF we translate "*anatta*" to be "no-self".

Sinhala Scholars Who Learned Buddhism from the Europeans

11. In order to complete the historical background relevant to this discussion, I need to point out a couple of more points.

- Following the original translations by Rhys Davis, Eugene Burnouf, and others, contemporary Sinhala scholars like Malalasekara (who was a doctoral student of Rhys Davis), "learned" Buddhism from the Europeans, and thus started using wrong interpretations.
- Other Sinhala scholars like Kalupahana and Jayathilake also learned "Buddhism" at universities in the United Kingdom (received Doctoral degrees on Buddhism), and wrote books in both English and Sinhala.
- Of course, scholars in other Buddhist countries did the same in their languages and the incorrect interpretations spread throughout the whole world.
- So, I hope I have provided enough information to at least contemplate on why the opinions of "scholars" are likely to be wrong, due to reasons beyond their control. Again, I admire and appreciate what Rhys Davids, Burnouf, Muller, and others did those days, and it was not their intention to distort Buddha Dhamma. It is not the fault of current scholars either.

Tipiṭaka was written on Ola Leaves

12. It is also important to note that mass printing was not available until recent years, and became common only in the 1800s; see, "WebLink: Printing press."

- In the early days, *Tipiṭaka* was written on specially prepared leaves and needed to be re-written by hand every 100-200 years before they degraded. So, we must be grateful to the *bhikkhus* in Sri Lanka

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who did this dutifully over almost 2000 years. **That served another important purpose. Any changes to Sinhala script over those two thousand years were taken into account!**

- Thus mass production of books became possible only with the new rotary printing presses that came out in the middle of the 1800s. By the time those key concepts had been mistranslated, printing had become widespread.
- WebLink: Wikipedia: The Pāli Text Society was founded in 1881 by Rhys Davids and started printing those translations. So, it was just unfortunate that it was those "distorted English translations" that spread throughout the world.
- Luckily, we still have the original Pāli *Tipiṭaka* and three original commentaries.
- With the help of those three original Pāli commentaries, Waharaka *Thero* was able to "re-discover" the original teachings of the Buddha over the past 25 years or so. Unfortunately, Waharaka *Thero* attained *Parinibbāna* recently; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."

Translation of *Tipiṭaka* to Sanskrit Was Prohibited by the Buddha

13. The Buddha had foreseen the problems of a direct translation of the *Tipiṭaka*. He warned not to TRANSLATE the *Tipiṭaka* to ANY LANGUAGE, and particularly to Sanskrit. There were two *Brahmins* by the names of Yamela and Kekuta who were experts on the *Vedic* Texts. They became *bhikkhus* and asked the Buddha whether they should translate the Pāli *suttā* to Sanskrit.

- That is when the Buddha admonished them that *Sanskrit* was a language with musical overtones developed by the high-minded *Brahmins* and thus it was not possible to convey the true meanings of *Maghadhi* (Pāli) words in Sanskrit; see WebLink: tipitaka: Chulavagga 5.33.
- In the SuttaCentral English translation, the Pāli word for *Sanskrit* (*Chandasa*) [*chandaso*: Conversant with the Vedas, a brahmin] is translated incorrectly as, "metrical"; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: 15. Minor matters (Khuddaka)" (at [*Now at that time Yameḷu and Tekula were the names of two monks who were brothers*]) which is the translation of "WebLink: suttacentral: 1. Khuddakavatthu." The relevant Pāli text is located close to the end, and starts as, "*Tena kho pana samayena yameḷakekuṭā nāma…*".

Role of the Commentaries To *Tipiṭaka*

14. Therefore, the *Tipiṭaka* was not translated to even Sinhala for 2000 years in Sri Lanka. Instead, commentaries were written in Sinhala to expand and explain the *Tipiṭaka*. Unfortunately, ALL those have been lost except for three commentaries in Pāli included in the *Tipiṭaka*. See, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background."

- However, the *Tipiṭaka* was translated to Sanskrit (despite the admonition by the Buddha not to do that), and it is likely that those translations were in even Sri Lanka within the Abhayagiri sector.

15. Recently I participated In two online forums briefly, and one of the criticisms published at the Dhamma Wheel and the SuttaCentral discussion groups was that I was not using "..international standards used by Indologists for over a century."

- With the above explanation, I hope one can understand why those standards established starting in the late 1800's have actually distorted Buddha Dhamma. Of course, it was not intentional.
- There are a few Pāli words that give different meanings based on how they are written and pronounced, and I will write about them in the future.

Pāli Is a Unique Language

16. I cannot emphasize enough that Pāli is unlike any other modern language. Meanings come from how one pronounces words. One cannot use etymology with the way one spell out (in English). Again to emphasize:

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- Pāli does not has its own alphabet. *Tipiṭaka* was written in Pāli with Sinhala script.
- Pāli does not have grammar rules, even though those European pioneers tried to invent grammar for Pāli, compose Pāli-English dictionaries, etc.
- Sanskrit words should never be used to interpret Pāli words. That is because there are many Pāli words that have been "Sanskritized" and that leads to much confusion. For example, there is no corresponding word for *anatta* in Sanskrit. But the Sanskrit word "*anātma*" is regularly used as the translation of "*anatta*." *Anatta* does not mean "impermanence," but "*anātma*" does have that meaning.
- While a Pāli-English dictionary could be useful in some cases, there are cases where they give wrong interpretations (*anicca, anatta, pabha*, etc); see, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?."

"*Saŋ*" Is a Unique Word in Pāli

A key Pāli word, the meaning of which has been hidden for thousands of years, is "*saŋ*" (pronounced like son). See the section on "Saŋ."

17. In the *Dhammapada* verse,

"*Aneka jāti* ***san****sāram*
san*dā vis****san*** *anibbi****san***
gahakaram gavesan to
dukkhā jāti punappunam"

- There are four places in the above where "*san*" comes in. This and another *gātha* (verse) capture the intense joy felt by the Buddha at the moment of attainment of *Buddhahood*. I will write a post on this in the future.
- The word "*san*" appears very frequently in the *Tipiṭaka*. But it is often masked by the fact that in many places it rhymes as "*sam*," as in "*saṃsāra*," "*sampādeta*," "*sammā*"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."

Critical Role of the Printing Press in Widespread Circulation of the Incorrect Interpretations

18. The printing press became widely available only after the rotary press was invented in 1843: "WebLink: Printing press." As pointed out above, Rhys Davids started publishing the English translations of the *Tipiṭaka* in 1881. **That led to the widespread circulation of the incorrect interpretations of those Early European scholars!**

- Up to that time, the printed version of the Pāli *Tipiṭaka* was on specially prepared ola (palm) leaves; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma." This was a laborious process as detailed in that post. Fortunately, *bhikkhus* kept re-writing the *Tipiṭaka* material in every hundred years or so, when the "old version" started degrading.
- The key point is that there were only versions of the original *Tipiṭaka*. It was not in wide circulation until the printing press was invented, just in time for the incorrect interpretations to be widely circulated. Rhys Davids started publishing the English translations of the *Tipiṭaka* in 1881.
- This is why there is no record of the correct interpretations of keywords like *anicca* and *anatta* in Sinhala. Those interpretations were in the original Sinhala commentaries (Sinhala *Atthkathā*.) It is safe to assume that the same holds in other Asian countries.
- The invention of the printing press was a key factor in spreading the incorrect interpretations that those early Early European scholars came up with (unintentionally)!

Also see, "Tipiṭaka Commentaries – Helpful or Misleading?."

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13.16 Tipiṭaka Commentaries – Helpful or Misleading?

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1. I recently came across the following essay on *Tipiṭaka* commentaries: "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Beyond the Tipiṭaka : A Field Guide to Post-canonical Pāli Literature". It describes the importance of such commentaries in clarifying key concepts in the *Tipiṭaka*. I will present evidence to the contrary. In fact, such commentaries have introduced contradictory explanations.

- Over the years, I have also seen heated discussions on key concepts of Buddha Dhamma like *anicca, anatta,* and *anidassana viññāṇa,* on internet discussion boards.
- I often wonder about the immense amounts of time people waste on discussing the meaning of key Pāli words in *Tipiṭaka suttā*. They go back and forth between different interpretations without reaching a conclusion. I hardly see any issue resolved fully in such discussions. Same topic is discussed year after year without much progress.
- One key factor contributing to this confusion is those commentaries themselves; they are not consistent with Buddha's original teachings in the *Tipiṭaka*. The other key factor is the incorrect translation of key Pāli words. Both these issues are discussed below.

2. I hope this post would be helpful in thinking about a new approach to finding the "correct teachings of the Buddha". **By discarding sources of incorrect interpretations once and for all**, one could save a lot of time and really focus on making progress.

- When I seriously started studying different versions of Buddhism several years ago, this was the strategy that I used to eliminate "corrupt" or "contaminated" versions. I eliminated Mahāyāna, Vajrayana (Tibetan), and Zen versions first. After I came across *desanās* of Waharaka *Thero*, I was able to eliminate Visuddhimagga and other relatively recent commentaries. These steps are discussed in detail below.
- Then I was left out with just the *Tipiṭaka* and its three ancient, original commentaries, which were composed during the time of the Buddha; see below. A consistent picture that is crystal clear has emerged for me.
- I hope others can follow the same procedure. **If everything can be understood within that framework, what is the need for more sources?** As the principle of philosophy "WebLink: wiki: Occam's razor" (or Ockham's razor) says, simplest explanation without any inconsistencies is the best explanation.

3. My key assertion is that the *Tipiṭaka*, together with the three original commentaries of *Patisambhidamagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana* are sufficient to clarify the original teachings of the Buddha.

- This was made possible by my Noble teacher Waharaka *Thero*, who was able to discern the true meanings of key Pāli words with the help of those three original commentaries; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."
- At this website I present this self-consistent picture that came out of the efforts of Waharaka *Thero*.
- Note that I am not asking anyone to take what I present at this website as the correct version. It is up to each person to look at the evidence and decide. As far as I can see, everything at this site is consistent with the *Tipiṭaka* and is also self-consistent. I encourage all to point out any inconsistencies, because my goal is 100% consistency.
- Self-consistency, i.e., making sure that there are no contradictions is the scientific procedure used also by modern scientists to evaluate the validity of a scientific theory.

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4. **There is no need to consult any commentary other than the three original ones mentioned above.** In fact, I have explained at length why the other key commentaries used today provide inaccurate and inconsistent explanations; see, "Historical Background."

The above mentioned essay (in #1) is a good example of some misconceptions on the importance and validity of *Tipiṭaka* commentaries. **When I say "commentaries" from now on below, they do not include the original three commentaries included with the *Tipiṭaka*.**

- In the following, the statements within quotation marks and highlighted in red are from the above essay, and are accompanied by my comments pointing out the flaws in those statements.

5. "The Tipiṭaka (Pāli canon) assumed its final form at the Third Buddhist Council (ca. 250 BCE) and was first committed to writing sometime in the 1st c. BCE. Shortly thereafter Buddhist scholar-monks in Sri Lanka and southern India began to amass a body of secondary literature: commentaries on the Tipiṭaka itself..."

- Not true. The original three commentaries mentioned in #3 above (*Patisambhidamagga*, *Petakopadesa*, and *Nettippakarana)* were compiled during the time of the Buddha, and those still are in the *Tipiṭaka* itself.
- Those three original commentaries are in Pāli, but there were many others written in Sinhala language, and all of those have been lost, as discussed below.

6. "Most of these texts were written in Sinhala, the language of Sri Lanka, but because Pāli — not Sinhala — was the *lingua franca* of Theravāda, few Buddhist scholars outside Sri Lanka could study them. It wasn't until the 5th c. CE, when the Indian monk Buddhaghosa began the laborious task of collating the ancient Sinhala commentaries and translating them into Pāli, that these books first became accessible to non-Sinhala speakers around the Buddhist world".

- This statement refers to those early Sinhala commentaries that have since been lost.
- **It is correct that Buddhaghosa's** Visuddhimagga — as well as other commentaries such as Vimuttimagga — were written in Pāli by Indian scholars.
- It is also important to note that incorrect translations of those Pāli words led to more problems when those were translated to English; see #7 below.

7. "These commentaries (*Atthakatha*) offer meticulously detailed explanations and analyses — phrase-by-phrase and word-by-word — of the corresponding passages in the *Tipiṭaka*."

- First of all, *Atthakatha* (a Sinhala word meaning "true accounts") were the ancient commentaries on *Tipiṭaka* written in Sinhala. **They ALL have been lost;** see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."
- **So, it is misleading to refer to those as the commentaries in question.** In contrast, the commentaries in circulation today are NOT those ancient *Atthakatha*, but more recent ones like Visuddhimagga.
- Buddhaghosa's mission was to translate the material in Sinhala *Atthakatha* to Pāli so that those *bhikkhus* in India could read them. **Unfortunately, he incorporated many *Vedic* concepts; see,** "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."
- **Further problems were introduced when Visuddhimagga was translated to English in recent times.** Today, both the original Pāli version of Visuddhimagga and its recent English translation are available on Amazon; see Refs. 1 and 2 below.

8. "Almost everything we know today about the early years of Buddhism comes to us from these post-canonical books".

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- This is completely false. In fact, those **post canonical commentaries** (such as Visuddhimagga) have "muddied the waters" than help.; see, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background" and "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis."
- What I am saying is to examine the evidence presented in those posts. **If one agrees, then one can just remove Visuddhimagga as a reliable source. That itself will solve half the problem.**
- **The second problem is the incorrect translation of key Pali words in those commentaries as well as in Tipiṭaka suttā;** see, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- As I have presented evidence throughout this website, the *Tipiṭaka* and the three original commentaries are enough to guide us.

9. "First, the chronicles and commentaries provide a vital thread of temporal continuity that links us, via the persons and historical events of the intervening centuries, to the *Tipitaka's* world of ancient India. A *Tipiṭaka* without this accompanying historical thread would forever be an isolated anachronism to us, its message lost in clouds of myth and fable, its pages left to gather dust in museum display cases alongside ancient Egyptian mummies..."

- **There are no myths or fables in the *Tipiṭaka*.** I would challenge anyone to show any evidence from the *Tipiṭaka*. This is an irresponsible and egregious statement.

10. "Second, almost everything we know today about the early years of Buddhism comes to us from these post-canonical books.."

- There is nothing in these commentaries that provide any significant information about the time of the Buddha. They may provide information about the time at which they were written. For example, Visuddhimagga was written about 800 years after the Buddha.

11. "One might reasonably wonder: how can a collection of texts written a thousand years after the Buddha's death possibly represent his teachings reliably? How can we be sure they aren't simply derivative works, colored by a host of irrelevant cultural accretions? First of all, although many of these texts were indeed first written in Pāli a thousand years after the Buddha, most Sinhala versions upon which they were based were written much earlier, having themselves been passed down via an ancient and reliable oral tradition..."

- This is the point I am making. We do know that, for example, Buddhaghosa distorted Buddhist meditation techniques, *Ānāpāna* meditation was misinterpreted as breath meditation and Hindu *kasina* meditations were also incorporated,
- For details, see, "Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis" and "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

12. "But what of the credentials of the commentators themselves: can their words be trusted? In addition to living a monastic life immersed in Dhamma, the compilers of the commentaries possessed unimpeachable literary credentials: intimate acquaintance with the *Tipiṭaka*, mastery of the Pāli and Sinhala languages, and expert skill in the art of careful scholarship. We have no reason to doubt either their abilities or the sincerity of their intentions".

- This is also a critical issue. As I discussed in those posts mentioned above, Buddhaghosa was a Vedic Brahmin and he distorted *Ānāpāna* to breath meditation and incorporated *kasina* meditations into Visuddhimagga; no such *kasina* meditations are to be found anywhere in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- Like so many late commentators, Buddhaghosa was just another philosopher like Nagarjuna. By the way, Nagarjuna was also a commentator, and his work led to the rising of Mahāyāna version of Buddhism.
- I have discussed the drawbacks in Mahāyāna; see, for example, "Key Problems with Mahāyāna Teachings" and "Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis."

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- Same kind of arguments can be applied to Tibetan Buddhism (Vajrayāna) and Chinese Zen Buddhism; all these are off-shoots of the original teachings in the *Tipiṭaka*; see, "Historical Background." In fact, it is well-worth the time to read this section before coming to any conclusions.

13. "And what of their first-hand understanding of Dhamma: if the commentators were scholars first and foremost, would they have had sufficient meditative experience to write with authority on the subject of meditation? This is more problematic".

- This is the only statement that I agree with. They were just "scholars" and philosophers, who had not made any progress in actual practice.
- This is true today as well. Many "scholars" have written books on Buddha Dhamma without having any significant progress in following the Noble Path. In fact, many are not even nominally Buddhists; some are "secular Buddhists" who do not believe in rebirth or *Nibbāna*; see, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?."
- I am not trying to put them down. They do serve a meritorious purpose in teaching how to live a moral life. However, those books/journal papers/websites cannot be used to **clarify deeper teachings** in the *Tipiṭaka*.

14. A key point missing in the current discussion is that it is not possible to comprehend the key concepts like *anicca* and *anatta* without at least attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. However, these days, people tend to gauge the qualifications by checking only whether a given person is an "academic scholar".

- Just like only a practicing physician can truly understand and diagnose a patient, not one who has just studied medical text books.
- Only an *Ariya* (a Noble person) — who has practiced the true teachings and at least attained the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna* — can comprehend deep concepts like *anicca*, *anatta*, *viññāṇa*, and *saññā*. **One cannot fully understand such deep concepts by just studying or reading about them.** For example, see, "What is Saññā (Perception)?."

15. The most referred to commentaries (these days) are Buddhaghosa's WebLink: wiki: Visuddhimagga and Upatissa's WebLink: wiki: Vimuttimagga (to a much less extent). The original Pāli text for the latter was long believed to have been lost; for centuries, discussions about the text therefore relied on a 5th c. Chinese edition.

- As we have established, those later commentaries — including Visuddhimagga and Vimuttimagga — were written in Pāli.

16. Therefore, those late commentaries lead to confusion in two ways:

- One is the erroneous interpretations by the commentators themselves, as discussed above.
- The other is incorrect translations — initially done by early European scholars — in translating key Pāli terms incorrectly; see, for example, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars." This has made the situation even worse.

These are two critical points to consider by those who are tempted to refer to those late commentaries. I cannot emphasize the importance of those two points enough.

17. Then there are those who quote from Chinese *Āgama*. Even though those original Chinese documents COULD BE authentic, my point is that they were also derived from the *Tipiṭaka* and **thus serve no purpose as additional resources.**

- They could be valuable for those who are proficient in Chinese but cannot read Pāli, Sinhala, or English.

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18. Finally, to re-emphasize my main point: The *Tipiṭaka* — together with the three original commentaries included in it — are sufficient to clarify the original teachings of the Buddha. The goal of this website is to have such a consistent clarification of Buddha's teachings in English at one place.

- Using just the *Tipiṭaka*, I have also pointed out some current misinterpretations in Theravāda Buddhism, mainly due to the influence of Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga; see, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline" and posts referred there.
- There still could be some minor inconsistencies at the website, and I am appreciative of those readers who have pointed out some of them that have led to improvements. But I have high confidence in the correctness of key concepts.
- Please do not hesitate to comment on any inconsistency with the *Tipiṭaka* or within the website. However, for the reasons that I have detailed, please do not quote from any other sources.

References

1. **Visuddhimagga (The Path of Purification – Pāli Edition)**, by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa (Theravāda Tipiṭaka Press, 2010).

2. **The Path of Purification (Visuddhimagga)**, by Bhadantacariya Buddhaghosa and translated by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli (BPS Edition, 1999). The Introduction (by Bhikkhu Nyanamoli) provides a historical background.

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XIV Buddhist Chanting

- "Buddhist Chanting – Introduction"
- "Namaskaraya – Homage to the Buddha"
- "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha"
- "The Five Precepts – Panca Sīla"
- "Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text)"
- "Sadhu – Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind)"

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14.1 Buddhist Chanting – Introduction

1. This section on Chanting may be helpful in cultivating *saddhā* (faith). For those who believe that there is no value in these "ritual-like" procedures, it may be a good idea to read the post, "Panca Indriya and Panca Bala- Five Faculties and Five Powers."

- If done with understanding, these are not rituals as in "*silabbata paramasa*".
- Therefore, as I keep adding items to this section, I will try to provide the deep meanings behind these "seemingly ritualistic" chantings.
- In addition to the aspect on the deeper meanings, there are subtle benefits in listening to chantings, especially those by *Ariyā* or Noble Persons. This is why I decided to add the sound recordings by the Venerable Thero.

2. The Buddha said that the mind takes precedence over everything else. Our speech and bodily actions are controlled by our thoughts. And these thoughts get their moral power from wisdom (*paññā*) and the joyful state (*pīti* or "*preethi*") of the mind.

- One can make a given meritorious deed much more powerful by doing it with joy and understanding. The most potent *kusala citta* is done with "joy and understanding" (a *somanassa-sahagata, ñāṇa-sampayutta citta*); see, "Javana of a Citta – Root of Mental Power".
- Recent scientific studies are beginning to illustrate the power of the focused mind; see, for example, "The Biology of Belief" by Bruce H. Lipton (2008) and "Biocentrism" by Robert Lanza (2009).
- Thus chanting done with understanding can have benefits, especially for those who have a dominant "*saddhā indriya*," or have a high-degree of faith in the Buddha or Buddha Dhamma.

3. **However, one should not force anything on the mind.** If chanting is not something that appeals to someone, then it should not be forced. Different people start off with different tendencies (i.e., they have a dominant faculty or power, see, "Panca Indriya and Panca Bala- Five Faculties and Five Powers"). Out of *sati, saddhā, viriya, samādhi,* and *paññā*, the dominant one should be the focus. As one cultivates the Path, other four will also grow.

- This is also related to the concept of how one's character (*gathi*) and habits change as one follows the Path. Then one's tendencies, associations, etc will also gradually change; see, "The Law of Attraction – Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- Thus one may want to concentrate just on the topics on the site that are appealing to oneself. Once in a while, one can take a look at other sections and see whether their opinions on those sections have changed or not.
- The main thing is to stay on the path of least resistance and the topics that can be easily comprehended.

Next, "Namaskaraya – Homage to the Buddha", ……

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14.2 Namaskaraya – Homage to the Buddha

1. In the *Theravāda* tradition, it is customary to pay homage to the Buddha (*Namaskāraya*; pronounced "namaskāraya), recite the Three Refuges (*Tisarana*, where "*ti*" is three and "*sarana*" means refuge or protection; pronounced "Thisarana") and undertake to observe the five precepts (*Panca Sīla*; pronounced "pancha seela") on visiting a place of worship or before starting a meditation session.

- Some people just do the Namaskāraya if they do not have time to recite the Tisarana (Refuge in Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha) or the Panca Sīla (five precepts; sometimes eight or ten precepts).

2. One can recite the following stanza three times by oneself or at more formal occasions (e.g., visiting a temple) a Buddhist monk administers them.

"Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa"

- A brief translation is, "I pay homage to the fully Enlightened One who found the truth about the existence and became free of all defilements".
- Another conventional translation is, "I pay homage to the Blessed One, the Exalted One, the fully Enlightened One".
- The deeper meaning is discussed below.

3. **Both interpretations are important.** For someone starting out, without much knowledge of Dhamma (but still sees the value in Dhamma) and thus wishes to pay respects to the Buddha, the conventional meaning itself is the dominant.

- But the Buddha himself said that the best way to pay homage to him is to learn Dhamma and to follow the Path. That is the more deeper meaning of the *Namaskāraya*. But they also have the reverence for the Buddha himself. As the knowledge in Dhamma grows, the second interpretation becomes clear, while not losing the first.

4. Here is a recital of the *Namaskāraya* by a Venerable *Thero* (volume adjustment on the right). It is normally recited three times:

WebLink: Listen to verse of : Namaskāraya

You can download the file below by clicking "DOWNLOAD". You can play it there or right-click on the screen and choose "save as.." to save to your computer.

Download

More audio files are at: "Sutta Chanting (with Pali Text)."

Namaskāraya – What Does it Really Mean?

"*Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammā sambuddhassa*"

1. Most Pāli verses have two (or more) meanings: one is the conventional ("*padaparama*") meaning, and the other is the deeper meaning that helps understand the deeper idea behind the verse. Unfortunately, most times it is the conventional idea that that is brought out when translating even whole *suttā*.

- In the case of *suttā*, a *sutta* that was delivered over an hour (sometimes many hours, like the *Dhamma chakka pavattana sutta*) is normally translated word-to-word in a few pages; see, "Sutta Interpretations."
- As I explained in the post, "Preservation of the Dhamma", most existing *sutta* translations are incomplete at best, and erroneous most of the time.
- Even the conventional meaning can be useful in some cases, like in *namaskāraya*, *Tisarana*, and the five precepts. For those who do not have a deeper understanding, the deeper meanings may not serve the

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purpose of bringing "joy to the heart" or "*citta pasāda*" (pronounced "*citta pasāda*"); for a deeper discussion on *citta pasāda*, see, "Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power."

- Thus for those who are new to the deeper meanings in Dhamma, the conventional interpretations may be a good start. As knowledge in Dhamma grows, the second interpretation becomes clear without losing the first, i.e., reverence to the person himself can also only grow as one learns how valuable his Dhamma is.

2. What we have here is a short phrase that can be correctly translated in a short essay. Let us see what is really meant by this verse.

- "*Namo*" means incline as in accepting something with this reverence because of its value; "*tassa*" means "to this" or "because of this". This is why we bend our heads to signify this.
- "*bhaga*" is to separate and "*vata*" is the usually translated as body, but it has more wider meaning to anything in this world. The Buddha, in trying to show that uselessness of clinging to one's body, advised to separate the body into 32 parts and see that there is nothing substantial in any of the parts. Even though we highly value our bodies, it will decay with old age, and will eventually give us only sicknesses and ailments. And it will last only about 100 years.
- In the wider sense, anything in this world can be divided into parts and be shown that there is nothing substantial in them.
- Once we see that it is unfruitful to cling our bodies (and anythings in general), we lose the craving ("*raha*" in Pāli or Sinhala) and become "*arahant*"(from "*a*" + "*raha*"). The word Arahant also comes from this meaning, i.e., someone who has given up craving for worldly things, by comprehending the true nature.
- As we saw in the post, "What is "San?" – the Meaning of Samsāra", "*san*" means accumulating worldly things. "*ma*" means become free of doing that. Thus "*sammā*" (*san+ma*) means "stop accumulating worldly stuff that will only cause suffering in the end".
- The accumulation of worldly things lead to preparation of future births or "*bhava*".*Sambuddhassa* (*san+bhu+uddassa*) means "remove from the root the causes for preparing bhava via accumulating *san*", i.e., become free of the rebirth process or to work towards *Nibbāna*.

3. Now we can see the whole verse:

"By analyzing my body and other worldly things with wisdom, I have come to understand the unfruitfulness of clinging to such things, and I incline to rout out the rebirth process (i.e., existence in the 31 realms) and attain *Nibbāna*".

- Here incline means one keeps "bent on attaining that goal". With deeper understanding of Dhamma one's resolve will be strengthened. As with most things in Buddha Dhamma, it is always about one's mind.
- The resolve has to come through understanding. There is no one watching, and no one else monitoring the progress; it is one's own mind that is doing all that.

4. Finally, the word *namaskāraya* (*nama+as+kāraya*, where "*nama*" is one's name, "*as*" pronounced like "us" means remove, and "*kāraya*" means doing) conveys the idea that one is making a resolve to get rid of the attachment one has for one's worldly things. It is a condensed version of the verse.

- Of course the conventional meaning of "*namaskāraya*" is "paying homage".

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14.3 Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Sangha

May 28, 2016 ; revised October 1, 2018; April 26,2020

1. It is traditional to start a meditation session with an homage to the Buddha (*Namaskāraya*):

- *Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*
- *Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*
- *Namo tassa bhagavato arahato sammāsambuddhassa*

and then to recite the supreme qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, and Saṅgha.

Here is a recital of the *Namaskāraya* by the Venerable *Thero*. It is normally recited three times: WebLink: mp3 audio: Namaskāraya – Homage to the Buddha

- The meaning of the above phrase is described in, "Namāskaraya – Homage to the Buddha."

The 24 Supreme Qualities

2. There are nine, six, and nine supreme qualities attributed to the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha respectively.

- These are listed and discussed in several suttā in the *Dīgha Nikāya* of the *Tipiṭaka*.
- For example, see, "10. *Dhammādāsadhammapariyāya*" section of the "Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta (DN 16)."
- The Buddha tells Ven. Ananda that when one becomes a *Sotapanna*, one would begin to understand these qualities and will have "unbreakable faith" in the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha (*Tiratana,* or Three Jewels.)

3. The 24 supreme qualities are called "*suvisi guṇa*," where *suvisi* means 24 and *guṇa* are the qualities. There are two main ways to interpret and utilize these 24 qualities.

- Chanting of these qualities can provide a calming effect for the mind and is normally done before a formal meditation session; see, "Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gati."
- Meaning of the word "*vandanā*" is "*va*" + "*andha*" + "*nā*", where "*va*" is for "*vaya*" or destroy, "*andha*" is for blind, and "*nā*" is for "*nyāya*" or the procedure for getting rid of moral blindness and attaining *Nibbāna*. The path to attaining *Nibbāna* is encoded in the *Tiratana vandanā.* We will discuss this in detail in a future post.
- Also, this chanting is alternatively called *Tiratana vandanā* (where *Tiratana* means the Three Jewels) OR *Tisarana vandanā* (where *Tisarana* means "guidance from the Three Jewels"). It is imperative to recite them correctly.

  WebLink: Listen to the verses of Tiratana Vandana
- The recital should break at places where there is a coma to state each quality separately, and should not break in the middle (e.g., no breaks in *anuttarro purisadamma sārathi)*; see below.

4. These qualities can only be stated partially, and can never be fully grasped. If a person with a mathematics Ph.D. teaches addition/subtraction to a first-grade student, that student cannot fully appreciate the capabilities or qualifications of the teacher. When the same student grows up and learns higher mathematics later from the same teacher at a university, he can appreciate the capabilities of the teacher more.

- In the same way, the qualities of the Three Jewels can be appreciated only with more learning of Dhamma. In fact, when I first wrote the original post on this subject more than a year ago, my understanding was much less than now. In the meantime, I have understood more and also experienced the power of the recital of these qualities.

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Supreme Qualities of the Buddha

5. **Correct Recital:** *itipi so bhagavā arahaṃ sammāsambuddho vijjācaraṇasampanno sugato lokavidū anuttaro purisadammasārathi satthā devamanussānaṃ buddho bhagavā'ti.*

- It is imperative to break the phrase "*itipi so*" to two words; "*so*" means "him."
- **Most people recite it as a single word "*itipiso*" and that gives not only an incorrect but a derogatory meaning: "*piso*" is for "*pisācha*" or a "lowly being like a *preta*."**
- "*itipi so Bhagavā*" means "because of (the following qualities) he (Buddha) is."
- The recital should break at places where there is a comma to state each quality separately, and should not break in the middle (e.g., no breaks in *Anuttarro purisadamma sārathi*); audio recording is given below.

6. There are 9 qualities of the Buddha stated in the above verse. Each quaity is said to be impossible for a human being to describe fully.

- As one learns more and more Dhamma, one truly begins to understand the value of a Buddha. It is said that an *Anāgāmī* can better understand the qualities of a Buddha than a *Sotāpanna*, and an *Arahant* even better.

7. Here are the list of the 9 qualities:

- *Arahaṃ* – "*A*" + "*rahaṃ*" or not a trace of defilement (attachment for sense pleasures) left.
- *Sammāsambuddhō* – – "*San*" + "*mā*" + "*sambhava*" + "*uddha*", or who discovered the way to dissociate from this suffering-filled world by removing "*san*"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."
- *Vijjacharaṇasampanno* – "*Vijjā*" (science or knowledge) + "*caraṇa*" + "*san*" + "*panno*", or perfectly knowledgeable about how the world arises (out of "*san*").
- *Sugato* – Ultimate in "*su*" + "*gathi*" or "good qualities."
- *Lokavidü* – "*Loka*" + "*vidü*", or having the ability to examine and explain any of the three worlds that encompass everything: world of mental formations (*Sankharaloka*), world of beings (*Sattaloka*), world of things (*Okasaloka*).
- *Anuttaro purisadammasārathi* – "*Purisa*" here is not a gender: *purisa dhamma* are the highest qualities; "*anuttara*" means unmatched. [***purisadammasārathi*** : the modesty of the man. ***damma*** : [adj.] tamed or trained. ***sārathi*** :[m.] a charioteer; a coachman; a driver.]
- *Satthā devamanussanan* – Teacher of celestial and human beings.
- *Buddho* – Perfectly Enlightened, uprooted all "*bhava*".
- *Bhagavā* or *Bhagavath* – "*Bha*" + "*ga*" + "*vatha*" – Able to examine a living being's origin in many different ways. Here "*Bha*" is *bhava* or existence and "*ga*" means connection or relationship, and "*vatha*" is the form of any being.

8. The above are, of course, not the only meanings. Since each word describes the infinite qualities of the Buddha, there are other meanings as well. Thus it is best not to really get hang-up on the translations above.

- It is best to get an idea of what these qualities and ALWAYS recite them in Pāli. As one's understanding grows, one will realize the meanings better.
- Pāli is a phonetic language. Meanings come via sounds. Thus what is imperative is to be able to recite the Pāli phrase above to the best to one's ability. I have provided the recordings at the end of the post, where my teacher *Thero* recites them as they should be recited.

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Supreme Qualities of the Dhamma

9. There are six supreme qualities of Dhamma:

"Svākkhāto bhagavatā dhammo sandiṭṭhiko akāliko ehipassiko opaneyyiko paccattaṃ veditabbo viññūhī'ti"

First, *Bhagavathā Dhammo* is the Dhamma taught by the Buddha.

- *Svākkātho* – leads to the removal of *sansāric* suffering via getting out of the 31 realms. Here "*svakkata*" ("*sva*" for "self" and "*akkata*" or "*akrutha*" or "*akriya*" means putting out of action) **means getting rid of the concept of a "me"** (*asmai māna*). It is not about whether a "self" exists or not; it is rather to realize that nothing in this world is worth to be considered "mine".
- *Sandiṭṭhika* – It **allows one to comprehend "*san*"** ("*san*" + "*diṭṭhi*"), the key reason for the existence in this world; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."
- *Akaliko* – This **Dhamma does not change over time**; it is the same Dhamma that is delivered by all Buddhas ("*a*" + "*kālika*"). Another meaning is that it leads to the removal of darkness (due to *avijjā*); here "*kalu*" means "black" or "darkness." [***kālika*** :[adj.] temporal = relating to time.]
- *Ehipassiko* – "*Ehi*" + "*passika*" or **defilement can be removed** ("*passika*") **when each *ārammaṇa* comes to the mind** ("*Ehi*"). One does not wait to remove defilement in a formal meditation session. Rather, one takes care of that at each instant when an immoral thought comes to the mind (with *ā\Ānāpāna* or *Satipaṭṭhāna*). [***ehi*** :[imper. of eti] come, come here.]
- *Opanayiko* – "*Opa*" + "*naiko*", where "*Opa*" means "*upata*" or "origins" and "*nyāya*" means the principle or the nature. Thus it means **one can comprehend how each existence (*bhava* and *jāti*) arises**.
- *Paccattam vedittabbo vinnuhi-* "*paccaya*" can be understood by looking at the origins (*veda* or *vedic*): *vedittabbo. "Vinnu"* means the hidden can be seen (like something hidden in a vessel by piercing it). Anything in this world arises due to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. **Thus, *Dhamma* allows one to "see through" how this whole world, together with all the suffering arises.**

Supreme Qualities of the Saṅgha

10. Here it must be noted that *Saṅgha* is not *bhikkhus*. *Saṅgha* means the Nobles or *Ariyā*, those who have attained one of the *magga phala*. (*Saṅgha* means one who has removed "*san*," i.e., "*san*" + "*gha*").

"Suppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho, ujuppaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho, ñāyappaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho, sāmīcippaṭipanno bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho yadidaṃ cattāri purisayugāni aṭṭha purisapuggalā, esa bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho āhuneyyo pāhuneyyo dakkhiṇeyyo añjalikaraṇīyo anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassā'ti.

2. *Bhagavato savakasangho* means Noble disciples of the Buddha. The first four phrases describe four Noble qualities: *Suppaṭipanno, ujuppaṭipanno, ñāyappaṭipanno,* and *sāmīcippaṭipanno*.

- *Paṭipanno* means "having such quality": "*Su*" means goodness and morality; "*uju*" means straightforward and not crooked in character; "*nāya*" means *ñāṇa* or wise; "*sāmicī*" means pleasant to associate. Thus it is easy to what is meant (succinctly) by those phrases. But as with all these qualities, it is not possible to describe them fully in words.

12. "*Yadidaṃ cattāri purisayugāni **aṭṭha purisapuggalā***" means thus described eight types of persons (*aṭṭha purisapuggalā*) of four Noble (*purisa*) lineages. Eight types come when each stage is divided into two, for example, *Arahant magga* and *Arahant phala*.

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13. Then starting with "*esa bhagavato sāvakasaṅgho*" (i.e., those Noble disciples of the Buddha), five more qualities are stated: *āhuneyyo, pāhuneyyo, dakkhiṇeyyo, añjalikaraṇīyo, anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ lokassa.*

- In those words, "*neyyo*" means *niyama dhamma* or core principle of nature; also called "*nyāma*." Then "*āhu*" means "grasped," "*pāhu*" means "inseparable" or "fused together", "*dakkhi*" means "see." Thus those disciples have clearly seen the core principles of nature (*paṭicca samuppāda*), have grasped them, and will not be separated from them ever.
- Because of that, they can dissolve and remove the causes (food) that fuel the *sansāric* journey: *anjalikaraneeyo*. Here "*an*" means "*āhāra*" or causes, "*jali*" is water (dissolve), and *karaṇyo* means "do". Another meaning of "*an*" is "horn" with sharp tips (as in a bull), which can hurt others; here *añjalikaraṇīyo* means dissolving them (by cultivating *Metta*) so that they cannot hurt others.
- *Anuttaraṃ puññakkhettaṃ: anuttara* is unmatched, *puñña* is meritorious, and *khetta* is for a field. Thus it means these disciples are like fertile fields, that can provide unlimited resources to others (just like a well-cultivated field can provide food for many).

Here is a recital of the *Namaskaraya* by the Venerable *Thero* (you need to adjust volume control on your computer). It is normally recited three times:

WebLink: Listen to the verses of Namaskaraya recital

Here is a recording of the *Tiratana vandana* by the Venerable *Thero* (You need to control the volume level on your computer)

WebLink: Listen to the verses of Tiratana Vandana

Pāli text (click to open the pdf file):

WebLink: PDF File: Tiratana Vandana

More audio files are at: "Sutta Chanting (with Pali Text)."

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14.4 The Five Precepts – Pañca Sila

Revised February 12, 2020

1. The five precepts (*pañca sīla*; pronounced "pancha seela") are normally recited after paying homage to the Buddha (*Namaskāraya*), and then taking the refuge (*Tisarana*), i.e., one says nine times that one takes the refuge in the Buddha, Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. In the following they are combined, as customary; see the previous post for pronunciations and details.

- Even for a Buddhist, it is not necessary to recite the precepts.
- It is important to keep in mind that JUST BY RECITING PRECEPTS does not do anything to purify the mind. The Buddha said, "*Yaṃ samādānaṃ taṃ vataṃ, Saṃvaraṭṭena sīlaṃ*," or "reciting precepts is a ritual ("*vata*"), moral behavior is attained by seeing and controlling '*san*'."
- However, it is good to recite *Namaskāraya*, *Tisarana*, and the precepts, to attain *citta pasāda* or calmness and joy of mind, especially before a formal meditation session. If one does it WITH UNDERSTANDING and RESOLVE, it can bring benefits.
- Furthermore, reciting precepts and *suttā* is preferred by those with developed *saddhā* (faith) *indriya*; see, "Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala – Five Faculties and Five Powers." For those who lack *saddhā indriya*, this may be something they want to consider doing.

2. It is important to realize that the five precepts have deep meanings, and thus should not be taken lightly; see, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them." The true meaning of the five precepts are discussed there.

- Only an *Arahant* is capable of strictly keeping those precepts (abstaining from all ten defilements or *dasa akusala*); **thus one needs to recite with the intention of doing one's best to keep the precepts. Otherwise, we will be lying from the outset.**

Here a Venerable Thero is reciting the *Namaskāraya, Tisarana*, and the five precepts with the audience repeating them (volume adjustment on the right):

WebLink: Listen to verse of : Pansil

Here is a pdf file with the text and translation:

WebLink: PDF File: Pañca Sīla (click to open)

3. To emphasize, these English translations are the conventional ("*padaparama*") or mundane ones and the real meanings are discussed in "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them." Also, while reciting, one needs to keep in mind that one is promising to do one's best to keep the precepts.

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14.5 Sutta Chanting (with Pali Text)

Revised August 14, 2016: Added more *suttā* at the end.

Following are recordings of three popular *suttā* by a Venerable Thero and the corresponding Pāli texts. At some point, I will make English translations. Most existing translations provide only the mundane ("*padaparama*") meanings.

Please note that a few *suttā* are translated and discussed in the section "Sutta Interpretations."

1. Karaniya Metta Sutta (volume adjustment on the right):

You can use the below link to open the file. You can play it there or right-click on the screen and choose "save as..." to save to your computer.

WebLink: Listen to verse of : Karaniya Metta Sutta

Pāli text (click to open):

WebLink: PDF File: Karaniya Metta Sutta

2. Ratana Sutta (volume adjustment on the right):

WebLink: Listen to verse of : Ratana Sutta

Pāli text (click to open):

WebLink: PDF File: Ratana Sutta

3. Mahā Mangala Sutta (volume adjustment on the right):

WebLink: Listen to verse of : Mahā Mangala Sutta

Pāli text (click to open):

WebLink: PDF File: Mahā Mangala Sutta

4. Here is a recording of **75 minutes of *pirith* (Sutta chanting)** including the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta.*

WebLink: 75 minutes of pirith (Sutta chanting)

5. Following are more popular *suttā*. Once a given *sutta* is open, you can play it or download from there.

WebLink: Dammacakkappavattana Sutta

WebLink: Sachchavibhanga Sutta

WebLink: Girimananda Sutta

WebLink: Bojjanga Piritha (Mahā Moggalana)

WebLink: Bojjanga Piritha (Mahā Kassapa)

WebLink: Khandha Sutta (Piritha)

WebLink: Mora Sutta

WebLink: Mettanisansa Sutta

WebLink: Vasala Sutta

WebLink: Atanatiya Sutta

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WebLink: Alavaka Sutta

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14.6 Sādhu – Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind)

Revised February 21, 2019

1. It is customary to say "*Sādhu*! *Sādhu*! *Sādhu*!" before and after reciting precepts, a meditation session, chanting sutta, or a meritorious act (by oneself or another). Since anything is done for a purpose in Buddha Dhamma, it is good to understand why it is done.

- *Sādhu* comes from "*sa*" and "*hadaya*" or a purified heart (not the physical heart, but the *hadaya vatthu* where thoughts arise).

2. It is important to realize that our minds are associated with the *hadaya vatthu*, which is in the *manomaya kāya* and is aligned close to the physical heart; see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?" This is why in a traumatic or joyful event we feel it in the heart, and not in the brain. Brain is like a computer, and when it is overworked, it causes headaches. But our feelings of love, hate etc. are felt close to the physical heart, in the *hadaya vatthu*.

How is one's heart (and mind) purified?

- "*Kāyena sanvaro sādhu, sādhu vācaya sanvaro; manasā sanvaro sādhu, sādhu sabbatta sanvaro*"
- "The heart is purified via moral discipline; one needs to act, speak, and think morally"

Thus when a meritorious deed is done by oneself or another, it is customary to say, "*sādhu*". It reinforces the "goodness" of the deed and one makes a determination to do more; the lightness of the heart can be felt if one does it with understanding.

3. Our hearts are darkened with greed, hate, and ignorance of *Tilakkhaṇa*. As we purify the mind, the darkness fades away and the "white light emerges"; it is like lighting a lamp gets rid of the darkness. Heart becomes joyful.

We get rid of greed, hate, and ignorance via staying away from the ten defilements:

- When we abstain from killing, stealing, and inappropriate conduct (including but not limited to sexual conduct), we are cultivating **moral discipline through bodily acts.**
- Abstinence from lying, vain talk, gossiping, and hateful speech leads to **moral discipline through speech.**
- When we forcefully control our bodily acts and speech, the mind will gradually calm down because we thus reduce *abhijjā [abhijjhā]* (strong greed) and *vyāpāda* (strong hate). Then we can cultivate *sammā diṭṭhi* via comprehending the *Tilakkhaṇa*; this leads to reduction of *micchā diṭṭhi* too (***abhijjā [abhijjhā]*, *vyāpāda*, and *micchā diṭṭhi* are the three *akusala kamma* done with the mind**). This is the step-by-step procedure that is discussed in the Bhāvanā (meditation) section.

4. Thus we can see that by saying "*sādhu*" mindfully, what we are doing is to make a firm determination to get rid of the ten defilements (*dasa akusala*) and thus to purify the mind and heart. Or, we are agreeing with a good deed done by someone else, and share the merits of that deed.

5. Now, what is the significance of putting the open hands together when saying "*Sadhu*!"?

- The gesture that we make by opening the hands fully, putting them together, and bringing them close to the heart or top of head also signify this determination. "With all my heart I make a commitment", or "this commitment stands above everything else", or "I agree wholeheartedly".

The strengthening of the fingers versus making a fist embody two basic characteristics of human nature.

- One makes a fist when hitting someone in anger. Also, someone caught doing a misdeed has clenched hands in addition to a bent posture (you have seen pictures of criminals being hauled off to jail in such timid postures).

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- In contrast, open hands indicate "I have not aggressive intentions" as when putting up hands indicating one has no desire to fight. Furthermore, as you may have noticed, people when say "*Sādhu*!" normally have their backs straight too, especially if they are doing with a joyful mind.

6. As mentioned above, one can make a given meritorious deed much more powerful by doing it with joy and knowledge; such thoughts should be there during that act and also when saying "*Sādhu*!" at the beginning and end. The most potent *kusala citta* are done with "joy and understanding" ("a *somanassa-sahagata, ñāṇa-sampayutta citta*"; see, "Javana of a Citta – Root of Mental Power".

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XV Dhammapada

- "Manopubbangamā Dhammā.."
- "Sabba Pāpassa Akaranan…."
- "Appamado Amata Padam…."
- "Najajja Vasalo Hoti……"
- "Arogya Parama Labha.."
- "Anicca vata Sankhara…"
- "Attā Hi Attano Nātho"

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15.1 Manopubbangamā Dhammā..

May 5, 2018; revised August 22, 2019; November 17, 2019; September 15, 2020

Mano pubbaṅgammā dhammā,
mano seṭṭhā manomayā;
manasā ce paduṭṭhena,
bhāsati vā karoti vā;
tato naṃ dukkhamanveti,
cakkaṃ va vahato padaṃ.

Mano pubbaṅgammā dhammā,
mano seṭṭhā manomayā;
manasā ce pasannena,
bhāsati vā karoti vā;
tato naṃ sukhamanveti,
chāyā va anapāyinī.

(Dhammapada verses 1 and 2)

1. These two verses encompass the critical idea in Buddha Dhamma: That mind is at the forefront. This whole world is made of the mind and has the mind as the basis for everything.

- *Mano* is, of course, the mind. ***Dhammā*** (plural, not Buddha Dhamma) are the **energies** that the mind generates (via *javana* power.) ***Dhammā*** means to "to bear" meaning "everything arises due to ***Dhammā***."
- Those *dhammā* then **give rise to everything (all phenomena) in this world** – whether living or inert. This analysis can go to profound levels. For the basis of that analysis, see, "What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!."
- *Pubbaṅgama* (*pubba* + *aṅga*) means what comes first. The first line (in both verses) says the mind creates all *dhammā* that give rise to everything in this world. The second line says, everything is prepared (*settā*) and is a manifestation of the mind (*manomayā*).
- The mind createes those ***Dhammā*** with thoughts (*saṅkhāra*.) That requires a lengthy explanation that can go to profound levels: "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" and "Worldview of the Buddha."

2. Depending on whether one speaks (*bhāsati*) and acts (*karoti*) with a defiled (*padutta*) or a pleasant (*pasanna*, Sinhala is *prasanna*) mind, those *dhammā* that are generated by the mind lead to (*tato nam*) suffering (*dukkhamanveti*), or happiness (*sukhamanveti*).

- In the case of a defiled mind (acting with *lobha, dosa, moha*), suffering will follow just as a wheel of a cart follows the footsteps of the ox pulling it (*cakkamva vahato padam*).
- In the case of a pleasant, moral mind (acting with *alobha, adosa, amoha*), happiness will follow one just as one's shadow follows oneself (*chāyāva anapāyani*).

3. These two verses can be interpreted in a mundane way, as outlined in #2 above. Any given task done with an un-defiled mind will always lead to a pleasant and joyous state of mind.

- There is a more in-depth interpretation. Thoughts, speech, and actions done with a defiled mind (*lobha, dosa, moha*) can lead to births in the *apāyā* and, thus, to a high degree of suffering. Those done with a pleasant mind (*alobha, adosa, amoha*) will lead to births in the "good realms," and will eventually lead to *Nibbāna*, end of all suffering.
- The first several subsections of the "Living Dhamma," discuss the fundamental aspects. That provides the background needed to go to the deeper issues discussed in the latter subsections there.

4. Now we can loosely translate the two verses as follows:

- All phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they all are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with an evil mind (i.e., engages in *dasa akusala*), then suffering (***dukha***) will follows just as the wheels of a cart follow the footsteps of the ox that is pulling the cart.
- All phenomena have mind as their forerunner; they all are mind-made. If one speaks or acts with a purified mind (i.e., engages in *dasa kusala* and *puñña kamma*), happiness (***sukha***) follows one like

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one's own shadow that always follows one. That is the source of "*nirāmisa sukha*," which eventually leads to *Nibbāna.*

I found a youtube video with the Pāli recital; it may take a minute to download. The two verses start respectively at 0.30 and 2.18 minutes:

WebLink: Youtube: Dhammapada - Yamaka Vaggo - Part 01

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15.2 Sabba Pāpassa Akaraṇaṃ….

Revised June 6, 2020; October 28, 2020

"Sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ,

kusalassa upasampadā;

Sacitta pariyo dapanaṃ,

etaṃ Buddhānasāsanaṃ"

(Dhammapada verse 183)

Let us see what is meant by the verse:

- *Sabba* = all; *pāpassa* = immoral deeds/speech/thoughts; *akarana* = (*a* + *karana*) = do not engaged in
- *kusalassa* = moral deeds/speech/thoughts; *upasampadā* = *upa* + *san* + *padā* = sort out "*san*" and embrace *kusala*; see, "What is "San?"
- *sacitta* = *sa* + *citta* = one's own thoughts; *pariyo dapanaṃ* = *pari* + *yo* + *dapanaṃ* = control at the onset (where "*dapaṇa*" means control and "*yo*" means origin and "*pari*" means around)
- Buddha *āna* = All Buddhas' *niyama* or principle. Another meaning is *Buddha* + *anusāsana* = Buddha's advice or his "doctrine."

Note: The process of "cleansing the mind" is what this website is about. See, "Sīla, Samādhi, Pannā to Pannā, Sīla, Samādhi" and "Living Dhamma."

Therefore, we can summarize as follows:

"Discard all that is immoral, what should not be done

Take in what is moral by sorting out "*san*."

Do this by controlling one's own thoughts (mind)

This is the doctrine of the Buddhas."

Here is a recording of the verse recited by a Venerable *Thero*; it keeps repeating several times:

WebLink: Listen to verse of : Sabba pāpassa akaraṇaṃ

When you click the "DOWNLOAD" button, it will open the file in a new window. Right-click on the screen and choose, "Save as.." to save the file to your computer.

WebLink: PureDhamma: DOWNLOAD the recording of "Sabba-Pāpassa-Akaraṇaṃ"

Next, "Appamado Amata Padam.…", ……

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15.3 Appamādo Amata Padam….

Appamādo amata padam
pamādo maccuno padam
appamattā na meeyanthi
ye pamattā yathā matā.

(Dhammapada verse Verse 21, *Samavati Vatthu*)

- *Appamāda* is "doing without delay" and *pamāda* is being delayed.
- *Mata* (pronounced "matha") is death, and *amata* is deathless, another word for *Nibbāna. Maccuno* (pronounced "machchuno") is also death, so is *meeyanthi.*
- *Pada* means "word" (most of these words are also Sinhala words).
- *Appamattā* is one who is not delayed, *pamattā* is one who is delayed.
- *Yathā* is "true status".

Now we can extract the MEANING of the verse as:

Hastening is a "deathless word"

Delay is a "death sentence"

One who makes haste attains the deathless status

One who negligent is like already dead

1. Thus someone who is delayed in seeking *Nibbāna* (either due to not knowing Buddha Dhamma or just procrastinates in following the Path) is like a dead person even while living. He/she will be facing innumerable deaths in the future.

- But someone who strives and attains *Nibbāna* has already reached the "deathless state". Because after attaining *Nibbāna*, all future deaths are stopped: No more future rebirths and thus no more deaths.
- One actually attains the "deathless state" when one becomes one of the 8 Noble Persons (*attha purisa puggala*). This is because once one becomes an *Ariya* (Nobel Person), one will never lose it, and will never be born in an *apāya*. Thus one can be said to "born" as an *Ariya*, when one becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi;* see,"Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyā."

2. There are two reasons for the urgency:

a. The time of death is unpredictable. Even a young, healthy person may die via an accident or other unforeseeable cause.

b. As we get old, our brains start to degrade and thus our minds will not be able to grasp the Dhamma.

3. Many Buddhists that I know say they want to "enjoy life while young" and then start focusing on *Nibbāna* at old age long after retirement. But one may not reach the old age, and even if did, the mind may not be able to grasp the deep message of the Buddha.

- Most people come to the conclusion of postponing practice, because they think attaining *Nibbāna* (or the *Sotāpanna* stage) is a mere act of following some rituals that can be done at any time. This would be a big mistake. The *Sotāpanna* stage is reached via comprehending the true nature of this world, *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*, and that needs a sharp mind and a lot of contemplation.

4. The Buddha was once traveling with some *bhikkhus* and they saw an old beggar couple. The Buddha told the *bhikkhus* that the man's name was Mahādana (meaning rich), and he was indeed a very rich person, and the woman was his wife; they both were of "tihetuka birth", i.e., they were born due to a very potent good kamma (done with all three good roots of non-greed, non-hate, and wisdom) from a previous life.

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- Thus, the Buddha said, if they started on the Path when they were very young, the man could have become an *Arahant* and the woman an *Anāgāmī*; if they started when they were young (20's), they could have become *Anāgāmī*/*Sakadāgāmī*, and if they started on the Path in the middle age they could have attained *Sakadāgāmī*/*Sotāpanna* stages. Instead, they lived a very lavish life, wasted their wealth, and became beggars. Now they were too old to comprehend anything.
- It is unfortunate to see many people today postponing the practice to their "old age". It is a good idea to start early and at least keep a slow pace.
- There are four factors that contribute to the capability of attaining *Nibbāna*: *Āyu* (age), *vaṇṇa* (lively), *sukha* (comfort), *bala* (ability.) These are due to past *puñña kamma*. See #13 of "Kaṇha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya."
- Some people may have sufficient *vaṇṇa* and *bala* even at a very old age. Thus a normal person cannot look at a given old person and say, "this person seems too old to attain *Nibbāna*". Only a Buddha can determine whether a person is too old to grasp the Dhamma. Yet, in general, as one becomes older the brain gets weaker.

5. Here is a recording of the verse recited by a Venerable *Thero*:

WebLink: Listen to verse of : Appamado

Next, "Najajja Vasalo Hoti..", …….

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15.4 Na Jacca Vasalo Hoti……

Revised May 2, 2020

"Na jaccā vasalo hoti, na jaccā hoti brāhmano

Kammanā vasalo hoti, kammanā hoti brāhmano"

(*Vasala Sutta*, Sutta Nipāta 1.7)

When I started writing this post, I erroneously assumed that the above verse is from *Dhammapada*. But it turned out that it is actually from the *Vasala sutta*. (It is the last verse of the *Sutta*.) However, I decided to put the post in the *Dhammapada* section. It is a succinct verse providing insight into the core message of the Buddha.

Let us look at the meaning of different key terms:

- "*Ja*" means birth and "*jaccā*" means "by birth" or "related to birth".
- "*Vasala*" (or "*vasalaya*" in Sinhala)is a derogatory term identifying someone as an "unworthy" person. Not merely "useless" but "someone not to be associated with", as if the person has a communicable disease. Even today, there are such "untouchables" in India even though their conditions have improved since 1995: WebLink: WIKI: Dalit.
- In those days, a *Brahmin* was supposed to be the opposite of a *vasalaya*, having the highest social rank. Of the 31 realms of existence, *Brahmā* live the highest 20 realms. They have the highest level of mental states (greedy or hateful thoughts normally do not arise in them.) Thus a *Brahmin* (who lives like a *Brahma*) is supposed to be of the highest moral values.
- *Kamma* is of course action, and *kammunā* means according to one's actions.

So, the meaning of the verse is clear:

"It is not the birth that makes a noble person or an ignoble person, but it is one's actions (the way one lives one's life) that determines whether one is a noble person or an ignoble person".

- Here one could substitute a Noble Person with a *Brahmin* and ignoble person with an untouchable, AND that does not come about by birth but by one's moral values.

We can make the following deductions using Buddha Dhamma:

- One is determined to be a Noble Person not by birth but by one's character.
- One change from being an ignoble person to a noble person and even a Noble Person (*Ariya*) by changing one's character (*gathi*). There are several posts on how to change habits; use the "Search" box on right to find the posts (just search for "habit" or "*gathi*"). This search box is a good resource to find relevant posts using a keyword.
- Sometimes a noble person can change to an ignoble person too, but a Noble Person (*Ariya*) never (even in future lives) changes to an ignoble person.
- Some people are very high-minded because of their birth, wealth, beauty, fame, among many other possibilities. But we need to be always aware of the fact that we have been born much worse than even the poorest human. We all have been born animals and worse. There is no reason to be high-minded for a span of 100 years in a rebirth process that has no beginning!
- Contemplating on the "bigger world view" with the 31 realms (with four realms of much suffering) can make one humble, and be compassionate; see, "Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and Society." During the hard-to-comprehend time scale of *saṃsāra*, we have been born in almost all of the 31 realms, good and bad.
- Also, we need to remember that even a lowly worm may have a potent *kamma* seed that could make it in its next life a king. (Even though chances are extremely low.) See, "How to Evaluate Weights of

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Different Kamma"), and if we do not act with wisdom we could have a rebirth worse than a worm. Actually, high-mindedness (*uddhacca*; pronounced uddachcha) can make one be born in a lower realm.

Next, "Arogya Parama Labha", …….

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15.5 Ārogya Paramā Lābhā..

Revised September 27, 2017; revised January 30, 2019; April 18, 2020; June 28, 2020

Ārogya paramā lābhā
Santuṭṭhiparamaṃ dhanaṃ
vissāsa paramā ñāti
Nibbānaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ

(Dhammapada verse 204)

Here is a recital by the Venerable Thero:

WebLink: Listen to Venerable Thero recital

1. As with many Dhammapada verses (and *sutta* interpretations), the conventional (or "*padaparama*") interpretation is the one that is widely known, which goes as: **"Health is the ultimate profit, happiness is the ultimate wealth, a trusted friend is the best relative, *Nibbāna* is the ultimate bliss".**

- The deeper meaning remains hidden for many. In some hospitals in Sri Lanka, the verse, "*Ārogya Paramā Lābhā*" is displayed in big letters to emphasize the benefits of being healthy.
- While it is good to abide by those conventional meanings while we live this life, we should also try to grasp the deeper meanings to embark on the Noble Eightfold Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma in Chart" and "What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma."

2. First "*parama*" means "ultimate" or "prominent". By the way, the word "*padaparama*" above means the interpretation that makes the "conventional meaning of a word prominent"; "*pada*" is "word". Now let us look at the other words in the verse.

3. "*Roga*" means "disease", so *ārogya* means not subject to disease. The bodies of all beings below the *Deva lokā* (human and below) are subject to disease. We cannot remove the possibility of disease until we remove causes for us to be reborn in the human realm or the lowest four realms, i.e., attain the *Sakadāgāmī* stage of *Nibbāna*. [***ārogya*** : [nt.] health.]

- "*Lābha*" is "profit". **The ultimate profit (better than any amount of wealth) of "disease-free" status is attained at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage of *Nibbāna*.**
- Actually "*ārogya*" is a Sanskrit word that has become standard. The actual line is, "*Aroga parama lābha*".

4. "*Santuṭṭhi*" comes from "*san*" + "*tuṭṭhi*" or removing "*san*." *Santuṭṭhi* and the more common Sinhala word "*santhosa*" means happy. When one removes "*san*," one gains the *nirāmisa sukha* of *Nibbāna* or "cooling down".

- "*Dhanaṃ*" means "wealth"; Sinhala word is "*dhanaya*." **Thus ultimate wealth is achieved by getting rid of "*san*" or defilements of greed, hate, and ignorance**; see, "What is "San"?".

5. "*Vissāsa*" comes from "*vis*" + *"āsā"*, where *"āsā" means "āsava"* or cravings. Thus it means getting rid of cravings that makes one bound to the *saṃsāra* (round of rebirths).

- "*Ñāti*" means "relative." **Thus ultmate refuge is reached via giving up the cravings for worldly things.**

6. The last one, *Nibbanaṃ paramaṃ sukhaṃ,* or "***Nibbāna* is the ultimate bliss**" is the only one that has the same meaning as the conventional or "*padaparama*" version in #1 above.

- Therefore, when one embarks on the *Sotāpanna magga*, one should be able to understand to the correct version.

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7. Buddha dhamma has no language, cultural, social barriers. But the Buddha advised never to translate *Tipiṭaka* to any language, particularly to Sanskrit, because the meanings of certain words can get distorted; see, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

- It is ironic that this is exactly what has happened during the past 1500 years or so, at least since Buddhaghosa wrote *Visuddhimagga*, probably even earlier. The most damaging are the replacement of the Pāli words *anicca* and *anatta* by the Sanskrit word *anitya* and *anātma*. The latter likely to have happened more recently. See, "Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars."
- On the other hand, the Buddha also advised that what really matters is to get the "meaning of a given word or phrase across". He said to use the words and phrases (and examples) appropriate for a given locale to convey the MEANINGS of these key Pāli words. While we should keep the *Tipiṭaka* intact in Pāli, we should interpret its content in a way that most conducive to get the ideas across depending on the audience.
- The correct way to interpret the *Tipiṭaka* material is outlined in "Sutta – Introduction."

8. It is interesting to note that this verse was a popular one among the *Vedic Brahmins* of the day of the Buddha. In the WebLink: suttacentral: *Māgandhiya sutta* (MN 75), it is described how Māgandhiya *brahmin* tells the Buddha that his teacher also taught him the same verse. When the Buddha asked him to explain the meaning that his teacher taught him, Māgandhiya gave the same interpretation that was given in #1 above.

- The Buddha told Māgandhiya that this *gāthā* (verse) came to the *Vedic* literature from the previous Buddha (Buddha Kassapa,) whose Buddha Sāsana had since disappeared: "***Pubbakehesā, māgaṇḍiya, arahantehi sammāsambuddhehi gāthā bhāsitā***."
- It is important to note that there had been three Buddhas before Buddha Gotama in this *mahā kappa*, and there will be another, Maithree Buddha, in the future after the present Buddha *Sāsana* disappears in about 2500 years.
- This is why only "conventional meanings" of pure Dhamma survives when *Ariyā* (Noble Persons) who can correctly interpret the deep meanings in the *suttā* and verses like this are absent for long times in this world. Either a Noble Person or a Buddha has to be born to bring back the true meanings.
- This is exactly what has happened during the past hundreds of years, where true meanings of many keywords like *anicca, dukkha, anatta, Paṭicca Samuppāda*, and *Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā*, have been not known; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

9. For those who like to dig deeper into *Tipiṭaka*, the "WebLink: suttacentral: Santuṭṭha Sutta (SN 16.1)" clearly illustrates that "***santuṭṭha***" is with one who lives a simple life, without minimal cravings, as **Ven. Kassapa** did: "..***Santuṭṭhāyaṃ***, *bhikkhave,* ***kassapo*** *itarītarena cīvarena, itarītaracīvarasantuṭṭhiyā ca vaṇṇavādī; na ca cīvarahetu anesanaṃ appatirūpaṃ āpajjati; aladdhā ca cīvaraṃ na paritassati; laddhā ca cīvaraṃ agadhito amucchito anajjhāpanno ādīnavadassāvī nissaraṇapaññho paribhuñjati..*"

- The WebLink: suttacentral: English and WebLink: suttacentral: Sinhala translations at the Sutta Central site are correct, for this *sutta*.

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15.6 Anicca vata Saṅkhārā…

Revised August 16, 2019; February 25, 2020; June 8, 2020; December 21, 2020

Aniccā vata saṅkhārā

Uppāda vaya dhammino

Uuppajjitvā nirujjhanti

Tesaṃ vūpa samo sukho

(*Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta*)

This verse is not in the Dhammapada, but it is a very common verse. In Sri Lanka (and possibly in other Buddhist countries), it is displayed at funerals to emphasize the "fleeting nature" of life. It has a deep meaning and explains why we face sorrow inevitably (because death is inevitable). We generate our future rebirths via our own (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra*! We need to stop creating *abhisaṅkhāra* (with *lobha*, *dosa*, *moha*) to attain the *Nibbānic* bliss.

- This verse was uttered by Sakka, the King of the *Devas,* just after the *Parinibbāna* (passing away) of the Buddha. It is in the *Mahā Parinibbāna Sutta* (DN 16) and also in a short sutta: "WebLink: suttacentral: Parinibbāna Sutta (SN 6.15)."

A common and incorrect translation is:

- All things are impermanent
- They arise and pass away
- Having arisen they come to an end
- Their coming to peace is bliss

Let us examine the correct interpretation of the verse.

1. *Anicca* is, of course "cannot be maintained to our satisfaction." It is NOT just impermanence, because even permanent things (relative to our lifetime) cannot be maintained to our satisfaction; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations."

Vata (pronounced as "vatha") here means "surely" or "indeed."

(There are other meaning for "*vata*": In the verse, "*yaṃ samādānaṃ taṃ* ***vataṃ****. Sanvaraṭṭena sīlaṃ*," or "reciting precepts is a **ritual**, moral behavior, or *sīla*, is attained by controlling "*san*." Thus, there "*vata*" means ritual. Another meaning is "**action**." One needs to pick the right meaning for the given situation).

We think, speak, and take actions based on our *mano, vacī*, and *kāya saṅkhāra.* They are all thoughts (we cannot even lift a finger without an associated thinking). Those *saṅkhāra* lead to *viññāṇa* via "*saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Strong *viññāṇa* produced via "*abhisaṅkhāra*" (or strong *saṅkhāra*) lead to future rebirths. But all births end up in death. See, "Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means" and "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."

- Thus the first line implies that any rebirth (which inevitably arises due to our *abhisaṅkhāra* cannot be maintained to our satisfaction. Any birth ends up in death and suffering.

2. *Uppāda* means to arise, and *vaya* means that arising can be stopped.

- But we can stop those things that lead to suffering to come into existence by stopping *saṅkhāra* from arising. That is *vaya*. That is the ultimate message embedded in Buddha Dhamma. *Dhammino* (or *dhammathā*) means the "Nature's way."

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- Thus the second line says, "those *saṅkhāra* are types of *dhammā* that can be stopped from arising," i.e., they are "*vaya dhammā*." That is also stated in another famous verse, "*vaya dhammā saṅkhārā."*
- The Buddha attained *Parinibbāna* (i.e., end of rebirth) because he was able to figure out how to stop *saṅkhāra* from arising (via removal of *avijjā*.)

3. *Uppajjitvā* means that which comes to existence (due to *saṅkhāra.*) Those things that come to existence in this world lead to suffering.

- *Nirujja* means those things will thus not arise anymore (by stopping *saṅkhāra* from arising.)

4. *Te* means "those," and thus "*tesaṃ*" ("*te*" + "*san*") means those (three) "*san*" or *lobha, dosa, moha;* see, "What is "San"?."

vūpa sama means "remove and get to *samādhi*." In the *Paṭisambhidā Magga Pakaraṇa* (*Jhāna Vibhaṅga* section) on p. 55, it explains that, "*vitakkavicārānaṃ vūpasamā*" means "getting rid of *vitakka* and *vicāra* and attaining *savitakka, savicāra*." See, "Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra." *Sukha* is happiness.

- Thus the fourth line says, "by removing *lobha, dosa, moha* (three bad "*san*"s) from our minds; we can reach (the ultimate) happiness or *Nibbāna*."

Here is a recording of the verse by the Venerable *Thero* (repeated three times; note the volume control on the right):

WebLink: Listen to verse of : Anichchavatha sankara

- This verse is a very good *kammaṭṭhāna* (meditation subject) for cultivating the "*anicca saññā*." One could recite the verse and contemplate its meaning. Think about all those loved ones who passed away and led to much suffering. And one's death is also inevitable.
- We have been through this process in perpetuity, being distressed as loved ones are lost and also thinking about one's own demise, at every birth.
- But there is a way to stop this suffering, by following the Path and stopping *saṅkhāra* from arising.
- Thus, instead of getting depressed about the inevitability of death, one WILL start feeling better if one can really cultivate the "*anicca saññā*"; see, "How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā."
- This *kammaṭṭhāna* will also cultivate the "*udayavaya ñāṇa*" or "the knowledge about arising and stopping the arising of a *saṅkhata."* See, "Udayavaya Ñāṇa."

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15.7 Attā Hi Attano Nātho

March 4, 2017; revised November 13, 2018; October 25, 2019

"Attā hi attano nātho
ko hi nātho paro siyā
***attanā** hi sudantena*
nāthaṃ labhati dullabhaṃ"

(Dhammapada verse 160)

This is an important verse where the word "*atta*/*attā*" (pronounced "aththa"/"aththā") is used with two very different meanings in two places within the same verse.

- **In the conventional sense**, "***attā***" means "a person".
- **The deeper meaning of "*atta*"** is "in full control", the opposite of which is *anatta* ("helpless") as in the *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Depending on the context, one needs to pick the correct meaning. In this verse, both meanings are used.
- When one attains the true "*atta*" state (*Nibbāna*), one has become "*nātha*," which is still used in Sinhala meaning "found refuge or salvation". As long as one remains in the 31 realms (this world), one is "*anātha*" (which is the Sinhala word for *anatta*) or "helpless".
- "*paro siyā*" means "outside oneself". Thus "*ko hi nātho paro siyā*" means "how can one find refuge outside oneself"?
- One becomes *atta* (*attano*) by cleansing (one's mind): *sudantena (sudda* means "clean").
- *Labhati* means get and *dullabhaṃ* means rare, and as we saw above "*nātha*" is attaining *Nibbāna*. So, *nāthanṃ labhati dullabhaṃ* means "it is not easy to get to salvation (*Nibbāna*)".

Therefore, we can translate the verse as follows:

"One is one's own refuge

how can another be a refuge to one?

one reaches salvation by purifying one's mind

getting to the refuge (*Nibbāna*) is rare"

Here is a recording of the verse recited by me (I could not find a recording by Venerable Waharaka Thero):

WebLink: Play Dhammapada verse 160

A detailed discussion on "*atta*/*attā*" is given in the posts, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?" and "Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?"

October 25, 2019: *Attā* is used in the sense of "a person" in many of the verses in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Attavagga" of the Dhammapada.

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XVI Sutta Interpretations

- "Sutta – Introduction"
- "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?"
- "Nikāya in the Sutta Piṭaka"
- "Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day"
- "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta"
  - "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure"
  - "Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction"
  - "Kayanupassana – Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)"
  - "Kayanupassana – The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)"
  - "Prerequisites for the Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā"
  - "What is "Kaya" in Kayanupassana?"
- "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)"
- "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta"
  - "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction"
  - "Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta"
  - "Majjima Patipada – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World"
  - "Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge)"
  - "Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages"
- "Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts"
  - "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma"
  - "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma – 2"
- "Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta"
- "Paṭhama Mettā Sutta"
- "Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) – Kammakkhaya"
- "Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)"
- "Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41) – Akuppā Cetovimutti"
- "Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) – Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering"

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16.1 Sutta – Introduction

Revised April 10, 2017; August 28, 2018; January 7, 2019; December 8, 2020

Dhamma Concepts Explained at 3 Levels

1. Explanation of dhamma concepts in the *Tipiṭaka* comes under three categories: "*uddesa, niddesa, patiniddesa."* A fundamental concept is first stated ("*uddesa*" or "utterance"). "*Niddesa*" is a "brief explanation". Finally, "*patiniddesa*" is explaining in detail with examples to clarify complex or "knotty" points.

[***uddesa*** : [fr. uddisati] -- 1. pointing out, setting forth, proposition, exposition, indication, programme M. III, 223 （u. uddiṭṭha）, 239； S. IV, 299； SnA 422. -- 2. explanation S. V, 110 sq. ； sa-uddesa （adj. ） with （the necessary） expln. , point by point, in detail, D. I, 13, 81； III, 111； A. III, 418； It. 99； Nd2 6171. -- 3. samaṇuddesa one marked as a Samaṇa, a novice （cp. sāmaṇera） D. I, 151； M. III, 128； A. IV, 343； uddesa-bhatta special or specified food Vin. I, 58 = 96, cp. II. 175, propounding, recitation, repetition.

niddesa : [m.] description; analytic explanation.]

- For example, "*ye dhammā hetuppabbavā..*" is *uddesa.* There, the fundamental characteristics of "this world" just stated, that everything in this world arises due to causes.
- In the *niddesa* version, *Paticca Samuppāda* is "*avijjā paccayā saṅkhāra, saṅkhāra paccayā viññāṇa,……..*" (all 11 steps): These are concise statements.
- In contrast, discourse (*desana*) is the *patiniddesa* version of explanation: a detailed explanation with examples.
- Most people refer to the Sutta Piṭaka to learn *dhamma* concepts. But there are two other *Piṭaka*, and especially the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka*, that need to be consulted.

Most *Suttā* Are in *Uddesa* or *Niddesa* Versions

2. Most *suttā* are in *uddesa* or *niddesa* versions (*Digha Nikāya* is an exception, even though some verses do have deeper meanings). They require detailed explanations. **Translating word-by-word is not appropriate in many instances.**

- For example, "*anicca, dukkha, anatta*" are only in the *niddesa* version in *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta* and *Anatta Lakkhana Sutta*. [SN 56.11 Rolling Forth the Wheel of Dhamma – Dhammacakkappavattanasutta, SN 22.59 The Characteristic of Anatta – Anattalakkhaṇasutta]
- However, each *sutta* took many hours to deliver. It was not possible to condense all that information in a *sutta* for mostly oral transmission that was available at the time. Each *sutta* is in a condensed form (most likely by the Buddha himself; see below).
- Thus the material in each *sutta* **as written in the *Tipiṭaka*** is in CONDENSED form in most cases. It is in the "*niddesa*" version. They are in verse format for oral transmission.

Paṭiniddesa (Detailed Explanation) in Commentaries

3. During the time of the Buddha, other *bhikkhus* then described in detail each *sutta* to audiences when they delivered discourses. That is the "*paṭiniddesa*" version. Especially after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha, **many *Arahants* started writing "*Attakathā*" or commentaries on essential *suttā*. But a few were written during the time of the Buddha.**

- Three of the original books with such early commentaries remain preserved in the *Tipiṭaka*: *Paṭisambidhā Magga Prakarana*, *Nettipparakana*, and *Petakōpadesa*. Of these, the *Paṭisambidhā Magga Prakarana* consists of the analyses by Ven. *Sariputta*, one of the chief disciples of the Buddha,

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and the *Nettipparakana* by Ven. *Maha Kaccāyana*. Thus we are lucky to have these three original commentaries still with us.

- These three books contain the "*paṭiniddesa*" versions of many of the essential *suttā*, which describe in detail the keywords/phrases in a given *sutta*. All other such excellent commentaries are lost; see, "Incorrect Theravada Interpretations – Historical Timeline" and "Buddhaghōsa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background."

Most People Today Need *Paṭiniddesa* (Detailed Explanation)

4. During the time of the Buddha, some could comprehend just the *uddesa* version. For example, Upatissa and Kolita (who became Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggalana later) became *Sotāpannas* upon hearing the verse, "*ye Dhamma hetupabbhavā*.…". They had done much in their past lives and needed "just a little push" to understand. They are called *ugghaṭitañña* or "persons with high wisdom."

- And many could understand the *niddesa* version. Those were *vipañcitañña* and needed a bit more explanation to grasp the concepts. WebLink: suttacentral: Ugghaṭitaññū Sutta (AN 4.133) discusses the four categories of persons — *ugghaṭitañña, vipañcitañña, neyya,* and *padaparama.*
- However, these days, most people are in the lower category of *neyya*. They need detailed explanations (i.e., *paṭiniddesa*) to grasp a concept. They also belong to two groups. Those with *tihetuka paṭisandhi* (optimum births) can attain *magga phala* in this life. But those with *dvihetuka paṭisandhi* (inferior births) cannot achieve *magga phala*, but they can accrue merits to attain *magga phala* in future lives. Of course, there is no way for anyone to figure out (except for a Buddha) whether one has a *tihetuka* or *dvihetuka paṭisandhi.*
- It is essential to realize that those who are either *ugghaṭitañña* or *vipañcitañña* had been *neyyas* with *dvihetuka paṭisandhi* in previous lives. They had strived to gain more wisdom and now are benefitting in this life. Thus there is no point worrying about whether one a *tihetuka* or *dvihetuka.*

Erroneous Commentaries Are Harmful

5. There are many erroneous commentaries today. The best example is the *Visuddhimagga* of *Buddhaghosa*. It was written around 400 CE (where CE is "Current Era" or AD) when the "pure Dhamma" was already lost, and the conventional meanings were commonplace, just as now.

- The "pure Dhamma" has been lost for an extended period from about 200 CE up to now. See "Incorrect Theravada Interpretations – Historical Timeline." But the original *suttā* survived because people at least used and preserved them even if they used the "conventional" or "mundane" ("*padaparama*" in Pāli) meanings.
- Thus we can see why people have been translating *suttā* "word for word" and just getting the conventional meanings. Profound verses in suttā need detailed explanations.

Special Role of *Jāti Sotāpannas* With *Paṭisambhidā Ñāṇa*

6. From time to time, *jāti Sotāpannas* are born. They had attained the *Sotāpanna* stage in a previous life, possibly during the time Buddha was alive. They likely have had births in the *deva loka* for long times and are reborn human now. Some of them have the unique capability to interpret the keywords/phrases in the *suttā*. This specialized knowledge is "*Patisambhidā Ñāna.*"

- There has been at least one time previously that the real meanings were brought out by a *Thero* with the *Patisambhidā Ñāna.* But this is not the time to discuss that.
- However, we have a few *Theros* at this time who have this ability. Waharaka Thero was the first in recent years. See, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero."

Tipiṭaka Was Compiled for Faithful Oral Transmission

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7. The Buddha knew that Buddha Dhamma would be going through periods of decline where *bhikkhus* capable of interpreting the *suttā* will not be present. Thus the *suttā* were composed in a way that only the "conventional" meaning is apparent. **That was a necessary step to preserve the *suttā*, especially before writing became commonplace.**

- It is important to remember that Ven. Ananda had memorized all the *suttā* which he then recited at the First Buddhist Council, just three months after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha.
- Ven. Ananda was Buddha's personal assistant over the last few decades of the Buddha's life. I believe that the Buddha condensed each *sutta* and Ven. Ananda memorized each of them. The Buddha synthesized each *sutta* in a "double meaning" way for them to survive the "dark periods."
- Then, at the first Buddhist Council, all the *suttā* were recited and were sorted into various categories (*Nikāyās*). That is my theory, and I believe that it will be proven to be accurate in the future.

Deeper Meanings May Stay Hidden for Long Times

8. There are times when *jāti Sotāpannas* with the *Patisambhidā Ñāna* are not born for long times. During such times people use conventional interpretations. **And that served the purpose of keeping the *suttā* intact, especially before written texts became common.**

- A perfect example is the *Ānāpānasati Sutta* (some of which are also part of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*). As we discussed in "7. What is Ānāpāna?", the conventional meaning is to tie up "*āna*" with breath inhaling and "*āpāna*" with breath exhaling.
- That was consistent with the breath meditation that has been there in the world at any time. Many *yogis* practiced it at the time of the Buddha. He learned those methods from such *yogis* before attaining the Buddhahood.

9. The following are the key points from the above discussion that I wish to emphasize:

- The *suttā* seem to be designed to convey "conventional" meanings while keeping the "deep meanings" embedded in them.
- It is those "deep meanings" that bring out the uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma.
- Word to word translation of the *suttā* does not convey the message of the Buddha. Examples are critical Pāli words like *anicca* and *anatta.*
- The surviving three original commentaries in the *Tipiṭaka* can verify the deep meanings of the keywords/phrases.

Misinterpretation of *Dhamma* Concepts Is an Offense

10. It is an offense to misinterpret *suttā* (and *dhamma* concepts in general.) That is in several *suttā* in the WebLink: suttacentral: Bālavagga of Aṅguttara Nikāya 2.

- For example, AN 2.25 is a short *sutta* that says: "*Dveme, bhikkhave, tathāgataṃ nābbhācikkhanti. Katame dve? Yo ca neyyatthaṃ suttantaṃ neyyattho suttantoti dīpeti, yo ca nītatthaṃ suttantaṃ nītattho suttantoti dīpeti. Ime kho, bhikkhave, dve tathāgataṃ nābbhācikkhantī" ti.*
- **Translation** ("WebLink: suttacentral: A Meaning to be Inferred"): "Monks, these two people slander the *Tathāgata*. Which two? He who explains a discourse whose meaning that needs to be explained in detail as one whose meaning has already been fully drawn out. And he who explains a discourse whose meaning has already been fully drawn out as one whose meaning needing clarification. These are two who slander the *Tathāgata*." [***Tathāgata*** : the 'Perfect One', lit. the one who has 'thus gone', or 'thus come', is an epithet of the Buddha used by him when speaking of himself.]
- Two perfect examples of the first type of slander are to say that the words *anicca* and *anatta* are fully explained by "impermanence" and "no-self." Those two concepts require detailed explanations.

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Checking for Inter-Consistency Among the Three *Piṭakas* Is the Key

11. The Buddha advised that any questions can be resolved by consulting the three *Piṭaka: Sutta, Vinaya*, and *Abhidhamma*.

- A concept in the *Sutta Piṭaka,* for example, must be consistent with other places in the *Sutta Piṭaka*. It must also be consistent with explanations in the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* and the *Vinaya Piṭaka.*
- But in the end, I will show how the lines in the *sutta* tally with this description. As the Buddha emphasized, what matters is to get the IDEA across, and NOT to memorize the Pāli *suttā.* (Memorization is needed only for transmission purposes).

Good Resource for Pāli *Tipiṭaka*

12. A useful resource for finding Pāli *Tipiṭaka* (and translations in several languages) *suttā* is suttacentral.net.

- Once you open a *sutta*, click on the left-most drop-down to choose one of several languages. That is a useful resource; consider donating if you find it useful. **Note: I am not associated with them in any way.**
- Of source, the translations are incorrect frequently for critical Pāli words, as is the case at many sites. But at least one can see the correct Pāli version.

Next, "Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?"

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16.2 Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?

March 4, 2017; Revised March 5, 2017; Revision March 7, 2017; May 17, 2018; October 27, 2018; August 20, 2019; June, 2020

I have received several emails pointing out that my interpretations of certain words are not compatible with those in Pāli dictionaries. I hope I can explain why one must be careful in using a Pāli dictionary if one's goal is to grasp the true teachings of the Buddha. Of course, I learned this from my Noble teacher, late Waharaka *Thero*.

1. In Pāli a word can have different meanings depending on the context. Furthermore, sometimes, grammar rules are bypassed.

- Many of the problems with an incorrect interpretation of the *Tipiṭaka* arise mainly because of those two misconceptions.
- Pāli does not have its alphabet. It was a spoken language. The Pāli Canon (*Tipiṭaka*) was first written using the Sinhala alphabet around 5 BCE (two thousand years ago); see, "Historical Background."

2. Even in English language, words can have different meanings depending on the context. Following are some examples for three words:

- Right: You were right./Make a right turn at the light.
- Rose: My favorite flower is a rose./He quickly rose from his seat.
- Type: He can type over 100 words per minute. /That dress is not her type.

(Read more at "WebLink: grammar.yourdictionary.com: Words with Multiple Meanings").

- In Pāli language, there are **many** keywords with different meanings. In many cases, there is a conventional meaning and a deeper meaning, as mentioned above: "Sutta – Introduction."

3. Pāli is a phonetic language. The *Tipiṭaka* was transmitted for many hundreds of years faithfully, because verses were formulated for easy memorization. Grammar rules bypassed in some cases. That is clear in the verses, "*Buddhaṃ Saranaṃ gacchāmi*," "*Dhammaṃ Saranaṃ gacchāmi*," etc. [In Pāli, if the verb is "*gacchāmi*" with the ending "..***mi***" it is for the **1st person singular "I"**, and if the word is "*gacchāma*" with the ending "..***ma***" it is for the **1st person plural "We"** and similarly for 2nd person (***si* , *tha* - you, you all**), and 3rd person (***ti*, *nti* - he, they**).]

- There is no subject in the above verse. The first of course means, "I take the refuge in the Buddha," but "I" is missing in "*Buddhaṃ Saranaṃ gacchāmi*." It is just understood.
- If you look at *suttā*, there is no clear grammatical structure. It is the sound that gives the meaning, and most verses have "double meanings": There is a simple meaning, but deeper meanings may be hidden. I have discussed this to some extent in the post, "Sutta – Introduction."
- Some key Pāli words discussed in the post: "Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, and Viññāṇa."

4. Let us start with the word "*atta*" (pronounced "aththa" or "aththā" depending on where used). This word can have many meanings depending on the context.

- **In the conventional sense**, **"*attā*"** means "a person." It is used with this meaning in some contexts; see below.
- **The deeper meaning of "*atta*"** is "in full control" or "the essence" or "the truth that is timeless." Just like the word "*anicca*," it is not possible to translate to English. One has to get the idea by learning how it is used in various situations. The opposite of "*atta*" is *anatta*. That means "helpless" in case of a living being. or "useless" in case of an inert thing.

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- At least, in this case, one could see the difference in meaning by the way they are pronounced: ***attā*** versus ***atta.***
- Both these meanings appear in the Dhammapada verse (*gāthā*), "Attā Hi Attano Nātho" that I am posting concurrently.

5. We can take more examples to illustrate the application of "*atta*" with those two very different meanings.

- In "*atta kilamatānu yoga*" *atta* is used in the conventional sense, to describe "procedures that cause suffering in a person."
- The word *sutta* comes from "*su*" and "*atta*": a *sutta* can make someone moral and ethical. So, here also *atta* is used in the conventional sense.
- The phrase "*anattan asārakattena*" means "(anything in this world) is *anatta* because it is devoid of any good or any usefulness." Something is *atta* only if it is the ultimate truth or has timeless value. Here, of course, the deeper meaning is used. [***asāraka*** :(adj.) [***a*** + ***sāraka***] unessential, worthless, sapless, rotten.]

6. *Paramattha* comes from "*parama*" + "*attha*," where "*parama*" means "at the highest level" and "*attha*" means "the truth that is timeless", the deeper meaning.

- This word has been translated to Sinhala as "*artha*" to indicate "meaning" in Sinhala. So, the Pāli word *paramattha* has been translated to Sinhala as "*paramārtha*" or "ultimate meaning."
- Therefore, the four types of *ñāṇa* (pronounced "gnāna") involved in the *Patisambidha Ñāṇa* are, "*attha, dhamma, nirutti, patibhāna*." These days, they appear in Sinhala as, "*artha, dharma, nirukthi, patibhāna*."
- I will write a separate post to discuss those four terms in the *Paṭisambidhā Ñāṇa.* A person qualified to explain Buddha Dhamma to others is supposed to have the *Paṭisambidhā Ñāṇa.* Otherwise, one could mislead others by providing incorrect explanations. Of course, no one but a Buddha can provide entirely error-free answers. It does not make much sense to learn Dhamma from someone who is not at least a *Sotāpanna* (i.e., an *Ariya*).

7. Of course the most problematic misuse of "*atta*" as "a person" or "a self" is in *Tilakkhaṇa*, the Three Characteristics of Nature. There, *anatta* is commonly translated just as "no-self." One correct expression is "no-unchanging self".

- We need to realize that "*atta*" is always "truth" and "*attā*" could be "person" in the conventional sense. **So, the opposite of "*atta*" is ALWAYS "*anatta*" (pronounced "anatththa"), which is NEVER pronounced "|*anattā*|," i.e., "anaththa."**
- That — together with translating *anicca* as "impermanence" — had kept *Nibbāna* hidden for a thousand years: see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."

8. That is why a dictionary can't provide fixed meaning for the word "*atta*," as well as for *anatta, nicca, anicca,* and many other words.

- Many words are supposed to have both conventional and deeper meanings. Only someone who has the *paṭisambhidā ñāṇa* can correctly explain the meaning of a verse in the *Tipiṭaka* regardless of where the word appears.
- Therefore, in most current English literature on Buddha Dhamma, some explanations are correct, but many are not. That is because of the tendency to use a fixed meaning for a keywords without paying attention to contex.

9. Another such key word is "*paṭi*," which is pronounced also as "pati", not as "pathi". I have received emails saying that Pāli dictionaries say "*paṭi*" means "against".

- *Paṭi* is also a Sinhala word that is being used to this day. It means "bonds" or "ties," just as in Pāli.

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- If "*paṭi*" means "against," how would that be compatible with many other words with "*paṭi*"? For example, "*paṭisamvedī*" or "*paṭisanvedī*" ("*paṭi* + "*san*" + "*vedī*") means *vedanā* due to bonds with "*san*" becoming apparent. *Paṭinissagga* means "getting rid of bonds". *Paṭiniddesa* means "detailed instructions on sorting out knotty or difficult points," etc. The latter is explained in detail at "Sutta – Introduction."

10. One could get a better idea of a keyword by looking at its application in various situations. The word *paṭisambhidā* in *paṭisambhidā ñāṇa* is a good example.

- *Paṭisambhidā comes from paṭi + san + bidhā.* "*San*" is, of course, a keyword; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)," and *bidhā* means to separate or to break apart; "*bindeema*" is the Sinhala word.
- So, *paṭisambhidā ñāṇa* is the knowledge to be able to sort out the meaning of a word by breaking it down to locate "*san*," i.e., connection to defilement.
- And that interpretation must be consistent with "*attha, dhamma, nirutti, patibhāna*" as will discuss in a future post. By the way, *paṭibhāna* means the ability to describe in detail with examples. *Nirutti* means finding the origins of keywords, i.e., how compound words are put together using critical words like *paṭi* and *atta* or *attha*.

11. Other examples come in the *gathā* to pay tribute to the *Saṅgha*: "*su**paṭi**panno bhagavatho savaka sangho, Uju**paṭi**panno....*"

- Here the "bonding" is to "good things." *Su**paṭi**panno* means "bound to moral things," *Uju**paṭi**panno* means "bound to be straightforward," *Ñāyapaṭipanno* means "bound with wisdom," and *Sāmīchi**paṭi**panno* means "good to associate with."
- Another is "*paṭisandhi*," which comes from "*paṭi*" + "*sandhi*," where *sandhi* (which is also a Sinhala word) means "to join." At the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment, one's mental body (*gandhabba*) dies (*cuti*, pronounced "chuthi") and one grasps a new existence. So, this joining of two adjacent lives is called *paṭisandhi*.
- Note that cuti pronounced as "chuthi." See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."
- Of course, the most important is "*pati*" in *Paṭicca Samuppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha"+"Sama+uppāda."

12. Here is a table showing the conventional and deeper meanings of some key Pāli words. Some meanings given in dictionaries are wrong, and they are in bold. Whether to use the correct conventional meaning or the deeper meaning depends on the context (where the word is used); a good example is, "Attā Hi Attano Nātho."

	Conventional	Deeper Meaning
Atta	Person, self	In control, has essence or ultimate truth
Anatta	**no-self (incorrect)**	helpless, no essence and devoid of value
Ānāpāna	in and out breathing	take in moral, discard immoral (in the mind)
Majjima	middle	majji + ma (avoid intoxication of mind)
Icca	like	like
Nicca	**permanent (incorrect)**	can be maintained to liking
Anicca	**impermanent (incorrect)**	cannot be maintained to liking
Pati	**against (incorrect)**	bind

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	Conventional	Deeper Meaning
Sammā	(i) good **(ii) friend (incorrect)**	san + mā; removal of "san"

13. Also see, "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?."

- Mostly the deeper meanings of Pāli words can be found at: "Pāli Glossary – (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary – (L-Z)."
- Again, one must pay attention to make sure that the meaning found in a dictionary is compatible with the context.

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16.3 Nikāya in the Sutta Piṭaka

January 7, 2016

1. The *Tipiṭaka* or the Pāli Canon of Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) consists of three major sections or "baskets" called "*piṭaka*" (*Tipiṭaka* is three *piṭaka*). They are *Sutta piṭaka*, *Vinaya piṭaka*, and the *Abhidhamma piṭaka*.

- The *Sutta piṭaka* consists of five sections called "*nikāya*." The Wikipedia is wrong to say that *nikāya* means "volume" in Pāli (and also what is meant by the five types of *nikāya*); see, WebLink: Wiki: Nikāya
- *Nikāya* comes from "*ni*" + "*kāya*" where *kāya* means our volitions and actions initiated via the six sense inputs, like in "*kāyānupassanā*" where one is mindful of how to respond to those sense inputs. Here, "*ni*" means to cease (*nikmeema* in Sinhala means to be freed) and thus *nikāya* means "path to *Nibbāna"*. At *Nibbāna*, one has stopped all *kāya.*

2. All *suttā* (note that plural of *sutta* is *suttā*) are in those **five *nikāyas* (*Dīgha*, *Majjhima*, *Saṃyutta*, *Aṅguttara*, and *Kuddaka*)**, based on the five types of people. All humans are in five general types based on their *sansāric* habits and capabilities. They are also called "*indriya* types": *saddha*, *viriya*, *sati*, *samādhi*, *paññā*. (Note that "*indriya*" here is different from the sense types such as *cakkhu indriya*, etc., as discussed in #6 and #7 below).

- ***Dīgha Nikāya*** is mainly for those with predominant *saddha indriya* who need detailed explanations. These are long (*dīgha*, pronounced "*dheega*," which means long in Pāli and Sinhala). For example, the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* in the *Dīgha Nikāya* provides detailed instructions on how to be mindful and practice *ānāpāna*.
- *Suttā* in the ***Kuddaka Nikāya*** ("*ku*" + "*uddaka*" where "*ku*" is *keles* or defilements and "*udda*" means to remove) are short and concise. They provide brief instructions for those with high wisdom (*paññā indriya*).
- ***Majjhima Nikāya*** has "middle length" *suttā* that provide instructions at a level in between those in the *Dīgha Nikāya* and the *Kuddaka Nikāya.* It is more suitable for those with dominant *viriya indriya.* Note here that *Majjhima* means "middle," but *Majjhimā* — as in *Majjhimā patipadā* — has a deeper meaning of "abstaining from getting intoxicated"; see, "Majjhima Patipada – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World."

3. The *suttā* in the ***Saṃyutta Nikāya*** are focused on explaining "san", which is a critical word in the foundation of Buddha Dhamma; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."

- Here *Saṃyutta* comes from "*san*" + "*yutta*" where *yutta* (pronounced "*yuththa*") menas "consists of." It natural to pronounce as "*Saṃyutta*" than "*sanyutta*." This is true of many combined words with "*san*" (like *saṃsāra*, *Sammā* = "*san*" + "*mā*").
- *Suttā* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* are said to be more suitable for those with dominant *sati indriya*.

4. *Suttā* in the ***Aṅguttara Nikāya*** are said to be more suitable for those with dominant *samādhi indriya*.

- *Aṅguttara* comes from "*anga*" + "*uttara*" where "*anga*" means parts or components and "*uttara*" means "predominant or principle." Therefore, the *suttā* in the *Aṅguttara Nikāya* are focused on fundamental principles and are also relatively short. These *suttā* are more suitable for people who can quickly get to *samādhi.*
- These categories help explain why *Dīgha* and *Majjhima Nikāya suttā* are the ones that are mostly in use today. Most people today fall into the categories of those with the *saddha* and *viriya indriya* dominant.

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5. It is also important to point out a different usage of the term "*nikāya*." Among the *Theravāda* nations of Southeast Asia and Sri Lanka, bhikkhus (and the temples they reside in) belong to several different groups or *nikāya*.

- For example, in Sri Lanka different temples belong to three types of *nikāyas*: *Siam*, *Ramanya*, and *Amarapura*.
- They are all *Theravāda* and there is no real difference among them as far as the doctrine is concerned. When one visits a temple, it is not possible to say to which *nikāya* it belongs.

6. The word *indriya* comes in two contexts. "*Indriya*" means "dominant" in some contexts. Here, the six types of dominant sense faculties are *indriya*: *cakkhu, sota, jivhā, ghāṇa, kāya*, and *mano*.

- Modern science deals with only five physical senses of eyes, ears, tongue, nose, and body.
- Scientists believe that our brains randomly produces our thought. That will be proven to be incorrect in the future.
- *Mana indriya* — located in the brain — is the sixth and most important one according to Buddha Dhamma. It detects *dhammā* from the "*nāma lōka*"; see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial" and "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."
- *Rūpa* are eleven types, but are split into two main categories (*oḷārika* or dense and *sukhuma* or fine). Those above the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level belong to the material world or "*bhauthika loka*." Those below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level (*dhammā*) belong to the mental world or "*nāma loka*." The five physical senses detect those *rupa* above the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level. The *mana indriya* detects those below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* level (*dhammā*). see, "Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial."

7. The other use of *indriya* is with categorizing people by their dominant characteristics and capabilities (*gati*). For some people, it is easy to grasp Dhamma concepts. That is because they have cultivated the Path in their previous lives, and thus have higher wisdom (*paññā*).

- Some others have also cultivated the Path mainly via just following precepts, but have high confidence in Buddha Dhamma. They are said to have their *saddha indriya* dominant.
- Some have the *sati indriya* dominant; they can focus on a given concept better than others.
- We all are familiar with some people who have the *viriya indriya* dominant; they are the "never give up" type, who seem to have inexhaustible energy levels.
- Some others have meditated and possibly got into *jhānā* in previous lives and have the *samādhi indriya* dominant.

8. Finally, there is an excellent website that has the full and complete *Sutta Piṭaka* with all Pāli *suttā*: WebLink: Sutta Central

- That site also has the complete *Vinaya* and *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* as well (in Pāli).
- Sutta Central also has Sanskrit *sutras*, which are, of course, *Mahāyāna*.
- The Chinese *Agama suttā* are also at this site (in Chinese). As I understand, they are very close to *Theravāda suttā*. Those translations to Chinese from *Theravāda* happened before the appearance of *Mahāyāna sutras*. I would appreciate feedback from persons who are proficient in both Chinese and English, as to whether my understanding is correct.

Next, "Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day",..

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16.4 Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

"Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure"

"Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction"

"Kayanupassana – Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)"

"Kayanupassana – The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)"

"Prerequisites for the Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā"

"What is "Kaya" in Kayanupassana?"

16.4.1 Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure

Revised September 1, 2016; October 29, 2017; February 16, 2020

Introduction

This post is the most important post on the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*. It sets the foundation. This is where 99% of the people should get started. Please read this and then follow the posts in the "Living Dhamma" section, before trying to follow the rest of the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta.*

1. Several web pages provide Pāli version of the *sutta* and/or its English translation. I believe that they all are incorrect translations, and as I proceed I will explain why.

- Here is a website that provides Pāli and English translations of the *sutta* side-by-side: WebLink: TIPITAKA: Mahāsatipaṭṭhāna Sutta (Pāli-English)
- It is not the fault of those who took their time with good intentions to write those posts. That is how this *sutta* and others have been interpreted for more than a thousand years.
- I will not follow the *sutta* sequentially, but you will be able to follow the relevant sections. Eventually, I hope to cover most of the *sutta.*

Three Levels of Explanations

2. As I explained in "Sutta – Introduction," there are three ways of presenting Dhamma: *uddesa, niddesa, patiniddesa*.

- Most *suttā* don't have the very brief summary or *uddesa*, but the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta* has it in the very beginning; see the above link in #1 which provides the complete *sutta* in Pāli and English.
- In the main body of the *sutta*, the concepts are **outlined**. Those key concepts are supposed to be described in detail, with examples, in verbal discourse (i.e., a *desanā*.) That is what I will be doing in these series of posts, i.e., to describe the concepts in detail.

Uddesa Version – Brief Summary

3. The *uddesa* (or *uddeso*) starts with, "*Ekāyano ayaṃ, bhikkhave, maggo sattānaṃ visuddhiyā, sokaparidevanaṃ samatikkamāya, dukkhadomanassanaṃ atthangamāya, nāyassa adhigamāya, nibbānassa sacchikiriyāya, yadidaṃ cattāro satipaṭṭhānā*"

- **Translation:** "This is **one guaranteed way**, monks, for the purification of beings, for the overcoming of sorrow and lamentation, for the extinguishing of suffering and grief, the Noble way for gaining wisdom, for the realization of *nibbāna.* That is to say, the fourfold establishing of **moral mindset**".

Two Key Points

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The main difference from the translation (conventional interpretation) given in the link in #1 above are the two phrases as highlighted above:

- It is not the only way to *Nibbāna*. Many had attained *Nibbāna* before the Buddha delivered this discourse. But it is a systematic, **guaranteed way**, of attaining *Nibbāna* at any level from "just cooling down" to the *Arahant* stage.
- The translation of "*nāyassa adhigamāya*" and "*satipathāna*": "*Nāya*" (Sanskrit "nyāya") means "underlying principle." It is grasped with "*nāna*" or wisdom, and "*adhigama*" is "*adhi*"+"*gama*" or "higher way". **Translating *Satipaṭṭhāna* as "moral mindset"** is not too bad, but I will discuss "*satipaṭṭhāna*" in the next post.
- So, the essence of that verse is that the method described in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* provides a guaranteed way to attain *Nibbāna*, via purification of the being, i.e., via cleansing one's mind.

"Four Stations" of Mindfulness

4. The next phrase is, "*Katame cattāro? Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassi viharati ātāpī sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ. Vedanāsu vedanānupassi viharati ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ. Citte cittānupassī viharati ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ. Dhammesu dhammānupassī viharati ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ"*

- Of course, "*Katame cattāro*?" is, "Which four? (*cattaro* pronounced, "chaththaro"). Pāli words are NOT spelled according to "Standard English." See, ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1" and ""Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2."
- And then it lists the four: *kayanupassana, vedananupassana, cittanupassana,* and *dhammanupassana*. Notice that the phrase, "*ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*" appears after each of the four.
- This indicates the critical importance of this phrase. This is a the beginning of the purification process, by laying out the foundation; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life." One HAS TO go through this process to reach the *Sotāpanna* stage.

A Key Phrase Relevant to All Four

5. We will discuss "*kāye kāyānupassi viharati" etc* in subsequent posts, but let us look at that all-important common phrase, "*ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*," that is common to all four "stations of mindfulness." This needs to be evaluated in two parts: "*ātāpi sampajāno"* AND *"satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ".*

- "*Tāpa*" (pronounced "thāpa") means heat; when we get really stressful we feel a "fire" in the heart. When it gets really bad, people say, "I could feel my heartburn" when a piece of especially poignant news comes through.
- And "*atāpi*" is to remove that "fire" from the heart and the stress from the mind and calm the mind. This is the "cooling down", "*niveema*," "*nivana*" or early stages of *Nibbāna*.
- When one cultivates *Satipaṭṭhāna*, one would not feel that "burning up" even upon hearing the tragic news. One will be able to "handle things" appropriately without taking drastic actions on the "spur-of-the-moment".
- *Sampajana* comes from "*san*" + "*pajana*" or sorting out "*san*" the things that make a mind stressful; see, "What is "San"?." The worst forms of "*san*" are the ones that we instinctively know to be immoral. They include killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and getting intoxicated. [***pajānanā*** : [f.] knowledge; understanding; discernment.]

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- *Sampajana* is closely related to "*sampādeta*" as in the Buddha's last words: "*..appamadena sampadeta*" or "..make haste and sort out *san*." Here *sampadeta* is "*san*"+"*padeta*" or again sort out "*san*".
- When one has done "*sampādeta*" one becomes "*sampajanno*": One knows what is right and what is wrong automatically; it has become a habit.
- This critical verse is discussed in the following *desanā* from the post, "WebLink: Audio Desana: Episode 3 - Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta - Relevance to Suffering in This Life" section (you may need to control the volume at your computer):

  Episode 3 – Maha Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life

Ātāpī Sampajāno

6. Therefore, "*ātāpi sampajāno"* means "remove the fire or heat from one's mind by being aware of the '*san*' or immoral tendencies". They also go by the names "*kilesa*" and "*asobhana cetasika*"; see, "What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika."

- When one starts making progress, one could start to avoid tendencies for extreme sense pleasures as well.

Satimā Vineyya Loke Abhijjhā Domanassaṃ

7. Then we have, "*satima vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*." This is a highly condensed statement about the nature of this world. It needs to be analyzed as "*sati mā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*," i.e., *satima* is really two words: *sati* and *mā*.

- The root cause of all suffering is extreme greed or "*abhijjā [abhijjhā]*" (which comes from "*abhi*" + "*icchā*" or strong craving or attachment). When one does not get what one desires, one gets depressed. That is *domanassa*. It is important to see that one acts with hate with a *domanassa* mindset because one is upset, deflated, and angry.
- "*Vineyya loke*" refers to this world where we are "bound to each other" via debt to each other. See, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."
- And "*satima*" comes from "*sati*" + "*mā*" where "*mā*" means removal, but not the removal of *sati* . It combines "*sati*" with the rest of the phrase, "*vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ"*.
- Thus "*sati ma vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*" means establishing moral mindset and moral conduct in order to be free from the debt-ridden world and to be relieved from *abhijjā [abhijjhā]* and *domanassa.* This is the key to "cooling down"; see, "Living Dhamma" for details.

A Key Idea Behind the *Sutta*

8. Thus the verse, "*ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*," means "get rid of the fire or heat in the mind by being aware of *kilesa* or defilements and by removing extreme greed (*abhijjā* [*abhijjhā*]) that leads to a depressed mind (*domanassa*) through discipline (*vineyya*)".

- In the first stage, one needs to focus on abstaining from immoral activities or *dasa akusala*.
- As one makes progress, one can start also on abstaining from extreme sense pleasures that may not hurt others. By that time, it will start becoming clear HOW and WHY extreme sense pleasures also lead to "fire or heat in the mind".
- Therefore, the phrase, "*ātāpi sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassaṃ*" is the key to both *Satipaṭṭhāna* and *ānāpāna bhāvanā*.
- The rest of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* is on the details on how to go about achieving these goals.

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The "Cooling Down"

9. This "cooling down" happens in four ways. They are *kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanā, cittānupassanā, and dhammānupassanā.*

- These are somewhat sequential, in the sense that one needs to start with taking care of major sources of *abhijjā [abhijjhā]* and *domanassa* with *kayanupassana*. This is basically the same as *sīla* or moral conduct. One needs to be aware that one's actions and speech need to be moral, i.e., to abstain from *dasa akusala* as much as possible.
- Once one achieves that to a certain extent, moral conduct will follow. One will "feel" when one is about to do something wrong. That means one will become "sensitized." But initially, it takes an effort to pause and think of the consequences.
- With the mind clear of the worst hindrances, then it will be easier to learn Dhamma with *dhammānupassanā*, be easier not to REACT to feelings (*vedanānupassanā*) but to take time and evaluate consequences, and to automatically be aware of immoral thoughts that come to the mind (*cittānupassanā*).
- Thus it is a gradual process. Each advance helps with gaining confidence in one's actions, helps not to just react to feelings, helps to think with a clear head, which in turn helps with the understanding process.

Comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* Will Accelerate Progress

10. The process of comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) starts with *kāyānupassanā* but all four can be cultivated simultaneously. The Buddha stated that if one makes an all-out effort, *Arahanthood* can be attained in seven days. If one makes a less commitment, either *Arahant* or at least the *Anāgāmī* stage attained within seven years according to the Buddha.

- Getting started on this process is described in detail in the section, "Living Dhamma."
- Another deeper approach is discussed at, "Origin of Life."

Further Analyses

11. The phrase "*ātāpī sampajāno, satimā vineyya loke abhijjhā domanassam*" has been analyzed by dividing into four components connected to *viriya indriya*, *paññā indriya*, *sati indriya*, and *samādhi indriya* in the WebLink: suttacentral: Lakkhaṇahāravibhaṅga of the *Nettiprakarana* (or p. 50 of the *Nettiprakana* (Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanthi edition):

"*..Tasmātiha tvaṃ bhikkhu kāye kāyānupassī viharāhi ātāpī sampajāno satimā vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassaṃ". "Ātāpī"ti vīriyindriyaṃ, "sampajāno"ti paññindriyaṃ, "satimā"ti satindriyaṃ, "vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassan"ti samādhindriyaṃ, evaṃ kāye kāyānupassino viharato cattāro satipaṭṭhānā bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchanti..*"

- Here "*ātāpī*" is *viriya indriya, sampajāno* is *paññā indriya*, *satimā* is *sati indriya*, and *"vineyya loke abhijjhādomanassan"* is *samādhi indriya.*
- One sorts out "*san*" with *paññā,* keep mindfulness with *sati,* and make an effort (*viriya*) to stay away from *"*bad *san" or dasa akusala,* thus getting the mind to be free of *abhijjhā* and *domanassa* and thus get to *samādhi.* And that should be done whenever possible, not only in formal meditation. Then one will be in *samādhi* all the time.

Connection to *Dasa Akusala*

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12. Finally, *kāyānupassanā* basically tackles *dasa akusala* done with actions and speech (moving body parts), as we will see in the next section. The harder part comes with those done directly by the mind, especially *micchā diṭṭhi* or wrong views.

- There are two levels of *micchā diṭṭhi*: First, the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* removed via the mundane Path. Removal of the deeper wrong views comes with the grasping of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*.
- Thus we can see the critical role of the *paññā indriya* (wisdom). One can start on all four types of *anupassanā*. However, when one becomes good in *kāyānupassanā*, the other three types of *anupassanā* cultivate to some extend too.
- **The key is to get started with *kāyānupassanā*** and make the effort (*viriya*). Then wisdom (*paññā*) will grow together with mindfulness (*sati*), and one will automatically get into other three *anupassanā* with increasing levels of *samādhi*.

Next, "Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction", ……

16.4.2 Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction

1. First we need to figure out what "*sati*" means. Bear with me as I use some key Pāli words, because it is important to understand them correctly. Things will become clear as we proceed below. Again, first try to read the post through without clicking on links, and then come back and read any relevant other posts as needed.

- *Sati* is a "good" mental factor (*sobhana cetasika*). Therefore, "*sati*" arises only in moral thoughts (*kusala citta*), and DOES NOT arise in *akusala citta*. As discussed in "Cetasika (Mental Factors)", "good *cetasika"* do not arise in *akusala citta* (similarly, "bad *cetasika"* do not arise in *kusala citta*).
- This is important to realize at the outset. Many people think "*sati*" is "attention" or "mindfulness". But a suicide bomber has to be mindful in wiring up the bomb, or a professional thief making plans for a grand robbery in minute detail needs to pay total attention to it; "*sati*" is NOT involved in either case. The *cetasika* involved there, are the two "neutral" cetasika (which can appear in both *kusala* and *akusala citta*) of *vitakka* (focused application) and *vicāra* (sustained application); see, "Cetasika (Mental Factors)".
- There are others who believe "*sati*" is the ability to remember or recall past events, but it is the "*manasikara*" *cetasika* that does that.

When a person stops and contemplates whether an action one is about to take has moral or immoral consequences, and carries out only those actions that have moral consequences, then that person is acting with "*sati*".

2. *Paṭṭhāna* can mean establishment, prepare, or "to mold". Therefore, "*satipaṭṭhāna*" means establishment of "*sati*", or train the mind to act with "*sati*" as described in the previous paragraph.

- This training process comes in four steps, and that is why it is also called "*satara satipaṭṭhāna*" where '*satara*" means four. Even though the four steps are interrelated, there is a sequence. The four steps are *kāyānupassanā, vedanānupassanāa, cittānupassanā*, and *dhammānupassanā*.
- The meaning of "*anupassanā*" is described in point #4 of "4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?" in the Meditation section.

3. Buddha Dhamma is all about cleansing the mind; that is the key to real and lasting tranquility of the mind. A defiled mind generates defiled thoughts (*citta*). Defiled thoughts lead to defiled speech (with a time lag) and defiled actions (with even longer time lag).

- **The sequence of cleansing the mind is backwards:** First control bodily actions, then (or simultaneously) to control speech, and controlling thoughts (as they arise) is harder. This is important to understand, so let us look into the reasons.

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4. As discussed in the *Abhidhamma* section, thoughts (*citta*) arise very fast; there are well over billions of *cittā* per second; but of course we "experience" only "bundles of *citta*" accumulating for at least about 0.05 seconds. **Even then it is not possible to control thoughts by sheer will power.**

- But our thoughts are dictated by our character and habits ("*gati*"). And, these character qualities (*gati*) can be changed with concerted effort by controlling one's speech and actions. We have discussed "*gati*" in many posts spread over different sections.

5. This is why *kāyānupassanā* comes first in *Satipaṭṭhāna*. We first discipline ourselves by making sure we speak only moral words, and do only moral actions. Both speech and actions arise from thoughts, but they come with a "time lag". We first think that "this person has done something bad to me", and then we start saying something bad to the person. But there is enough of a 'time lag" to stop saying it.

- We tend to take "bodily actions" with even longer delay than for speech. So, unless one is in a rage, there is enough time to catch oneself and stop any bad actions. Actually, when we get good at it, and control both speech and actions, such instances of acting with rage will diminish with time, and will go away. This is because the more we act with "*sati*", the more that we give up bad "*gati*" and cultivate good "*gati*".

6. Thus *Kāyānupassanā* basically means "catching ourselves before we say or do something wrong".

- To put it in another way, what we need to accomplish with *kāyānupassanā* is to be aware of our speech and actions AT ALL TIMES. By now it must be clear why *satipaṭṭhāna* cannot be restricted to a "formal sitting down meditation session".
- We say or do things in response to what we see, hear, smell, taste, touch, or think. The speech or actions have time delays from the time we get the "input" from outside or even if generated by the mind itself. Even if we start saying something bad, we can catch ourselves and stop (and apologize if we hurt someone's feelings). Even if get up to hit someone, we can realize the bad consequences of such an action and immediately stop. That is how one starts.

7. With practice, one's ***gati*** will change, and such awkward instances will occur less and less. There are many posts on "*gati*" at the site, and there are some in the meditation section under, "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)". *Satipaṭṭhāna* is basically a methodical way of doing *Ānāpānasati*. A scientific view is discussed in, "How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View".

8. Therefore, it is easy to see that *kāyānupassanā* is the first and most important part of the *satara satipaṭṭhāna*.

- When *kāyānupassanā* is practised, one's "*gati*" will gradually change and one will start to calm down. And one will not REACT to feelings on an impulsive basis, and thus it will be easier to practice the next stage of "*vedanānupassanā*", i.e., "think about how to respond when certain feelings arise".
- When both those are practised, "*gati*" will change to an extent that even initial thoughts will have "less venom", and thus it will be easier to practice "*cittānupassanā*" or "think morally" automatically.
- Finally, it will be easier to get into *samādhi* and to contemplate *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (or any other *Dhamma* concept), which is "*dhammānupassanā*".

9. Thus one starts with *kāyānupassanā* first and then move on to other three "*anupassanā*". When one completes all four one completes the process and will have "*sammā sati*" in full, which leads to "*sammā samādhi*" in full, i.e., *Arahanthood*.

- Of course, that is normally accomplished in four stages, the first of which is the *Sotāpanna* stage.
- Just like it is not possible to attend middle school without attending the primary school, or to take college courses without passing high school, one needs to go through the four steps methodically. One needs to control one's actions and speech first. That is what "*kāyānupassanā*" is about. We will discuss that in detail in the next post.

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- This does not mean that one should not do the other three while doing *kāyānupassanā*; it just means there is "not much benefit" in doing the other three unless one is actively engaged in stopping the "BIG EIGHT" done with speech and body; see, "2. The Basics in Meditation."
- And one does not stop doing *kāyānupassanā,* ever. It is not something to be done forcefully, it will become a habit. When one sees the benefits, one would want to advance. One just keeps incorporating other three gradually and soon enough will be doing all four. But *kāyānupassanā* is the FOUNDATION.

Next, "Kayanupassana – The Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)", ……..

16.4.3 Kāyānupassanā – Section on Postures (Iriyāpathapabba)

1. Let us first clarify what *kāyānupassanā* means. There are two interchangeably used meanings for "*kāya*": one is the body, the other is whatever is involved in "*kriya*" or "actions". In *kāyānupassanā* the latter is more general. This section on postures is based on body postures, but is still concerned with all "actions" done via all six senses. This will become clear as we proceed below.

- It is normally written as "*kāyānupassanā*", and is ALWAYS pronounced as "*kāyanupassana*".
- In interacting with the world, we see visuals (*rūpa*) with eyes, hear sounds with ears, smell odors with nose, taste with the tongue, touch (*pottabba*) with body, and think about concepts (*dhamma*) with the mind.
- Thus there are six internal "*kāya*", and six external "*kāya*" involved in experiencing the world. Thus we are concerned with both the internal sense faculties (*ajjhatta*, pronounced "*ajjhaththa*") and the six external entities (*bahiddha*), while we are in any of the four main postures of sitting, standing, walking, or lying down.

2. When one starts on the Path, one does not need to believe in anything that the Buddha (or anybody else) said about the true nature of the world. One can start with a simple goal of "getting some peace of mind" or "get some relief from the day-to-day stresses of this world", i.e., get to the "*ātāpī*" stage.

- One can keep an open mind on whether there is rebirth or not, whether the concept of *kamma* is correct or not (of course one should not rule out those either; that would be *"niyata micchā diṭṭhi"* and one WILL NOT be able to make any progress); see, "How do we Decide which View is Wrong View (Diṭṭhi)?."

3. The Buddha said that the mind is burdened by greed, hate, and ignorance. It is not easy to see "the truth" (i.e., to remove ignorance) because the mind is normally "covered" by strong versions of greed and hate called "*kāmachanda*" (one becomes blind by greed) and "*vyāpāda*" (one keeps going downward with intense hate); **you can do keyword searches to find related posts.**

- And these two, *kāmachanda* and *vyāpāda* are the main culprits for making a mind stressful, and for causing "inside fires". Thus by forcibly removing any thoughts of extreme greed and hate as they come to the mind, one can get relief in real time. One does not have to wait for "effects of *kamma* to materialize". Such benefits will be there too, but one WILL be able to experience more immediate benefits.
- This is the beginning of "cooling down" or experiencing *nirāmisa sukha*, as explained in the post, "Three Kinds of Happiness".

4. As explained in the previous post, "Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction", we start by disciplining our actions through speech and bodily actions, because they have a "time lag" and there is enough time to stop them willfully.

- We can start with the conventional five precepts. Without that basic discipline, one CANNOT get any kind of long-lasting peace of mind, no matter how much time one spends in meditation.

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- If one is engaged in any of these five (intentional killing of living beings, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, and using alcohol excessively or using drugs), and can abstain from them one should be able to experience the benefits of that in the near term.

5. After that one can tackle the BIG EIGHT (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct, lying, gossiping, slandering, harsh speech, and getting "drunk" with not only drugs or alcohol, but also with wealth, fame, power, etc); see, "2. The Basics in Meditation".

6. The *kāyānupassanā* of the *satipaṭṭhāna* consists of six sections or "*pabba*":

Anapānāpabba (section on "*ānāpāna*"),
Iriyāpathapabba (section on postures),
Sampajānapabba (section on habits),
Patikulamanasikārapabba (section on contemplation of body parts),
Dhatumanasikāra (section on contemplation of elements), and
Navasivathikapabba (section on contemplation of the decay of a body).

- We have already discussed *ānāpāna* in several posts, starting with "7. What is Ānāpāna?."

7. **The "*Iriyāpathapabba*" section of the *Kāyānupassanā* in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* is all about how to abstain from committing an immoral act AT ANY TIME.**

- We have four postures or"*iriya*": sitting, standing, walking, and in the sleeping position (laying flat).
- In any posture, we need to be vigilant on what we are about to do or speak. This is the beginning of "*satipaṭṭhāna*", being "morally mindful" at all times.
- When a thought comes to mind to say something or to do something (whether sitting, standing, walking, or lying down), we need to get into the habit of contemplating their consequences.

8. For example, we may be walking on the street and see someone, whom we do not like, coming our way. If we get the tendency to say something bad, we have enough time to contemplate the bad consequences and stop saying those words.

- We may be lying in bed and getting bored, and may decide to go and see a friend to do some "gossiping" for fun. We have time to think about it and see whether we can use that time more productively.
- Sometimes we get "nasty e-mails"; someone pointing out an allegedly bad deed that we have done. We get that immediate "tāpa" or "heating up" in our heart because we get so perturbed by that false accusation. We tend to fire up an equally nasty e-mail back to that person. But we need to take time and contemplate a better action. Give that person the benefit of the doubt; may be he/she did not do it to aggravate us, or truly was misled. Of course, there are people who do such things purposely to aggravate, but even then it is better to ignore it, rather than letting it develop into a worse situation. Learning to keep away from such troublemakers is a habit that we learn to develop. By responding in kind, it will not help quenching the "fires".

9. We need to constantly ask ourselves "why am I going to do this? Why am I going to say this?". If the outcome of that action could hurt us or someone else, we need to think about a different way, or totally abandon it.

- It is sad to see that many people waste their time "walking mindfully" one step at a time, just concentrating on taking each step, or "lifting their arm mindfully" This is the '*iriyāpathapabba*" that is being practiced in most places. How can that procedure lead to a long-lasting peace of mind? Of course, just like doing breath meditation, it can make a person calm for the time being; that is the ONLY benefit.
- And it is not enough to do this in a formal session. This needs to become a habit (a keyword search can be done to find more on habits; developing habits is the key to change those all important "*gati*"). Buddha Dhamma is all about purifying the mind.

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10. If one can do this for a week or so, one should be able to see a change in oneself; a sense of tranquility, a "peace of mind". Of course some of you may be there already. We will discuss how to take the next step in the next post.

- When one is at this stage, it will be easier to get into *samādhi*, even if one is just doing the "breath meditation". A moral mind is easy to be calmed. Many people do horrible acts on the spur-of-the-moment because they do not have this mindset or habit. Also see, "Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala."

Next, "Kāyānupassanā – The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)", ……

16.4.4 Kāyānupassanā – The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)

Revised February 8, 2019

This is really an extension of the section on postures (*Iriyāpathapabba*) discussed in the previous post ("Kāyānupassanā – Section on Postures (Iriyāpathapabba)", going into finer postures and activities. The key point is ultimately to become "sensitized" to each and every action that we take thus leading to the formation of "good habits", i.e., to become a "*sampajānno*".

1. One cannot start on this section until one has acquired discipline with the "bigger activities". For example, if one is killing animals for fun, then there is no point in worrying about kicking a dog.

- As one gets some practice with abstaining from major offenses, one will become "sensitized", i.e., one will start seeing minor offenses that one is about to make.

2. The relevant paragraph on the *Sampajānapabba* in the WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (DN 22) reads::

"*Puna ca param, bhikkhave, bhikkhu abhikkante patikkante sampajānakāri hoti, ālokite vilokite sampajānakāri hoti, saminjite pasārite sampajānakāri hoti, sanghātipattacivaradhārane sampajānakāri hoti, asite pite khāyite sāyite sampajānakāri hoti, uccārapassāvakamme sampajānakāri hoti, gate thite nisinne sutte jāgarite bhāsite tunhibhāve sampajānakāri hoti".*

Here is the **mundane translation** ("WebLink: tipitaka.org: The Great Discourse on the Establishing of Awareness"), which is word by word:

- "Again, monks, a monk, while going forward or backward, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; whether he is looking straight ahead or looking sideways, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; while he is bending or stretching, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; whether wearing his robes or carrying his bowl, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; whether he is eating, drinking, chewing or savoring, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence; while attending to the calls of nature, he does so with constant thorough **understanding of impermanence**; whether he is walking, standing, sitting, sleeping or waking, speaking or in silence, he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence".

3. Thus many possible "finer posture and actions" can be seen in the above direct translation, which are correct. The point is to be "morally mindful" in each and every such action, and not just to do those acts like a robot just in a formal setting as most people do.

- I am not sure where "impermanence" came from, apparently as the translation of the word, "*sampajānkāri*". But as was explained in the post, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure", *sampajāno* means knowing right from wrong ("*san*") via enhanced wisdom.
- Thus *sampajānkāri* means doing something the right way, and *sampajānkāri hoti* means developing a habit to do that.

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4. When one goes into finer details on "being morally mindful" of one's actions, one is not just concerned with killing, stealing, etc. One is also concerned about general welfare, that one should act with civility and be courteous to others: one should be wearing proper clothes appropriate for the occasion, when eating one should not be making inappropriate noises, while walking in a crowded street one should be mindful of the others and not throw one's refuse on the roadside, etc.

- As I pointed out in the post, "Sutta – Introduction", a *sutta* gives instructions in the "*niddesa*" or as a brief description. It needs to be EXPLAINED rather than doing a direct translation. Any *sutta* was originally delivered over a number of hours, and then summarized in a special way to make it brief and suitable for oral transmission.

5. A case in point is the direct translation of "..*uccārapassāvakamme sampajānakārī hotī*", as "while attending to the calls of nature (going to the bathroom), he does so with constant thorough understanding of impermanence!" (from the conventional translation in #2 above).

- What is meant there is to act with decency and not to relieve oneself in an inappropriate place. In all those cases, *sampajānakārī hoti* means acting with diligence and prudence.

6. There are many other aspects too. For example, if one is about to take a nap in the middle of the day, one should be asking oneself why one needs to take nap. Unless one had engaged in some strenuous activity and really needs to get some rest, it is not a good habit to take unnecessary naps. Then it could become a habit, a bad one.

- We should also develop good habits. While walking on the street, it is good to help out those who need help, and to be courteous to others. A small thing like not spitting in a public place or just dropping trash anywhere one pleases can cause discomfort (and health problems) for others.
- Of course with each minor act we should also make sure it does not pan out to immoral activities. A good example is drinking too much. Drinking alcohol is not an *akusala kamma* per se (and there is nothing wrong with taking a drink in a social setting), but there is danger in getting intoxicated.
- An intoxicated mind can be very dangerous; one could lose any sense of decency, and may get into situations that are immoral and offensive. Both drinking and smoking can be harmful to oneself and also to others.

7. As one develops good habits and gets rid of bad ones, **one becomes more and more "sensitized" and catch even minor mistakes**. **This is what is meant by "*patisamvedi*" ("*pati*" + "*san*" "*vedi*")**, i.e., becoming aware of "getting attached to a wrong mindset".

- At the same time, one will start seeing a big improvement in one's "inside fires", but one also becomes less prone to be aggravated or offended, and one becomes more forgiving to others.
- There are many posts at the site on habits, and how they can lead to *sansāric* habits and *āsavas*; developing good habits and getting rid of bad habits is key to "cooling down" in the short term as well as in the long term.
- Parents, teachers, and friends play key roles in a child's life, because a child's mind can be influenced by others in a good or bad ways, and can lead to lifelong habits. If the foundation is set right, then it will be easier for one to become a "*sampajānno*", one who is capable of "keeping fires under control".

8. This is what was meant by being a "*sampajānno*", and being able to "quench fires", i.e., "*ātāpi sampajāno*", which was a key phrase in the *uddesa* (brief description) of the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure."

Next, "Prerequisites for the Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā", ……

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16.4.5 Prerequisites for the Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā

As you may have noticed, I am not going to follow the *sutta* in the formal order. I would like to present it in a way that is conducive to the present day. However, at the end it will become clear that everything in the *sutta* has been discussed.

1. From the previous two posts it is clear that this meditation is **not just to be practiced in a formal session**, even though formal sessions can and should be done. In particular, *Dhammānupassana* needs to be done in formal sessions, which we will discuss shortly. With that in mind let us look at how the *sutta* begins (after the *uddesa* or the "brief description" section, to which we will get back later):

"*Kathaṃ ca pana, bhikkhave, bhikkhu kāye kāyanupassi viharati?*

- Here and many other other places, "*ca*" is pronounced "cha".
- Here "*viharati*" means "to live". Thus what it says is, "Bhikkhus, what is meant by living with *kayanupassana* of the body (*kaye kayanupassana*)?".
- This should make it very clear that the *bhāvanā* is not just to be practised in a formal session; one has to "live it".

2. Now let us look at the next phrase that describes how to prepare for the *bhāvanā*:

"Idha, bhikkhave, bhikkhu arañña gato vā rukkhamūla gato vā suññāgāra gato vā nisidati pallankaṃ ābhujitvā, ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya, parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā".

- The conventional translation is something like, "Here a monk, having gone into the forest, or to the foot of a tree, or to an empty room, sits down cross-legged, keeps his body upright and fixes his awareness in the area around the mouth".
- Of course, this is a good thing to do if one is going to do a formal session, except that one should focus the awareness not "around the mouth" but on the object of contemplation as we will discuss later.

3. I pointed out in the introduction how the *sutta* (like most other *suttā*) was apparently designed to convey the above "conventional" meaning while keeping the deeper meaning hidden; see, "Sutta – Introduction". This is a good example of how this was accomplished. Let us describe the above sentence in detail. However, I may not be able to go into such details for the rest of the *sutta*, because it will take up too much space.

Continuing with the interpretation of the phrase in #2, "*gato va*" means "get in to" or in the deeper sense, "get into the mindset".

- *Arañña* is a forest (or forest monastery). But the hidden meaning comes from "*rana*" which means "battle" and thus "*arañña*" means staying away from battles. Thus, "*arañña gato vā*" means "get into a calm mindset leaving behind the everyday battles". In the conventional interpretation is says, "having gone into the forest".
- "*rukkha*" is "tree" and "*mūla*" is the "root"; even though the top of a tree sways back and forth with the wind, the tree trunk close to the root is very stable. Thus "*rukkhamūla gato va*" means getting to a stable mindset. In the conventional interpretation is says, "having gone to the foot of a tree".

4. Next, "*suññāgāra*" is an empty building or room. The deeper meaning is that the mind should be empty of greed, hate, and ignorance. One should dispel any such thoughts that comes to the mind.

- Now comes, "*nisidati pallaṅkaṃ ābhujitvā",* which is translated as, "sits down cross-legged". The key word here is, "*anka*" or literally "number"; in Pāli or Sinhala, "reduce the number" or "*palla+anka*" means not giving importance. Thus "*nisidati pallankaṃ ābhujitvā"* means, "being modest" and getting rid of any sense of "superiority".

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- And, "*ujuṃ kāyaṃ paṇidhāya"* is translated, "keeps his body upright". In the deeper meaning, it is about being "straightforward" or forthright and honest.
- The post, "Kāyānupassanā – Section on Postures (Iriyāpathapabba)," describes how one needs to conduct *satipattāna* in all four postures (sitting, standing, walking, lying down), AND in numerous sub-postures; Therefore, the idea of "keeping the physical body upright" during *satipaṭṭhāna* is a falsehood.

5. Finally, "*parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā"* is the KEY to *Satipaṭṭhāna*: It is translated literally as "fixes his awareness in the area around the mouth". What is actually meant is to keep the mind on the main object (called "*mukkha nimittā*"), i.e., "*Nibbāna*" or "cooling down". "*Pari*" here means "complete" or "full".

- Therefore, "*parimukhaṃ satiṃ upaṭṭhapetvā"* means maintaining one's focus on the main goal or *Nibbāna*.
- Thus what is described in that sentence is the required mindset for the meditator, whether he/she is going to be "meditating" in any one of the four postures described in the previous post, not just in a sitting down formal meditation session.

6. Thus the "preparation instructions" in that opening phrase can now be stated something like, "get into a calm and stable mindset that is devoid of greed, hate, and ignorance; keep a modest attitude without any sense of superiority; be forthright and honest, and keep the mind on the main object of cooling down".

- Such a state of mind needs to be cultivated for all times. That is the key to cooling down on a long-term basis.
- Of course the conventional interpretation can also be used for sitting down, formal, sessions **without** "fixing awareness in the area around the mouth". One ALWAYS focuses on cooling down, and becoming an "*ātāpi sampajanno*"; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure," and "Kāyānupassanā – The Section on Habits (Sampajānapabba)."
- Thus the idea is for one to become a "firefighter" ("*ātāpī sampajāno*"), who is always on the lookout not for actual fires, but for those mental events that CAN LEAD TO mental fires in the future. These are basically any immoral acts, speech, or thoughts.

7. There are five sections or "*pabba*" in the *kāyānupassanā*. The reason that I described the *Iriyāpathapabba* ("section on postures") and the *Sampajānapabba* ("section on habits") in the previous posts was to emphasize the point that this *bhāvanā* cannot be restricted to a formal session. One could say, "How can I be meditating the whole day?". This question arises only because of the misconceptions we have on what meditation or "*bhāvanā*" is.

- The Buddha said, "*bhavanaya bahuleekathaya*", or "*bhāvanā* is what one does all the time". It is about getting into the habit of developing good habits and getting rid of bad habits. [***bahulīkata***: [pp. of bahulīkaroti] took up seriously; increased. (adj.), practised frequently.]
- One can just make it a "formal session" in order to get into deeper levels of *samādhi* or *jhānā*.

8. Buddha Dhamma is not a religion in the sense of providing "salvation" by following certain rules or procedures. The Buddha said the only way to achieve long-lasting happiness is to purify the mind. It starts with avoiding the worst immoral acts of killing, stealing, etc. When one sees the benefits of that one can go a step further and include gossiping, slandering, etc. and so on.

- The more one purifies one's mind, the true nature of this world will become increasingly clear. One cannot read about it in one essay or even many essays. One has to put it into action. Even though it is good to read about *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, it is not possible to "get it" until one purifies one's mind to a certain extent AND experiences the "cooling down" that results from a purified mind; this will be discussed in the *Dhammānupassana*.

9. Satipaṭṭhāna sutta describes a very methodical way of following the Path prescribed by the Buddha. **Initially, one does not even have to worry about whether rebirth is valid or whether there are 31**

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realms of existence. One just focuses on realizing that there are "internal fires" (*ātāpi*) that we are not even aware of; see "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure."

- As one purifies the mind, one can clearly see and FEEL these fires and how they start. When one clears up the "big fires" one is able to see and feel smaller ones; one becomes more "sensitized". And then one tackles those smaller fires. It is a gradual, step-by-step process. That is why it is called the Path. The higher one climbs on the Path, the more one can "see" and get rid of, and more happier one becomes.

Next, "What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā?", ……

16.4.6 What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā?

Revised May 20, 2018; February 17, 2019

1. There are two meanings to "*kāya*": one is "*kāya*" for the body, and the other "*kāya*" means "collections" or "aggregates" of anything: *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, or *viññāṇa*.

- "*Sabba*" means all. Therefore, "*sabba kāya*" is the same as "*pañcakkhandha*" ; see, "Five Aggregates – Introduction," and follow-up posts.
- In the *Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta,* one contemplates on the five aggregates via four categories (*kāyānupassanā*, *vedanānupassanā*, *cittānupassanā*, and *dhammānupassanā*).
- *Kāyānupassanā* deals mostly with bodily actions (i.e., regarding *kāya).* But "*kāya*" + "*anupassanā*" rhymes as "*kāyānupassanā*"; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction."

2. We experience pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, touch (which are all different types of *rūpa*), and *dhammā* (things which we think about).

- **Note that *dhammā* are different from *dhamma* (without the long "a" at the end) in Buddha Dhamma; the latter *dhamma* refers to "teachings of the Buddha".**
- Even though "*rūpa*" is commonly used to describe "material objects" (which are really "*vanna rūpa"* or *"rūpa rūpa*"), *rūpa* includes sounds (*sadda rūpa*), smells (*gandha rūpa*), tastes (*rasa rūpa*), and touch (*phoṭṭhabba rūpa*).
- **I will just use the term "*rūpa*" to include sounds, smells, tastes, and touch as well as pictures for the rest of the post.**
- *Dhammā* are a type of *rūpa* too; but they are below the *suddhaṭṭhaka* stage and "cannot be seen or touched" : "*anidassanaṃ, appaṭighaṃ, dhammāyatana pariyāpanna rupaṃ*"; see, "What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too!."

3. Something is a picture or a visual object only when one is seeing it. A moment later it is only a memory, and it is now a "memory of an old picture". If we visualize a house that we are building, that is also a picture in the memory plane, an "envisioned future picture".

- In the WebLink: Anatta Lakkha Sutta (SN 22.59), "all *rūpa*" are described as 11 categories: "*Tasmātiha, bhikkhave, yaṃ kiñci rūpaṃ atītānāgatapaccuppannaṃ ajjhattaṃ vā bahiddhā vā oḷārikaṃ vā sukhumaṃ vā hīnaṃ vā paṇītaṃ vā yaṃ dūre santike vā, sabbaṃ rūpaṃ..*" . They are past, present, future, near, far, likable, distasteful, fine (not strong), coarse (strong), internal, and external; see also, "Five Aggregates – Introduction."
- For example, feelings (*vedanā*) *khandha* can be any in the 11 categories. Here, near and far means recent or way back in the past. Internal is one's own and external is feelings of the others; one needs to be aware of other's feelings in the sense that "if I do this, it could cause a feeling of grief to so and so", as an example.

4. It is good to contemplate on these concepts and have a good idea of how different representations mean the same things: *Pañcakkhandha* is the same as "*sabba kāya*", both include "everything in this world".

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Please send me a comment if this is not clear. Many people think "*kāyānupassanā*" is just about one's body, and that is not correct.

- But we don't think about the "whole world" out there either. We think about a tiny fraction of that "world out there". **AND we get attached to (*taṇhā*) even a smaller fraction.**
- Thus even though *pañcakkhandha* (five aggregates)is unimaginably large, the fraction of *pañcakkhandha* that we interact with or think about is very small. And we form attachments (via greed or hate) to even smaller fraction, and this is the *pañcupādānakkhandha*, the aggregates that we attach to with greed and hate (and ignorance). *Upādāna* means "drawn to", and that is what one grasps willingly because one thinks there is happiness in them.

5. For example, we all know about the zillions of stars out there, or about the other planets in our Solar system; but do not generate any greed or hate about them. We only attach to **some of the pictures**, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch that we interact with daily, which is indeed a tiny, tiny fraction of the "world out there". The biggest component of our "*pañcupādānakkhandha*" is the dhamma aggregate, the things we think about. Let us discuss this a bit more.

- Thus here we are concerned with only a tiny fraction of "*sabba kāya*": Only those that lead to greed, hate, or ignorance. This is the same as *pañcaupādānakkhandha,* which is a tiny fraction of *pañcakkhandha.*

6. When we contemplate on this a bit more, we realize that most of the pictures, sounds, smells, tastes, and touch we think about belonging to the ***dhammā*** category; see #2 above..

- A long series of thoughts may start with an "old picture" that is in our memory (say an old friend), and then we start generating more thoughts about that person, and then we get into something altogether different: We may think about the nice neighborhood that person is living in and then start thinking about building a house there. Thus we may end up thinking (generating *saṅkhāra*) about something totally different. Thus it now belongs to the *dhammā* category.
- Later, we need to focus on such thoughts and dhamma in the "*cittānupassanā*" and "*dhammānupassanā*". What we need to do in "*kāyānupassanā*" is to mainly control our speech and actions first. This way we will be able to slowly change our habits (*gathi*) and start controlling our "automatic actions" that we used to do almost on impulse.

7. We already discussed how we need to be "morally mindful" while we are in any of the four main postures (*Iriyapathapabba*), and also in any of "sub-postures" or basically any movement (*sampajānapabba*).

- For example, we see a likable picture (a person or an item) we need to immediately think about whether it is appropriate to take the action that automatically comes to our mind with our old habits. We may be waiting at the airport for the next flight and see a bar; instead of going there and have a drink, it may be more productive to get on to the internet and read something useful. It is more productive to take a nap if one is really tired.
- In another example, someone may come to you and accuse you of doing something wrong. Instead of just retaliating, it may be a good idea to calm down and listen to that person first to see whether you have indeed done something unknowingly to aggravate that person.

8. As we discussed in the post, "4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?," *Anupassanā* means "discard according to the principles learned" ("*anu*" means according to and "*passanā*" means to get rid of). We need to logically think of what would happen if a certain action is taken. If that seems to lead to a "bad ending" we need to discard it.

- Thus "*kāyānupassanā*" in the *iriyāpatapabba* and the *sampajānapabba* means to contemplate on the moral consequences of an act one is about to do and abstain from doing it if it seems to have bad consequences.

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9. **Now, there are three sections in the *kāyānupassanā* where one specifically contemplates on the physical body. These are *patikulamanasikara pabba*, *dhatumanasikāra pabba*, and *navasivathika pabba*.** These sections involve just contemplating on the nature of our physical bodies.

- In the *patikulamanasikara pabba* the 32 parts of the body are discussed. Those body parts are not very appealing when separated from each other. It is amazing how our bad perception of hair in the dinner plate is so different from the admiration we have for the hair that is attached to our head. The hair in the plate could be one of our own, but still, we do not like it.
- The nail on the finger is something we admire, take care and sometimes paint too. But as soon as it is cut, it becomes something not appealing.

10. What we form a liking for is the "whole complete package" with all 32 parts that are in "good condition". We get distraught when hair starts greying, or the skin starts sagging. A beautiful person may become ugly in an instant if the face becomes disfigured due to some mishap.

The reality is that all the above IS GOING TO HAPPEN to us in the future. As long as there is birth, there is decay and death.

11. The section (*pabba*) on *dhatumanasikāra pabba* is to contemplate on the fact that all our bodies are composed of just four entities. They are *pathavi* (solidness), *āpo* (liquid-ness/tendency to bind together), *tejo* (heat or warmth), *vāyo* (wind). Out of the six *dhātu*, *ākāsa* (space) is there too, but *viññāṇa* (consciousness) does not belong to the physical body.

- Those four things make all bodies — whether beautiful or ugly. There is nothing special.

12. The third section (*pabba*) of the physical body, *navasivathika pabba,* is to contemplate on what happens to a dead body over the course of many months if left out on the ground to decay. (That was commonly done at the time of the Buddha).

- Again, whether it is a body of a homeless person or an emperor, the same decay process will take place. Eventually, all body parts will be absorbed to the ground or released to the air.

13. All three of those sections are to help us lose attachments to our physical bodies. The purpose is NOT to get distraught but to develop the wisdom to realize that it is common to us all and will happen.

- A major component of our suffering arises when we eventually realize that we cannot maintain things to our satisfaction. Most people do not like to think about this inevitability. They just want to "whatever it takes" to maintain a beautiful body. The more one does that, the more one will be depressed later.
- Instead what we should do is try to maintain a healthy body by eating well and sticking to a good exercise program. It is not "eye catching aspect" that matters more. One should be more concerned with the health of the body.
- Eating healthy foods and exercising regularly (see, "'Spark" by John Ratey") will keep the body and the mind in good condition, so that we will have enough time to at least get to the *Sotāpanna* stage of Nibbāna.

14. It is important to remember that in all these "*anupassanā*," we need to contemplate on the Three Characteristics of nature (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) when we contemplate on the unfruitfulness in attaching to "things and concepts".

- Also, it is important to examine the potentially "bad outcomes" of immoral and unwise actions. We should also think about the wisdom of our stressful attempts to try to maintain our body appearances. (Especially using artificial techniques like botox). The sooner we realize this, the less stressful it will be.

15. Finally, in those three sections on the body, *patikulamanasikara pabba, dhatumanasikāra pabba*, and *navasivathika pabba,* we need to contemplate on not only our own body (this is what *ajjhatta* means in these three sections), but also on the bodies of others (this is what *bahiddhā* means in these three sections).

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- We can not only contemplate on other humans (famous, poor, rich, young, old, etc), but also on animals. It does not matter who or what it is, we all will eventually become dust. But, for many, this realization comes only after going through much effort in vain to keep the body "beautiful" via artificial means; then it could be too late.
- Therefore, *ajjhatta* and *bahiddhā* means somewhat different things in these three sections compared to other sections.

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16.5 Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)

Revised April 3, 2016; Re-revised May 6, 2017; November 27,2017; December 17, 2017; February 26, 2018

This *sutta* discusses two eightfold paths: A mundane path that leads to rebirth in the "good realms" (at or above the human realm) and the Noble Eightfold Path that leads to *Nibbāna*.

1. All *suttā* in one way or another describe the Path to *Nibbāna*; there are many ways to analyze the Path.

- In this *sutta*, the emphasis is on the 20 "good factors", 10 leading to "good rebirths' and 10 leading to *Nibbāna (Cooling Down of the mind*). The opposing 20 factors direct one away from *Nibbāna* (to be trapped in the four lowest realms or *apāyā*).

2. The Path to *Nibbāna* is normally abbreviated as *sīla* (virtue), *samādhi* (moral concentration), and *paññā* (wisdom).

- Without some level of wisdom one will not even start thinking about the Path. There are some people, no matter how much they listen or read about the Buddha's message, cannot see any benefit from it. Such people have no *sansāric* habit ("*gathi*") built up from past lives, and their minds are totally covered; this is the strong form of *avijjā* called *moha*.
- Therefore, without some level of wisdom (or *paññā*, not "book knowledge") it is not possible to "see the Path". When we talk about "seeing the Path", it is not meant seeing with the eyes; it is seeing with wisdom.
- Thus the correct order is *sīla, samādhi, paññā* (in the mundane Eightfold Path), and then start with higher *paññā* (with comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*) again in the Noble or *Lokuttara* Eightfold Path, i.e., *paññā, sīla, samādhi* towards *Ariya samādhi,* that leads to *sammā ñāṇa* and *sammā vimutti* (*Arahantship*). These are the 10 factors for *Nibbāna*.
- This is discussed in "Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi."
- This is a cyclic process: when one completes the first round, one starts the next round with enhanced *paññā*, and can "see more". The "seeing" will be complete only at the *Arahant* stage.

3. **There are four kinds of "seeing" that is with a person that is improved in the following order:** 1. strong *micchā diṭṭhi* and engaging in *pāpa kamma* (people like serial killers), 2. moral people with some types of *micchā diṭṭhi* (most people today belong to this category), 3. not comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (after getting rid of 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*), and 4. transcendental *sammā Diṭṭhi* (comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta* or vision for attaining *Nibbāna*).

When one's mind is totally covered with defilements (when one has *moha*), one is likely to believe in all or some of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi:*

1. no benefits in giving. [*natthi dinnaṃ*]
2. no benefits in fulfilling one's responsibilities. [*natthi yiṭṭhaṃ*]
3. respecting and making offerings to those with higher virtues has no merits. [*natthi hutaṃ*]
4. *kamma* or deeds do not have good and bad *vipāka.* [*natthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko*]
5. this world does not exist. [*natthi ayaṃ loko*]
6. *para loka* or the world of *gandhabba* does not exist. [*natthi paro loko*]
7. mother is not a special person. [*natthi mātā*]
8. father is not a special person. [*natthi pitā*]
9. there are no instantaneous (*opapathika*) births in other realms. [*natthi sattā opapātikā*]

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10. there are no *samana brahmana* (basically *Ariyā* or *yogis*) who have cultivated their minds to be free of defilements and thus can can see other realms and previous births. [*natthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaṃ parañca lokaṃ sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī*]

[WebLink: suttacentral: AN 3.117. Vipattisampadāsutta - Distress and Attainment Sutta '(1) *natthi dinnaṃ,* (2) *natthi yiṭṭhaṃ,* (3) *natthi hutaṃ,* (4) *natthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ, kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko,* (5) *natthi ayaṃ loko,* (6) *natthi paro loko,* (7) *natthi mātā,* (8) *natthi pitā,* (9) *natthi sattā opapātikā,* (10) *natthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaṃ parañca lokaṃ sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī*']

See, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage" and "Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)" for a discussion on *para loka*.

4. The 10 wrong factors that contribute to one's downfall (*akusala kamma*) RESULT FROM the above 10 types of wrong views.

- One is not likely to see the consequences of immoral thoughts and intentions (*micchā saṅkappa*) in 3 categories: sensual lust (*kāma chanda*), ill-will (*vyapāda*), violence (*hinsā*).
- Thus one will utter 4 types of *micchā vaca* or wrong speech: lying (*musāvāda*), slandering (*pisuṇāvācā*), harsh speech (*parusāvācā [pharusāvācā]*), and empty speech (*sampappalāpa*).
- And one will engage in 3 types of immoral bodily actions (*micchā kammanta*): in killing living beings (*pānātipātā*) , taking the not-given (*adinnādānā*) , sexual misconduct and other extreme sensual activities (*kāmesu micchācārā*).

5. The more one does those 10 defiled actions by the mind, speech, and body, the stronger one's conviction of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* will become. Thus one will be trapped in a downward Path.

- Thus one will be engaged in immoral livelihoods (*micchā ajiva*), make effort in such activities (*micchā vayama*), build-up that mindset (*micchā sati*), and solidify that kind of mindset (*micchā samādhi*).
- Those in turn will strengthen *micchā diṭṭhi, micchā saṅkappa, micchā vaca, micchā kammanta.*
- And so it goes on and on, pushing one downwards spiral.

6. Therefore, those two sets of 10 factors each will lead one in the wrong way towards unimaginable suffering in future lives, and it will be very difficult to break away from them.

- Sometimes acts of occasional kindness or charity could open one's mind to the truth. This is probably the reason for the order: *sīla, samādhi, paññā*. Even occasional acts of virtue (*sīla*) can get one pointed in the right direction.

7. As one removes more and more types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, one will start gaining *sammā diṭṭhi*, which means not having those 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi.*

- Once the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* are removed, one starts comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta*, the correct interpretations. Of course, it will not help at all if *anicca* is interpreted as just "impermanence" and *anatta* as "no-self".
- It is just like taking a medicine to cure a disease. If one is taking the wrong medicine, then no matter how long one takes it, that will not help.

8. So, the *sutta* explains that there are 2 types of *sammā diṭṭhi*: **mundane (*lokiya*), and transcendental (*lokuttara*).**

Initially, one sees the perils of *micchā diṭṭhi* (and associated immoral acts), and starts turning to mundane *sammā diṭṭhi*: One sees that things happen for a reason, and one could get into bad situations and bad births by doing immoral acts. One is motivated to do moral deeds and to seek good rebirths. Now one does not have *moha*, but just *avijjā*.

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- Thus one starts thinking moral thoughts (*sammā saṅkappa*), uttering moral speech (*sammā vaca*), abstain from immoral deeds (*sammā kammanta*).
- Thus one will be engaged in moral livelihoods (*sammā ajiva*), make effort in such activities (*sammā vayama*), build-up that mindset (*sammā sati*), and solidify that kind of mindset (*sammā samādhi*).
- This eight factors constitute the **mundane Eightfold Path**. One will be making progress towards "good rebirths".

9. It is important to realize that those *dasa akusala* that are done by the body (killing, stealing, sexual misconduct) and speech (lying, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping) are tackled in the **mundane Eightfold Path.**

- This is specifically stated in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (MN 117)."
- Even though the English translation there is not good, this fact is clear in the English translation at that website: "WebLink: suttacentral: The Great Forty."

10. Then some of those on the mundane Eightfold Path will start seeing the unique message of the Buddha, which says that one can NEVER find permanent happiness in this world (*lokaya*).

- This is because, even if one makes sure to avoid the four lower realms (*apāyā*) in the next birth by following the mundane Noble Eightfold Path, one will not be assured of anything in the births after that. Because we have no idea under what circumstances we will be born in the next life even if it is human.
- Of course, one needs to be exposed the correct version of *Tilakkhaṇa*.

11. As long as one has not not attained the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*, it is inevitable that one is likely to be born in the *apāyā* in (probably distant) future. One may be born in the human or higher realms for a long time to come due to the moral acts done in this life, but once that "good energy" is spent, past bad *kamma vipāka* will inevitably come to the surface.

- Thus, as long as we are born anywhere in these 31 realms, it will eventually lead to *dukkha* (suffering).
- Thus it is unfruitful to strive for such mundane happiness as a human, *deva*, or *brahma*. In the long run, none of those births will provide permanent happiness. We cannot maintain anything to our satisfaction in the long run anywhere. This is the concept of *anicca*.
- This is in fact the concept of *anatta*: that there is no place in the whole wider world of 31 realms that one could find refuge.

12. The realization of these three characteristics (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) of this world (*lokaya*) is the point at which one grasps the ***lokuttara sammā diṭṭhi***.

- Then one starts thinking moral thoughts (*sammā saṅkappa*) on how to remove suffering FOREVER. Now one is not interested in merely seeking "good rebirths" because one realizes the futility of such efforts in the long term. This is ***lokuttara sammā saṅkappa***.
- One stops uttering immoral speech (*sammā vaca*) and abstain from immoral deeds (*sammā kammanta*), because one realizes that there is NO POINT in doing those things, not just because they lead to bad births. They are now ***lokuttara sammā vaca*** and ***lokuttara sammā kammanta***.
- These in turn will lead to ***lokuttara*** types of ***sammā ajiva, sammā vayama, sammā sati, and sammā samādhi.***
- These eight factors constitute the **lokuttara Noble Eightfold Path** that will take one progressively to stages of "higher cooling down" or *Nibbāna* starting with the *Sotāpanna* stage and ending in the *Arahant* stage.
- *Avijjā* is gradually dispelled starting at the *Sotāpanna* stage and completely removed at the *Arahant* stage; simultaneously, wisdom (*paññā*) grows and becomes complete at the *Arahant* stage.

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13. The uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma lies in the ***lokuttara* Noble Eightfold Path.** Other religions are focused on "how to live a moral life" (even if that has implications of permanent happiness in heaven), and that and more is embodied in the **mundane Noble Eightfold Path**.

- Buddha Dhamma says living a moral life is not enough to attain permanent happiness (because even heaven is not permanent according to Buddha Dhamma). Ultimately, it requires relinquishing all desires for worldly things. But the mindset to seek *Nibbāna* via "relinquishing all desires for worldly things" is not even possible until one makes progress on the **mundane Noble Eightfold Path**. The mind needs to be purified to some extent even to realize the futility of existence anywhere in the 31 realms.
- Through most of the recent past, the genuine ***lokuttara* Noble Eightfold Path** had been hidden together with the true nature of the world as described by the real meanings of *anicca, dukkha, anatta;* most have been practicing the **mundane Noble Eightfold Path.** It is easy for most people to connect with the **mundane Noble Eightfold Path** simply because it is mundane, i.e., concepts that we are already comfortable with.
- But as the Buddha said, his Dhamma "had never been heard before…", as he emphasized in the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta*: "*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*…."

14. In summary, the forty factors are there because there are four pathways each with 10 outcomes: two types of wrong paths (one with 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* and another with strong *micchā diṭṭhi* with immoral behavior) and two types of "good paths" (one after getting rid of 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* and the next with starting to comprehend *anicca, dukkha, anatta*).

- The 10 outcomes in the Noble Path are: *sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappa, sammā vaca, sammā kammanta, sammā ajiva, sammā vayama, sammā sati, sammā samādhi, sammā ñāṇa, and sammā vimutti* (*Arahantship*).
- Towards the end of the Buddha says, "*Iti kho, bhikkhave, aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgato sekkho, dasaṅgasamannāgato arahā hoti..*" **Translated:** "Thus, *bhikkhus*, the path of the disciple in higher training (*Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmi, Anāgāmi*) possesses eight factors, and the *Arahant* possesses ten factors."
- The other three paths have corresponding 10 outcomes, leading to good or bad outcomes, but provide no permanent solution (of course the bad ones lead to unimaginable suffering).

15. The *Pāli* version of the *sutta* — as well as translations in several languages — is available at: WebLink: suttacentral: Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta.

- However, that translation is not complete, as mentioned above. In particular, the distinction between the two types of *sammā diṭṭhi*, etc and two types of eightfold paths is not discussed there because most people today don't understand the importance or the correct interpretation of *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- Finally, another way to analyze this step-by-step process is discussed at: "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

16.5.1 Mahācattārīsaka Sutta

Majjhima Nikāya 117

Mahācattārīsakasutta

Evaṃ me sutaṃ— ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā sāvatthiyaṃ viharati jetavane anāthapiṇḍikassa ārāme. Tatra kho bhagavā bhikkhū āmantesi: "bhikkhavo"ti. "Bhadante"ti te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosuṃ. Bhagavā etadavoca: "ariyaṃ vo, bhikkhave, sammāsamādhiṃ desessāmi saupanisaṃ saparikkhāraṃ. Taṃ suṇātha, sādhukaṃ manasi karotha, bhāsissāmī"ti. "Evaṃ, bhante"ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosuṃ. Bhagavā etadavoca:

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"Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhi saupaniso saparikkhāro? Seyyathidaṃ— sammādiṭṭhi, sammāsaṅkappo, sammāvācā, sammākammanto, sammāājīvo, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati; yā kho, bhikkhave, imehi sattahaṅgehi cittassa ekaggatā parikkhatā—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyo sammāsamādhi saupaniso itipi, saparikkhāro itipi. Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti? Micchādiṭṭhiṃ 'micchādiṭṭhī'ti pajānāti, sammādiṭṭhiṃ 'sammādiṭṭhī'ti pajānāti —sāssa hoti sammādiṭṭhi.

Katamā ca, bhikkhave, micchādiṭṭhi? 'Natthi dinnaṃ, natthi yiṭṭhaṃ, natthi hutaṃ, natthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, natthi ayaṃ loko, natthi paro loko, natthi mātā, natthi pitā, natthi sattā opapātikā, natthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaṃ parañca lokaṃ sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī'ti—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, micchādiṭṭhi.

Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi? Sammādiṭṭhimpahaṃ, bhikkhave, dvāyaṃ vadāmi—atthi, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā; atthi, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggaṅgā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā? 'Atthi dinnaṃ, atthi yiṭṭhaṃ, atthi hutaṃ, atthi sukatadukkaṭānaṃ kammānaṃ phalaṃ vipāko, atthi ayaṃ loko, atthi paro loko, atthi mātā, atthi pitā, atthi sattā opapātikā, atthi loke samaṇabrāhmaṇā sammaggatā sammāpaṭipannā ye imañca lokaṃ parañca lokaṃ sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā pavedentī'ti—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā.

Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggaṅgā? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato paññā paññindriyaṃ paññābalaṃ dhamma-vicayasambojjhaṅgo sammādiṭṭhi maggaṅgaṃ—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggaṅgā. So micchādiṭṭhiyā pahānāya vāyamati, sammādiṭṭhiyā, upasampadāya, svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchādiṭṭhiṃ pajahati, sato sammādiṭṭhiṃ upasampajja viharati, sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammādiṭṭhiṃ anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidaṃ—sammādiṭṭhi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti? Micchāsaṅkappaṃ 'micchāsaṅkappo'ti pajānāti, sammāsaṅkappaṃ 'sammāsaṅkappo'ti pajānāti, sāssa hoti sammādiṭṭhi.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, micchāsaṅkappo? Kāmasaṅkappo, byāpādasaṅkappo, vihiṃsāsaṅkappo—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, micchāsaṅkappo.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo? Sammāsaṅkappampahaṃ, bhikkhave, dvāyaṃ vadāmi—atthi, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko; atthi, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko? Nekkhammasaṅkappo, abyāpādasaṅkappo, avihiṃsāsaṅkappo: 'ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko'.

Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo? Yo kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato takko vitakko saṅkappo appanā byappanā cetaso abhiniropanā vacīsaṅkhāro—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo. So micchāsaṅkappassa pahānāya vāyamati, sammāsaṅkappassa upasampadāya, svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchāsaṅkappaṃ pajahati, sato sammāsaṅkappaṃ upasampajja viharati; sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammāsaṅkappaṃ anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidaṃ— sammādiṭṭhi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti? Micchāvācaṃ 'micchāvācā'ti pajānāti, sammāvācaṃ 'sammāvācā'ti pajānāti; sāssa hoti sammādiṭṭhi. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, micchāvācā? Musāvādo, pisuṇā vācā, pharusā vācā, samphappalāpo—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, micchāvācā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāvācā? Sammāvācampahaṃ, bhikkhave, dvāyaṃ vadāmi—atthi, bhikkhave, sammāvācā sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā; atthi, bhikkhave, sammāvācā ariyā anāsavā

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lokuttarā maggaṅgā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāvācā sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā? Musāvādā veramaṇī, pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī, pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī, samphappalāpā veramaṇī—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammāvācā sāsavā puññabhāgiyā upadhivepakkā. Katamā ca, bhikkhave, sammāvācā ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggaṅgā? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato catūhi vacīduccaritehi ārati virati paṭivirati veramaṇī—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammāvācā ariyā anāsavā lokuttarā maggaṅgā. So micchāvācāya pahānāya vāyamati, sammāvācāya upasampadāya; svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchāvācaṃ pajahati, sato sammāvācaṃ upasampajja viharati; sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammāvācaṃ anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidaṃ—sammādiṭṭhi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti? - Micchākammantaṃ ‘micchākammanto’ti pajānāti, sammākammantaṃ ‘sammākammanto’ti pajānāti; sāssa hoti sammādiṭṭhi. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, micchākammanto? Pāṇātipāto, adinnādānaṃ, kāmesumicchācāro—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, micchākammanto. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammākammanto? Sammākammantam-pahaṃ, bhikkhave, dvāyaṃ vadāmi—atthi, bhikkhave, sammākammanto sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko; atthi, bhikkhave, sammākammanto ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammākammanto sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī, adinnādānā veramaṇī, kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇī—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammākammanto sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammākammanto ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato tīhi kāyaduccaritehi ārati virati paṭivirati veramaṇī—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammākammanto ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo. So - micchākammantassa pahānāya vāyamati, sammākammantassa upasampadāya; svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchākammantaṃ pajahati, sato sammākammantaṃ upasampajja viharati; sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammākammantaṃ anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidaṃ—sammādiṭṭhi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti? Micchāājīvaṃ ‘micchāājīvo’ti pajānāti, sammāājīvaṃ ‘sammāājīvo’ti pajānāti; sāssa hoti sammādiṭṭhi. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, micchāājīvo? Kuhanā, lapanā, nemittikatā, nippesikatā, lābhena lābhaṃ nijigīsanatā—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, micchāājīvo. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo? Sammāājīvampahaṃ, bhikkhave, dvāyaṃ vadāmi—atthi, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko; atthi, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko? Idha, bhikkhave, ariyasāvako micchāājīvaṃ pahāya sammāājīvena jīvikaṃ kappeti—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo sāsavo puññabhāgiyo upadhivepakko. Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo? Yā kho, bhikkhave, ariyacittassa anāsavacittassa ariyamaggasamaṅgino ariyamaggaṃ bhāvayato micchāājīvā ārati virati paṭivirati veramaṇī—ayaṃ, bhikkhave, sammāājīvo ariyo anāsavo lokuttaro maggaṅgo. So micchāājīvassa pahānāya vāyamati, sammāājīvassa upasampadāya; svāssa hoti sammāvāyāmo. So sato micchāājīvaṃ pajahati, sato sammāājīvaṃ upasampajja viharati; sāssa hoti sammāsati. Itiyime tayo dhammā sammāājīvaṃ anuparidhāvanti anuparivattanti, seyyathidaṃ—sammādiṭṭhi, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti? Sammādiṭṭhissa, bhikkhave, sammāsaṅkappo pahoti, sammāsaṅkappassa sammāvācā pahoti, sammāvācassa sammākammanto pahoti, sammākammantassa sammāājīvo pahoti, sammāājīvassa sammāvāyāmo pahoti, sammāvāyāmassa sammāsati pahoti, sammāsatissa sammāsamādhi pahoti, sammāsamādhissa sammāñāṇaṃ pahoti, sammāñāṇassa sammāvimutti pahoti. Iti kho, bhikkhave, aṭṭhaṅgasamannāgato sekkho, dasaṅga-samannāgato arahā hoti. Tatrapi sammāñāṇena aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā vigatā bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchanti.

Tatra, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti. Kathañca, bhikkhave, sammādiṭṭhi pubbaṅgamā hoti? Sammādiṭṭhissa, bhikkhave, micchādiṭṭhi nijjiṇṇā hoti. Ye ca micchādiṭṭhipaccayā aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā sambhavanti te cassa nijjiṇṇā honti. Sammādiṭṭhipaccayā aneke kusalā dhammā bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchanti. Sammāsaṅkappassa, bhikkhave, micchāsaṅkappo nijjiṇṇo hoti … pe … sammāvācassa,

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bhikkhave, micchāvācā nijjiṇṇā hoti … sammākammantassa, bhikkhave, micchākammanto nijjiṇṇo hoti … sammāājīvassa, bhikkhave, micchāājīvo nijjiṇṇo hoti … sammāvāyāmassa, bhikkhave, micchāvāyāmo nijjiṇṇo hoti … sammāsatissa, bhikkhave, micchāsati nijjiṇṇā hoti … sammāsamādhissa, bhikkhave, micchāsamādhi nijjiṇṇo hoti … sammāñāṇassa, bhikkhave, micchāñāṇaṃ nijjiṇṇaṃ hoti … sammāvimuttassa, bhikkhave, micchāvimutti nijjiṇṇā hoti. Ye ca micchāvimuttipaccayā aneke pāpakā akusalā dhammā sambhavanti te cassa nijjiṇṇā honti. Sammāvimuttipaccayā ca aneke kusalā dhammā bhāvanāpāripūriṃ gacchanti.

Iti kho, bhikkhave, vīsati kusalapakkhā, vīsati akusalapakkhā—mahācattārīsako dhammapariyāyo pavattito appaṭivattiyo samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmiṃ.

Yo hi koci, bhikkhave, samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā imaṃ mahācattārīsakaṃ dhammapariyāyaṃ garahitabbaṃ paṭikkositabbaṃ maññeyya tassa diṭṭheva dhamme dasasahadhammikā vādānuvādā gārayhaṃ ṭhānaṃ āgacchanti—sammādiṭṭhiñce bhavaṃ garahati, ye ca micchādiṭṭhī samaṇabrāhmaṇā te bhoto pujjā, te bhoto pāsaṃsā; sammāsaṅkappañce bhavaṃ garahati, ye ca micchāsaṅkappā samaṇabrāhmaṇā te bhoto pujjā, te bhoto pāsaṃsā; sammāvācañce bhavaṃ garahati … pe … sammākammantañce bhavaṃ garahati … sammāājīvañce bhavaṃ garahati … sammāvāyāmañce bhavaṃ garahati … sammāsatiñce bhavaṃ garahati … sammāsamādhiñce bhavaṃ garahati … sammāñāṇañce bhavaṃ garahati … sammāvimuttiñce bhavaṃ garahati, ye ca micchāvimuttī samaṇabrāhmaṇā te bhoto pujjā, te bhoto pāsaṃsā. Yo koci, bhikkhave, samaṇo vā brāhmaṇo vā imaṃ mahācattārīsakaṃ dhammapariyāyaṃ garahitabbaṃ paṭikkositabbaṃ maññeyya tassa diṭṭheva dhamme ime dasasahadhammikā vādānuvādā gārayhaṃ ṭhānaṃ āgacchanti. Yepi te, bhikkhave, ahesuṃ okkalā vassabhaññā ahetuvādā akiriyavādā natthikavādā tepi mahācattārīsakaṃ dhammapariyāyaṃ na garahitabbaṃ nappaṭikkositabbaṃ amaññiṃsu. Taṃ kissa hetu? Nindābyārosau-pārambhabhayā"ti.

Idamavoca bhagavā. Attamanā te bhikkhū bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandunti.

Mahācattārīsakasuttaṃ niṭṭhitaṃ sattamaṃ.

Majjhima Nikāya 117

The Great Forty

Thus have I heard. On one occasion the Blessed One was living at Sāvatthī in Jeta's Grove, Anāthapiṇḍika's Park. There he addressed the bhikkhus thus: "Bhikkhus."—"Venerable sir," they replied. The Blessed One said this:

"Bhikkhus, I shall teach you noble right concentration with its supports and its requisites. Listen and attend closely to what I shall say."—"Yes, venerable sir," the bhikkhus replied. The Blessed One said this:

"What, bhikkhus, is noble right concentration with its supports and its requisites, that is, right view, right intention, right speech, right action, right livelihood, right effort, and right mindfulness? Unification of mind equipped with these seven factors is called noble right concentration with its supports and its requisites.

View

"Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong view as wrong view and right view as right view: this is one's right view.

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"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong view? 'There is nothing given, nothing offered, nothing sacrificed; no fruit or result of good and bad actions; no this world, no other world; no mother, no father; no beings who are reborn spontaneously; no good and virtuous recluses and brahmins in the world who have realised for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.' This is wrong view.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right view? Right view, I say, is twofold: there is right view that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right view that is affected by the taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? 'There is what is given and what is offered and what is sacrificed; there is fruit and result of good and bad actions; there is this world and the other world; there is mother and father; there are beings who are reborn spontaneously; there are in the world good and virtuous recluses and brahmins who have realised for themselves by direct knowledge and declare this world and the other world.' This is right view affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The wisdom, the faculty of wisdom, the power of wisdom, the investigation-of-states enlightenment factor, the path factor of right view in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right view that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

"One makes an effort to abandon wrong view and to enter upon right view: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong view, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right view: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right view, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

Intention

"Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong intention as wrong intention and right intention as right intention: this is one's right view.

"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong intention? The intention of sensual desire, the intention of ill will, and the intention of cruelty: this is wrong intention.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention? Right intention, I say, is twofold: there is right intention that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions, and there is right intention that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? The intention of renunciation, the intention of non-ill will, and the intention of non-cruelty: this is right intention that is affected by taints…ripening in the acquisitions.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right intention that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The thinking, thought, intention, mental absorption, mental fixity, directing of mind, verbal formation in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right intention that is noble…a factor of the path.

"One makes an effort to abandon wrong intention and to enter upon right intention: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong intention, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right intention: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right intention, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

Speech

"Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong speech as wrong speech and right speech as right speech: this is one's right view.

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"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong speech? False speech, malicious speech, harsh speech, and gossip: this is wrong speech.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right speech? Right speech, I say, is twofold: there is right speech that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right speech that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right speech that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? Abstinence from false speech, abstinence from malicious speech, abstinence from harsh speech, abstinence from gossip: this is right speech that is affected by taints…ripening in the acquisitions.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right speech that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The desisting from the four kinds of verbal misconduct, the abstaining, refraining, abstinence from them in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right speech that is noble…a factor of the path.

"One makes an effort to abandon wrong speech and to enter upon right speech: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong speech, mindfully one enters upon and abides in right speech: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right speech, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

Action

"Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong action as wrong action and right action as right action: this is one's right view.

"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong action? Killing living beings, taking what is not given, and misconduct in sensual pleasures: this is wrong action.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right action? Right action, I say, is twofold: there is right action that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right action that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right action that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? Abstinence from killing living beings, abstinence from taking what is not given, abstinence from misconduct in sensual pleasures: this is right action that is affected by taints…ripening in the acquisitions.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right action that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The desisting from the three kinds of bodily misconduct, the abstaining, refraining, abstinence from them in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right action that is noble…a factor of the path.

"One makes an effort to abandon wrong action and to enter upon right action: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong action, mindfully one enters upon and dwells in right action: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right action, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

Livelihood

"Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? One understands wrong livelihood as wrong livelihood and right livelihood as right livelihood: this is one's right view.

"And what, bhikkhus, is wrong livelihood? Scheming, talking, hinting, belittling, pursuing gain with gain: this is wrong livelihood.

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"And what, bhikkhus, is right livelihood? Right livelihood, I say, is twofold: there is right livelihood that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions; and there is right livelihood that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right livelihood that is affected by taints, partaking of merit, ripening in the acquisitions? Here, bhikkhus, a noble disciple abandons wrong livelihood and gains his living by right livelihood: this is right livelihood that is affected by taints…ripening in the acquisitions.

"And what, bhikkhus, is right livelihood that is noble, taintless, supramundane, a factor of the path? The desisting from wrong livelihood, the abstaining, refraining, abstinence from it in one whose mind is noble, whose mind is taintless, who possesses the noble path and is developing the noble path: this is right livelihood that is noble…a factor of the path.

"One makes an effort to abandon wrong livelihood and to enter upon right livelihood: this is one's right effort. Mindfully one abandons wrong livelihood, mindfully one enters upon and dwells in right livelihood: this is one's right mindfulness. Thus these three states run and circle around right livelihood, that is, right view, right effort, and right mindfulness.

The Great Forty

"Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? In one of right view, right intention comes into being; in one of right intention, right speech comes into being; in one of right speech, right action comes into being; in one of right action, right livelihood comes into being; in one of right livelihood, right effort comes into being; in one of right effort, right mindfulness comes into being; in one of right mindfulness, right concentration comes into being; in one of right concentration, right knowledge comes into being; in one of right knowledge, right deliverance comes into being. Thus, bhikkhus, the path of the disciple in higher training possesses eight factors, the arahant possesses ten factors.

"Therein, bhikkhus, right view comes first. And how does right view come first? In one of right view, wrong view is abolished, and the many evil unwholesome states that originate with wrong view as condition are also abolished, and the many wholesome states that originate with right view as condition come to fulfilment by development.

"In one of right intention, wrong intention is abolished, and the many evil unwholesome states that originate with wrong intention as condition are also abolished, and the many wholesome states that originate with right intention as condition come to fulfilment by development.

"In one of right speech, wrong speech is abolished…In one of right action, wrong action is abolished…In one of right livelihood, wrong livelihood is abolished …In one of right effort, wrong effort is abolished…In one of right mindfulness, wrong mindfulness is abolished…In one of right concentration, wrong concentration is abolished…In one of right knowledge, wrong knowledge is abolished…In one of right deliverance, wrong deliverance is abolished, and the many evil unwholesome states that originate with wrong deliverance as condition are also abolished, and the many wholesome states that originate with right deliverance as condition come to fulfilment by development.

"Thus, bhikkhus, there are twenty factors on the side of the wholesome, and twenty factors on the side of the unwholesome. This Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty has been set rolling and cannot be stopped by any recluse or brahmin or god or Māra or Brahmā or anyone in the world.

"Bhikkhus, if any recluse or brahmin thinks that this Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty should be censured and rejected, then there are ten legitimate deductions from his assertions that would provide grounds for censuring him here and now. If that worthy one censures right view, then he would honour and praise those recluses and brahmins who are of wrong view. If that worthy one censures right intention, then he would honour and praise those recluses and brahmins who are of wrong intention. If that worthy one censures right speech… right action…right livelihood…right effort…right mindfulness…right concentration…right

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knowledge…right deliverance, then he would honour and praise those recluses and brahmins who are of wrong deliverance. If any recluse or brahmin thinks that this Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty should be censured and rejected, then these are ten legitimate deductions from his assertions that would provide grounds for censuring him here and now.

"Bhikkhus, even those teachers from Okkala, Vassa and Bhañña, who held the doctrine of non-causality, the doctrine of non-doing, and the doctrine of nihilism, would not think that this Dhamma discourse on the Great Forty should be censured and rejected. Why is that? For fear of blame, attack, and confutation."

That is what the Blessed One said. The bhikkhus were satisfied and delighted in the Blessed One's words.

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16.6 Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day

November 30, 2016; revised October 29, 2019

Introduction

1. In this critical post, I point out that it is better to study *suttā* in the order that is the reverse of the time sequence of *sutta* delivery by the Buddha.

- As I discussed in the post, "Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude," the Buddha spent the first few years of his ministry "paying back" those those who had helped him attain the *Buddhahood* through numerous previous lives.
- Those ranged from the five ascetics (to whom the Buddha delivered the first *desanā*) to King Suddhodana (his father, he went to see in the fifth year after attaining the Buddhahood). They and others in between had fulfilled most of the requirements to achieve the *Arahanthood* in previous lives. They were "ready" to attain the *Arahantship* and were able to comprehend the *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) reasonably quickly.

Comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* Is Not Easy

2. Grasping the *Tilakkhaṇa* is not easy for a normal human being. It takes many, many lives. In a given *Buddha Sāsana* (ministry), those who have fulfilled most of the requirements in previous lives attain *Arahanthood* first, without much effort. For example, the two chief disciples, Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggallana reached the *Sotāpanna* stage just by listening to a single verse and then attained the *Arahanthood* within two weeks.

- **Therefore, those discourses delivered in the first several years were "deep." They could only be comprehended by those who had made progress on the path in previous lives.**
- The first *desanā*, *Dhammacappavattana Sutta*, was a summary of the "Buddhist doctrine" to put in terms of modern terminology. The second *desanā* was on the *anatta* nature of the world, *Anatta Lakkhana Sutta*. The "fire sermon" (*Adittapariyaya Sutta*) was on the "burning nature" of this world of 31 realms. The word "burning" inplies to "*tāpa*" or "heat in the mind." This word "*tāpa*" was discussed later in the *Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta*; see, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life."
- A large number of people (who were ready) attained *magga phala* within the first few years of the Buddha *Sāsana*. In the latter years it took longer and longer for people to attain *magga phala*. In the latter years, the Buddha delivered more and more discourses that were "less deep" and easier to grasp for those who were "less prepared".
- For example, Mahā Cattarisika Sutta and Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta (which were delivered later) provide detailed accounts of the process, starting with basic concepts. However, those basic concepts have not discussed adequately. In some cases, translations are incorrect.
- Many *suttā* clarify even more fundamental aspects.

3. All those "deep *desanās*" delivered early by the Buddha require detailed explanations. Just word-by-word translations cannot explain the deeper meanings. That is why the meanings of the *Tilakkhaṇa* remain hidden.

- Furthermore, understanding *Tilakkhaṇa* requires some fundamental — and essential — material covered in later *suttā* by the Buddha.
- I plan to discuss more of the "less deep" *suttā* in this section in the future. I realized this point only recently while writing posts in the new "Living Dhamma" section.

Four Categories of People, Based on Their Capabilities

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4. As pointed out by Buddha, there are three types of people who can comprehend *Tilakkhaṇa*, categorized according to their "inherent capabilities". That has nothing to do with "book knowledge", but has everything to do with one's ingrained capabilities accumulated over many, many lives.

- The first category is *ugghaṭitaññā* or "persons with high wisdom"; they could grasp concepts very easily. Then some belong to the *vipañcitaññā* category, and they needed a bit more explanation to understand the concepts. The third category is *neyya*; they need detailed explanations (i.e., *patiniddesa*) to grasp a concept. People in the last group of "*padaparama*" are unable to comprehend Dhamma.

  [***ugghaṭitaññu*** : "one who already during a given explanation comes to penetrate the truth" (Pug.). This is one of four types of persons classified according to their ability of acquiring insight, mentioned in A. IV, 133. Cf. also ***vipañcitaññu***, ***neyya***, ***pada-parama***. See The Requisites of Enlightenment, by Ledi Sayadaw (WHEEL 171/174). ***vipañcitaññu*** : "one who realizes the truth after explanation." Thus is called one who realizes the truth only after detailed explanation of that which already had been said to him in a concise form. Cf. *ugghaṭitaññu*. ***neyya*** : "requiring guidance," is said of a person "who through advice and questioning, through wise consideration, and through frequenting noble-minded friends, having intercourse with them, associating with them, gradually comes to penetrate the truth" (Pug. 162). Cf. *ugghaṭitaññū*. ***pada-parama*** : "one for whom the words are the utmost attainment." "Whoever, though having learned much, speaking much, knowing many things by heart, and discoursing much, has not penetrated the truth, such a man is called by that name" (Pug. 163).]
- These categories are listed in the WebLink: suttacentral: Ugghaṭitaññū Sutta (AN 4.133) and discussed in, "Sutta – Introduction."
- These days — 2600 years into the *Buddha Sāsana* of the Gotama Buddha — most people are in the third category of *neyya*. Therefore, it makes more sense for most people today to start at a more fundamental level and proceed to higher levels.
- Trying to comprehend those "deep" *suttā* — without first grasping the material in the *suttā* that were delivered later in his life by the Buddha — is like trying to pass the university entrance examination without having a good primary and high school education.

"Living Dhamma" Section

5. The "Living Dhamma" section was started to provide a systematic way to proceed to higher levels starting at a fundamental level. I highly recommend to everyone to start there.

- If one is confident of the material in early posts in that section, they can proceed quickly to higher levels (later posts). Furthermore, if someone runs into difficulty at a recent post, one needs to go back to earlier posts and clarify those points.
- The Buddha had a unique ability to "see" the capability of each person. Therefore, he was able to deliver a discourse tailored to each individual. No one today has that capability, despite false claims by some. Thus, each person needs to realize one's abilities and deficiencies and strive accordingly.

Need to Discuss Simper *Suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka*

6. There are hundreds of *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* that discuss key concepts at a basic level. It is quite unfortunate that even the *Theravadins* have set aside the *Tipiṭaka* and are using the *Visuddhimagga* of the Buddhaghosa as the "base."

- With the current revival of pure Dhamma in Sri Lanka — initiated by Venerable Waharaka Abhayaratanalankara Thero — the value of the *Tipiṭaka* is becoming clear.

7. In the "Sutta Interpretations" section, I plan to discuss some of those long-forgotten *suttā* to explain key Pāli terms. I will briefly mention some of those *suttā* below.

- The *Nibbāna Sutta* in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya* clearly describes *Nibbāna* as, "*..ragakkhayo, dosakkhayo, mohakkhayo, idam vuccathi Nibbananti.*"

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- One does not need to examine deep concepts like *sunyata* initially. However, even though those deeper meanings become clear upon grasping the basic ideas. See, "What is Sunyata or Sunnata (Emptiness)?"
- That is why I emphasized this at the beginning of the Meditation section: "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation." One can actually experience the "cooling down" as one gets rid of greed, hate, and ignorance (of the true nature of the world) from one's mind.

More Key Pāli Words

8. Another keyword is *anicca*, incorrectly translated as "impermanence". It is very easy to see from the *Icca Sutta* (in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*), that *icchā* or the opposite of *anicca* has nothing do with "permanence". The *Sutta* states,

"*..Icchāya bajjhati loko, icchā vinayāya muccati*

Icchāya vippahānena, sabbaṃ chindati bandhanan" *ti.*"

- That means the following, "The world is bound by *icchā* (cravings), and one needs to get rid of *icchā* to become disentangled; one becomes free of all entanglements by realizing *anicca* nature." Of course, one removes cravings by comprehending *anicca* nature, i.e., that it is not possible to maintain things to one's liking.
- *Icchā* (pronounced ichchā) is a perception in one's mind.

9. The *Dasakammapatha Sutta*, clearly states how people with similar *gati* tend to associate with each other and thus make those *gati* stronger.

- That is why one needs to dissociated from those who have bad *gati* and try to make associations with people with "good *gati*"; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)" and, at a deeper level in "9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gati)."

10. In the *Ginjakavasatha sutta* (*Saṃyutta Nikāya*), Buddha tells Ven. Ānanda that one can determine for oneself whether one has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage. Furthermore, one can declare that if one so desires.

- The deeper meaning of the five precepts discussed in the *Sikkapada vibhanaga* in the *Vibhangapakaranaya-2*. The deeper meaning of the fifth precept, "*surameraya majjapama dattana veramani…*" is described as discussed in the post, "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them."

Many Key Words Are Based on "*San*"

11. The *Cūḷahatthipadopama Sutta* (in the *Majjima Nikāya*) explains many words associated with "*san*". Some of these "*san*" words are discussed in the section on "san." More words in the post, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)."

- Ven. Mahinda Thero explained that *sutta* to King Denampiyathissa when they first met.
- *Cūḷa* is for "small". *Hatthi* is an elephant. *Padopama* comes from "*pada*" + "*upamā*," or "from an example or simile". The simile is about a person who came to the wrong conclusion about the size of an elephant, based on the size of the footprint on the ground left by that elephant.
- That *sutta* explains how people come to wrong conclusions about a given keyword by just taking in the "conventional" interpretation (for example, taking *anicca* to mean "impermanence," whereas the actual meaning of *anicca* much more in-depth).
- I hope to discuss those and other "long-forgotten" and misinterpreted *suttā* that help us understand basic concepts first. Then it would be easier to tackle those deeper *suttā* that were delivered very early.

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16.7 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction

Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta

Majjima Patipada – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World

Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāṇa (Knowledge)

Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages

16.7.1 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction

January 16, 2016; revised February 20, 2020

Introduction

Please download and print the pdf of the *sutta* (or open in another window) for reference. You may need to click the link on the new page again:

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Text

1. I have divided the *sutta* to 13 sections, and I will go through some parts in this essay. There are more posts on other section of the sutta. As explained in the "Sutta – Introduction" post, a *sutta* gives only a short summary of the original *desanā*. It needs detailed explainations.

- It may be helpful to listen to the chanting of the *sutta* by the venerable *Thero*, as it gives the correct pronunciations, and also how to chant it without "too much dragging" as done commonly (which will diminish its effects).
- I could not get my normal audio player to work, so the new player below just has a play button. There is no volume control, so you need to adjust volume on your end.

  WebLink: Listen to the Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

2. *Sutta* chanting can be much more effective if one recites it the right way AND also understand the meaning at least to some extent.

- It is possible that even a single *sutta* can provide Dhamma knowledge that one needs to attain *magga phala*. However, it must be analyzed correctly in detail (*paṭineddesa* version); see, "Sutta – Introduction." Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta is especially important since it lays out the "blueprint" of Buddha Dhamma.

The Framework of Buddha Dhamma

3. Of course, this was the first *sutta* delivered by the Buddha, to the five ascetics Koṇḍañña, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji. Thus, it has the framework or the foundation of Buddha Dhamma.

- The name of the *sutta* comes from the combination of three terms: *Dhamma, Cakka*, and *Pavattana*. *Dhamma* here means the Buddha Dhamma or the true nature of existence. *Cakka* means "seeing" or "to see". *Pavattana* means to "set in motion" AND to "maintain".
- Therefore, the *sutta* describes the **way to "see" the true nature of existence with wisdom**, not with the physical eye. Only a Buddha can discover the true nature, but an average human can comprehend it, once explained.

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- As in many Pāli terms, the word "*dhammacakkappavattana*" comes from the combination of three above words, with an additional "p" just before *pavattana*. As we discussed before, *pañcakkhandha* is the combination of *pañca* with *khandha* with an additional "k" in tying up the two words.
- Sometimes the *sutta* is also called the *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta*.

Opening the "Dhamma Eye" to the World

4. Let us address a common mistranslation of the name of the *sutta*. The most common is "Setting the Wheel of Dhamma in Motion". Here *cakka* (pronounced "chakka"), is translated as "wheel". But the name of the *sutta* becomes quite apparent when one looks at section 9.

- In section 9 (see the text), dhammacakkhun udapādi means "eye to see the Dhamma was born" for the ascetic Kondanna (*āyasmato Koṇḍaññassa*). There is no way to associate a "wheel" here.
- Note that the main summary of the *sutta* ends with section 8. The following sections provide the following information. One is that the ascetic Koṇḍañña attained the *Sotāpanna* stage. The second is a description of various types of *devā* and *brahmā* who attended the delivery of the *sutta;* see #6 below. A large number of them attained various stages of *Nibbāna*.

Four Stages of *Nibbāna*

5. This *sutta* lays out the basic structure of Buddha Dhamma. Then it explains how one attains release from this world of 31 realms via successively attaining four stages of *Nibbāna*. That happens by getting through "three rounds" of bondages (*tiparivaṭṭa*) to this world: "*ti*" means "three", "*vatta*" means "*vataya*" in Sinhala or "circle" in English.

- In section 8, it says, "*..imesu catūsu ariyasaccesu evaṃ* ***tiparivaṭṭaṃ dvādasākāraṃ yathābhutaṃ ñāṇadassanaṃ...*****"** Here "*catusu*" means "four" and "*ariyasaccesu*" of course, means the "Noble Truths." By comprehending the Four Noble Truths, one can overcome the three rounds of bondage and fulfill the 12 factors ("*dvādasākāraṃ*.") Those 12 factors will be discussed in "Tiparivaṭṭaya and Twelve Types of Ñāṇa (Knowledge)."

Three "Rounds" or "circular Walls" to Overcome

6. "*Tiparivaṭṭa*" means the three rounds of bondage. The first is to be released from the *apāyā* (four lowest realms), via the *Sotāpanna* stage, by removing the wrong views about existence in the 31 realms.

- In the second round, one overcomes the *kāma loka* (realms 5 through 11, which include the human realm and 6 *Deva* realms). That happens via two stages. A *Sakadāgāmī* will not be reborn with bodies subjected to diseases. Thus, there will be no more rebirths for a *Sakadāgāmī* in the five lowest realms (*apāyā* and the human realms). Then, at the *Anāgāmī* stage, *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* go away and one is released from births anywhere in the *kāma loka*.
- In the third round, any linkage to anywhere in the 31 realms is removed. The mind becomes free of attachment to any trace of matter, and the *Arahant* stage is attained. See, "What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)."

The 31 Realms of Existence

6. Section 11 is long and takes a significant part of the *sutta*. That section names the 6 *deva* realms and 15 out of 16 *rupi Brahma* realms. Most of this section has been truncated in many published versions of the *sutta*. However, this section is important for a couple of reasons.

- First, it clearly shows that the Buddha indeed described a "wider world" than experienced by us, consisting of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" and "31 Realms of Existence."

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- Second, it says that beings from many those realms were present when the Buddha delivered the *desanā* overnight (over many hours) to the five ascetics. Starting from the 6 *deva* realms, it lists 15 *rupi brahma* realms (except the *asañña* realms, where beings have only a physical body and thus cannot even listen to a *desanā*). It is said that numerous *Devā* and *Brahmā* attained various stages of *Nibbāna*.
- Section 11 starts with "*Bhummānaṃ devānaṃ saddaṃ sutvā Cātummahārājikā devā sadda manussāvesuṃ...*" Here "*bhummanaṃ devanaṃ*" means "*bhummatta Deva*." They are part of the *Catummaharajika Deva* realm, but are located at the Earth's surface with humans (even though we cannot see them). They first became aware of the *desanā* and notified their higher-lying main realm. Section 11 lists how the news progressively propagated to higher-lying realms and eventually *Devā* from all those 21 realms came to listen to the *desanā*. "
- As you can see those realms match the names listed in the following post on the web (note that all of them are referred to as *devas* in the *sutta*, regardless of whether they belong to the 6 *Deva* realms or the *rūpi Brahma* realms): "31 Realms of Existence."
- Of course, only 5 humans (the five ascetics) were present. Any being in the lowest four realms cannot comprehend Dhamma. Also, the *Brahmā* in the 4 *arūpi* realms do not have ears to listen to. Thus section 11 lists 21 realms. Not listed are the four lowest realms, the *asañña* realm, and the four *arūpi Brahma* realms. They appear in many other *suttā*.

The *Sutta* Provides Only a Summary

7. As I mentioned above, the *sutta* gives only a brief outline of the *desanā*. It was delivered over many hours, and the *sutta* is just an outline of that delivery.

- The *sutta* starts off with the customary "*Evaṃ me sutaṃ*" (thus I heard) uttered by Ven. Ānanda at the *Dhamma Sangayana* where these *suttā* were categorized into sections in the *Tipiṭaka*.
- Section 1 is about the two extremes to be avoided: **kāmasukhallikānuyogo** (excess sense pleasures) and **attakilamathānuyogo** (engage in useless activities that make one go through hardships).
- Note that both extremes are labeled "*anattasanhito*." This means anyone who follows those two extremes are unaware of the "*anatta*" nature. Thus they have *saññā*, or perceptions, that will LEAD TO "*anatta*" or being helpless in the rebirth process.
- And they both are "*dukkho*" and "*anariyo*": they will be subjected to suffering and thus they are not *Ariyā* or Noble Ones.
- In addition, the extreme of ***kāmasukhallikānuyogo* is also labeled** *hīno, gammo, pothujjaniko*. Here, "*hino*" means lowly; *gammo* means "uneducated" or "crass". "*Pothu*" means bark or the outer shell of a tree trunk (which is of no value,) and "*janika*" means to produce. Thus a "*pothujjaniko*" means a person who is engaged in useless and unproductive activities. The Buddha often used the term *pothujjaniko* (or *pothujjano*) to described a person who value and crave sense pleasures.

The Middle Path

8. Most people are in the ***kāmasukhallikānuyogo*** mode, even if not in extreme. In fact, one gets closer to "middle" as one progressively become a *Sotāpanna anugāmi, Sotāpanna, Sakadāgāmī, Anāgāmī*. Then the "true middle" found only at *Arahanthood*.

- Thus ***majjhimā paṭipadā*** has a deeper meaning than just "middle path". One has to realize the dangers of "getting drunk" ("*majjī*" or intoxicated with sense pleasures). Here, "*mā*" there means "getting release from", just like in "*sammā*" means "*san*" + "*mā*"; see, "What is 'San?' Meaning of Saṇsāra (or Samsāra)."
- This is why the ***kāmasukhallikānuyogo*** mode has the additional "labels" of *hīno, gammo, pothujjaniko*. Anyone "intoxicated" with sensory pleasures is a *hīno, gammo, pothujjaniko*. Thats mindset can be changed only by comprehending the "..Dhamma that has never been known to the

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world..” or “..***pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu...*”** That phrase is repeated many times in sections 4 through 7 for a reason.

- This is the reason why one cannot comprehend this Dhamma in a conventional way. One has to realize the true nature of the world: *anicca, dukkha, anatta;* see, “Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart.”

More posts on the *sutta* at, “Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta.”

16.7.1.1 Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Text

Evaṃ me sutaṃ:

Ekaṃ samayaṃ Bhagavā **Bārāṇasiyaṃ viharati Isipatane Migadāye**. Tatra kho Bhagavā **pancavaggiye bhikkhū** āmantesi—

1. Dve me’, bhikkhave, antā pabbajitena **na sevitabbā** :

Katame dve:

i. Yo cāyaṃ kāmesu **kāmasukhallikānuyogo** —hīno, gammo, pothujjaniko, anariyo. **anatthasanhito**

ii. Yo cāyaṃ **attakilamathānuyogo** —dukkho, anariyo **anatthasanhito** ,

ete te, bhikkhave, ubho ante anupagamma **majjhimā paṭipadā** Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā cakkhukaraṇī, ñāṇakaraṇī, upasamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya sanvaṭṭati.

2. Katama ca sā, bhikkhave, majjhimā paṭipadā Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā—cakkhukaraṇī ñāṇakaraṇī, upasamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya sanvaṭṭati?

Ayam’eva **ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo** —seyyathidan:— Sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappo, sammā vācā, sammā kammanto, sammā ājīvo, sammā vāyāmo, sammā sati, sammā samādhi.

Ayan kho sā, bhikkhave, majjhimā paṭipadā Tathāgatena abhisambuddhā—cakkhukaraṇī, ñāṇakaraṇī, upasamāya, abhiññāya, sambodhāya, nibbānāya sanvaṭṭati.

3. Idan kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhan ariya saccan: — Jāti’pi dukkhā, jarā’pi dukkhā, vyādhi’pi dukkho, maraṇam’pi dukkhan, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, yamp’icchan na labhati tam’pi dukkhan, saṅkhittena pañcupadānakkhandhā dukkhā.

Idan kho pana, bhikkhave, **dukkhasamudayan ariya saccan**: Yāyan taṇhā ponobhavikā nandirāgasahagatā tatratatrābhinandinī—seyyathidan:— kāmataṇhā, bhavataṇhā, vibhavataṇhā.

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Idan kho pana, bhikkhave, **dukkhanirodhan ariya saccan**: Yo tassā yeva taṇhāya asesavirāganirodho, chāgo, paṭinissaggo, mutti, anālayo.

Idan kho pana, bhikkhave, **dukkhanirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariya saccan**: — Ayameva ariyo aṭṭhaṅgiko maggo—seyyathidan:—sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappo, sammā vācā, sammā kammanto, sammā ājīvo, sammā vāyāmo, sammā sati, sammā samādhi.

4. (i) **Idan dukkhan ariyasaccan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**
(ii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkhan ariyasaccan **pariññeyyan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā, udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**
(iii) Tan kho pan'idaṃ dukkhan ariyasaccan **pariññātan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**

5. (i) **Idan dukkhasamudayan ariyasaccan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**
(ii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkhasamudayan ariya saccan **pahātabban'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**
(iii) Tan kho pan'idaṃ, dukkhasamudayan ariyasaccan **pahīnan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**

6. (i) **Idaṃ dukkhanirodhan ariyasaccan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**
(ii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkhanirodhan ariyasaccan **sacchikātabban'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**
(iii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkhanirodhan ariyasaccan **sacchikatan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**

7. (i) **Idaṃ dukkha nirodhagāmini paṭipadā ariyasaccan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **p ubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**

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(ii) Tan kho pan'idan dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipāda ariya saccan **bhāvetabban'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**
(iii) Tan kho pan'idan, dukkha nirodhagāminī paṭipadā ariyasaccaṃ **bhāvitan'ti me**, bhikkhave, **pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhun udapādi, ñāṇan udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi.**

8. Yāvakīvañca
me, bhikkhave, imesu chatūsu ariyasaccesu **evaṃ tiparivaṭṭan dvādasākāran yathābhutan ñāṇadassanan na** suvisuddhaṃ ahosi, **neva** tāv'āhan, bhikkhave, sadevake loke samārake sabrahmake sassamaṇabrāhmaṇiyā pajāya sadevamanussāya anuttaran sammā sambodhin abhisambuddho paccaññāsin.

Yato ca kho me, bhikkhave, imesu chatūsu ariyasaccesu **evaṃ tiparivaṭṭan dvādasākāran yathābhūtan ñāṇadassanan** suvisuddhan ahosi, ath'āham, bhikkhave, sadevake loke samārake sabrāhmaniyā pajāya sadevamanussāya anuttaran sammā sambodhin abhisambuddho paccaññāsin.

Nāṇañ ca pana me dassanan udapādi, akuppā me chetovimutti a yaṃantimā jāti, natthi' dāni punabbhavo'ti.

Ida ma vo ca Bhagavā. Attamanā pañcavaggiyā bhikkhū Bhagavato bhāsitaṃ abhinandun'ti.

9. Imasmiñca pana veyyākaraṇasmin bhaññamāne āyasmato Koṇḍaññassa virajan vītamalan **dhammacakkhun udapādi** —**yan kiñci samudayadhamman sabban tan nirodhadhamman'ti.**

10. Pavattite ca pana Bhagavatā dhammacakke bhummā devā sadda manussāvesun: **Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan** appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

11. Bhummānan devānan saddam sutvā Cātummahārājikā devā sadda manussāvesun. Etaṃ Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyaṃ Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Cātummahārājikānan devānan saddam sutvā Tāvatinsā devā sadda manussāvesun
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan

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appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Tāvatinsānan devānan saddam sutvā Yāmā devā sadda manussāvesun
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Yamanan devanan saddam sutva Tusitā devā sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Tusitanan devanan saddam sutva Nimmānaratī deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Nimmanratinan devanan saddam sutva Paranimmitavasavattī devā sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Paranimmitavasavattīnan devānan saddam sutva Brahma Parisajja deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Brahma Parisajjanan devanan saddam sutva Brahma Purohita deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Brahma Purohitanan devanan saddam sutva Mahā Brahma deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci

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vā lokasmin'ti.

Mahā Brahmanan devanan saddam sutva Parittabha deva sadda manussāvesun.
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Parittabhanan devanan saddam sutva Appamanabha deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Appamanabhanan devanan saddam sutva Abhassara deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Abhassaranan devanan saddam sutva Paritta Subha deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Paritta Subhanan devanan saddam sutva Appamana Subha deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Appamana Subhanan devanan saddam sutva Subha kinhaka deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Subha kinhakanan devanan saddam sutva Vehappala deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Vehappalanan devanan saddam sutva Aviha deva sadda manussāvesun.

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Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Avihanan devanan saddam sutva Atappa deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Atappanan devanan saddam sutva Sudassa deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Sudassanan devanan saddam sutva Sudassi deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

Sudassinan devanan saddam sutva Akanittakha deva sadda manussāvesun.
Etan Bhagavatā Bārāṇasiyan Isipatane Migadāye anuttaran dhammacakkan pavattitan appativattiyan samaṇena vā brāhmaṇena vā devena vā mārena vā brahmunā vā kenaci vā lokasmin'ti.

12. Itiha tenakkhaṇena tena muhuttena yāva brahmalokā saddo abbhūggañchi. Ayañca dasasahassī lokadhātu saṅkampi sampakampi sampavedhi. Appamāṇo cā uḷāro obhāso loke pāturahosi. Atikkamma devānaṃ devānubhāvan ti.

13. Atha kho **Bhagavā udānan udānesi**: — **Aññāsi vata bho Kondañño, aññāsi vata bho Koṇḍañño'ti.** Iti h'idaṃ āyasmato Koṇḍaññassa Aññā Kondañño tve'va nāman ahosi'ti.

End of Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

16.7.2 Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta

October 23, 2018; revised May 4, 2020; November 14, 2020

Introduction

1. In the very first discourse that he delivered, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*, the Buddha laid out the "foundational aspects" or the essence of Buddha Dhamma.

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- These days, there are many discussions about what is meant by *Nibbāna*. In particular, "secular Buddhists" who do not believe in rebirth try to provide their interpretations. But as we will discuss below, Buddha's position is crystal clear from this *sutta*.
- Some people have doubts about the existence of beings in realms other than the human and animal realms, and whether life exists outside the Solar system, i.e., the Earth. This *sutta* clarifies both, as we will see below.
- I will point out several such vital aspects below.

A *Sutta* Is a Highly Condensed Summary

2. Some people think that the Buddha recited each *sutta* (as it appears in the *Tipiṭaka*) when delivering a discourse. That could be the reason that *suttā* are translated word-by-word by most people today. But that is far from the truth.

- For example, *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* was delivered to the five ascetics over several days. See, "'The Life of the Buddha' by Bhikkhu Nānamoli."
- Only *Ven*. Kondañña attained the *Sotāpanna* stage during the first night. **Then the material was discussed for several days.** The other four ascetics attained the *Sotāpanna* stage over several days.
- The above book contains many passages from the *Vinaya Piṭaka* of the *Tipiṭaka*, which provide many details not available in the *suttā*. It also provides the time-line of major *suttā* and significant events.

3. Therefore, the Buddha actually did not recite the *sutta* as it appears in the *Tipiṭaka*. That recital would have been finished within 15 minutes!

- It will take many people a lifetime to fully understand what is embedded in this *sutta*.
- It appears that the Buddha himself summarized the material in each *sutta* in a short concise way to a limited number of verses that were suitable for oral transmission (easy to remember); see, "Sutta – Introduction."
- We must remember that all the *suttā* in the *Tipiṭaka* were transmitted down orally by many generations. *Tipiṭaka* was written down about 500 years after the *Parinibbāna* of the Buddha. See, "Preservation of the Dhamma."

A *Sutta* Needs to be Explained in Detail

4. It is only a short summary of a *sutta* that is in the *Tipiṭaka*. Many of the *suttā* are highly condensed and need to be discussed in detail. **It is not reasonable to assume that one could understand a *sutta* by just reading a word-by-word translation of a few pages of the *sutta*.**

- However, that is what happens these days. *Suttā* are translated word-by-word into English. This is a very bad practice. It is no different from just reciting a *sutta*!
- Some of these deep *suttā* need to be explained in detail. Even a single key verse needs to be explained in detail.

First Noble Truth in Just a Single Verse!

5. Now, let us look at how the Buddha summarized the First Noble Truth about suffering in that *sutta*.

Idaṃ kho pana, bhikkhave, dukkhaṃ ariya saccaṃ:

jātipi dukkhā, jarāpi dukkhā, byādhipi dukkho, maraṇampi dukkhāṃ**, appiyehi sampayogo dukkho, piyehi vippayogo dukkho, **yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhāṃ**—saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā.* [khitta*** :[pp. of khipati] thrown; overthrown; casted away; upset.] **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

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Translated: *Bhikkhus*, What is the Noble Truth of Suffering?

"**[@1]Birth is suffering, getting old is suffering, getting sick is suffering, dying is suffering. [@2]** Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering and having to separate from those things one likes is suffering. **[@3]If one does not get what one likes, that is suffering** – **[@4]** – in brief, the origin of suffering is the **craving** for the five aggregates of *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, *viññāṇa* (*pañcupādānakkhandha*). All we crave for in this world are represented by *pañcupādānakkhandha* (*upādāna* or craving for the *pañcakkhandha*).

- There are four sections in that verse. I have highlighted alternating sections in order to explain each of the four below.

The Key Aspects of Suffering

6. The first part **[@1]** in bold indicates what we consider to be forms of suffering: Birth, getting old, getting sick, and dying.

- Each and every birth ends up in death. This is why birth is included in suffering. All births – without exception – end up in death.
- We also DO NOT LIKE to get old, to get sick, and we definitely do not like to die. If we have to experience any of them, that is suffering.
- What we WOULD LIKE is to stay young, not get old, not get sick, and not to die ever. If we can have those conditions fulfilled we will be forever happy.
- Therefore, it is clear that the suffering that the Buddha focused on in his first discourse was associated with the rebirth process.

Root Cause of Suffering – Not Getting What One Desires

7. Anyone can see that not getting what one desires is suffering.

- That is what the second part **[@2]** of the verse in #5 (not in bold) says: Having to associate with things that one does not like is suffering and having to separate from those things one likes is suffering.

8. That part in #7 is stated in one succinct statement in the third part **[@3]** of the verse in #5 (in bold): "*yampiccaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*."

"*Yampiccaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ*" is actually a shortened version of the verse (that rhymes).
The full sentence is "*Yaṃ pi **iccaṃ** na labhati taṃ pi dukkhaṃ*."

- "*Yaṃ pi **iccaṃ***" means "whatever is **liked or craved** for". "*Na labhati*" means "not getting". "*taṃ pi dukkhaṃ*" means "that leads to suffering".
- **Therefore, that verse simply says: "If one does not get what one craves or likes, that leads to suffering."**
- **This is a more general statement and applies in any situation.** We can see that in our daily lives. We like to hang out with people we like and it is a stress to be with people that we do not like.
- **Furthermore, the more one craves something, the more suffering one will endure at the end.** But this requires a lot of discussions.

Yampicchaṃ na labhati tampi dukkhaṃ

9. "*Yampiccaṃ nalabhati tampi dukkhaṃ*" verse gets us closer to the deeper meaning about the Noble Truth on suffering.

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- Note that *icca* and *iccha* (ඉච්ච and ඉච්ඡ in Sinhala) are used interchangeably in the *Tipiṭaka* under different *suttā*. The word "*iccha*" with the emphasis on the last syllable indicate "strong *icca*" or "strong attachment".
- The word "*icca*" (liking) is closely related to "*taṇhā*" (getting attached). *Taṇhā* happens automatically because of *icca*.
- Not getting what one desires or craves is the opposite of "*icca*" or "*na icca*" or "*anicca*." This is the same way that "*na āgami*" becomes "*Anāgāmi*" ("*na āgami*" means "not coming back"; but in the context of *Anāgāmi,* it means "not coming back to *kāma loka* or the lowest 11 realms. **Both these are examples of Pāli *sandhi* rules (connecting two words together).**
- The intrinsic nature of this world is "*anicca*," i.e., we will never get what we crave for, and thus at the end (at least at death) we will leave all this behind and suffer, that is *dukkha*.
- There is another (and related) way to explain *anicca* as the opposite of "*nicca*"; see, "Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses."
- To get the deeper meaning of what we have discussed so far, we need to realize that the suffering that the Buddha stated in the verse in #5 above is the FUTURE suffering in future births. That is stated clearly also in the *sutta*.

Rebirth Process Is Irrefutable in Buddha Dhamma

10. After explaining the four Noble Truths (we briefly discussed just the First Noble Truth), the Buddha says in the middle of the *sutta*: "*Ñāṇañca pana me dassanaṃ udapādi: 'akuppā me vimutti, ayamantimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo'" ti.*"

Translated: "The knowledge and vision arose in me: 'unshakable is the liberation of my mind. **This is my last birth.** There is no more renewed existence.'"

- That statement says the outcome of the discovery of that knowledge. The solution to future suffering. **It is the ending of the rebirth process. This will stop those four main causes of suffering discussed in #5 and #6.**
- So, my point is that this statement by itself confirm the following facts. (i) The Buddha was focused on stopping suffering in future lives. (Some of which in lower realms could be unimaginably harsh.) (ii) There is no "safe" rebirth anywhere in this world, whether it is a human, *Deva*, or a *Brahma* realm.

The Need for Detailed Explanations

11. As you can see, one single verse itself takes a lot of explaining. Even the above explanation addresses only the four major types of suffering in the rebirth process.

- For example, we know that during life there is so much suffering too. Suffering during a human life may be much less compared to that during an animal life.
- Suffering in the other three lower realms would be much higher than that in the animal realm.
- There is no realm among the 31 realms where suffering is absent.
- The need for detailed explanations is further clarified in, "Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure."

"*Saṃkhittena Pañcupādānakkhandhā Dukkhā*"

12. The last part **[@4]** of the verse in #5 (not in bold), "*saṃkhittena pañcupādānakkhandhā dukkhā*" will take much more explaining. One needs to understand the five *khandhas* (*rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*) first, in order to even begin to understand this part. **[*saṅkhittena* means being overthrown by defilement]**

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- **Note that *upādāna* is related closely to craving or *icca*.** *Upādāna* means "pulling closer in one's mind due to craving (***iccā***)".
- The more one does *upādāna* with *vacī saṅkhāra* (because of one's *iccā*), one's *taṇhā* grows. Those three words have slightly different meanings, but are closely related.
- Until one sees this *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature of this world, one will be trapped in the suffering-filled rebirth process.
- What we discussed above, together with this verse, is discussed in "Tipiṭaka – A Systematic Approach."

Word-by-Word Translations Can be Dangerous

13. The other key point: Translating some key verses word-by-word can lead to bad unintended consequences. This is because many key Pāli words CANNOT be translated as a single English words. For example, we recently discussed why the word *rūpakkhandha* should not be translated as "form aggregate." See, "Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha."

- The five ascetics were able to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage by understanding the detailed description of the material embedded in this *sutta*. That holds true today.
  By the way, there is nothing in this *sutta* that says impermanence leads to suffering. The key words are *icca* and *anicca*.
- *Anicca* is not the same as Sanskrit "*anitya*" (which does mean impermanence), which in Pāli is "*aniyata*" or "*addhuvaṃ*." None of those three words appear in this *sutta*. In fact, I don't think the word "*anicca*" appears directly in this *sutta* either; of course, it appears in many other *suttā* in the same context. **But the word "*anitya*" does not appear in a single *sutta* in the *Tipiṭaka***; "*aniyata*" and "*addhuvaṃ*" appear in a few *suttā* to actually indicate impermanence in other contexts. For example, "*jīvitaṃ aniyataṃ, maraṇaṃ niyataṃ*."
- The root cause of suffering is explained with the word "*icca*" in this *sutta*, as I explained above.

Therefore, we can see that there is a lot of information embedded in this *sutta*. Further analysis of the *sutta* in this subsection: "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta."

16.7.3 Majjhimā Paṭipadā – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World

January 22, 2016; Revised January 23, 2016; July 19, 2020

Please read the first post on the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* (also called *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana Sutta*) before reading this second post: "Dhammacakkappavatta Sutta – Introduction."

1. In almost all English translations, *majjhimā paṭipadā* is termed the "middle way of the Buddha". This gives the impression that all one needs to do is to avoid extreme sense pleasures and extreme hardships for the body. In general, that is true but the Buddha meant something deeper. One should live such a simple and comfortable life but should start seeing the dangers of craving for sense pleasures.

- Many Pāli words have two meanings: conventional (mundane) and transcendental (*lokuttara*). We saw that the Noble Eightfold Path can be interpreted either way: "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart" or "Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)." As I explained in "Sutta -Introduction," I believe this was a strategy by the Buddha to facilitate at least the conventional transmission of the *Tipiṭaka* during times when *Ariyā* (Noble Persons) are few in number to explain the *lokuttara* meanings of key Pāli words.
- Thus *majjhimā paṭipadā* is the "middle path" in the conventional sense, and it is a good first step. But the *lokuttara* meaning is much deeper, and this *sutta* lays out the basic structure of how to explain the deeper meaning. Throughout his 45 years of his ministry, Buddha explained the details in various ways.

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- One *lokuttara* (or deeper/transcendental) meaning of *majjhimā paṭipadā* is to "avoid being intoxicated by sense pleasures." See, "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand it?." Here we will examine It in detail to show that it is a gradual process. High levels of intoxication are removed via removing *micchā diṭṭhi* when attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage. After that, lower and lower intoxication levels removed as one gains more wisdom in steps.
- We will follow the text of the *sutta* in this pdf: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta-3

2. First, I want to emphasize what is meant by "relinquish" in the title. It means "voluntarily giving up" and NOT to give up attachments to this world by sheer will or force. This is something most people do not comprehend either. The mind will not give up things that it considers pleasurable unless there is a good reason.

- Those reasons are what Buddha Dhamma is all about. One becomes a *Sotāpanna* by truly comprehending why it is not only unfruitful, but also DANGEROUS to attach to things that one perceives to be pleasurable. But even a *Sotāpanna* only has "seen" the truth of the "*anicca* nature" of this world of 31 realms.
- The actual "giving up" comes next, when one slowly start "giving up" voluntarily and progress through the next two stages of *Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī*, and eventually gives up all attachments at the *Arahant* stage.
- Thus one does not need to worry about giving up ANYTHING until reaching the *Sotāpanna* stage. Giving up happens automatically when one realizes the true nature of this world.

3. In the first verse of section 2 of the above pdf, it says, "*Bhikkhus*, what is the *majjhimā paṭipadā* declared by the *Tathāgatha* (Buddha) that leads to the vision, wisdom, calming down, special knowledge (*abhiññā*), comprehend "*san*" (*sambodhi*), and to *Nibbāna*?"

- "It is the Noble Eightfold Path wit *Sammā diṭṭhi, sammā saṅkappa, sammā vaca, sammā kammanta, sammā ājīva, sammā vāyāma, sammā sati, sammā samādhi*."
- In the third verse, he affirms that it is indeed the Path or the *majjhimā paṭipadā*.

4. In section 3, the Four Noble Truths are **briefly stated** (***uddesa*; see, "Sutta -Introduction"), and each can be described in detail filling thousands of books, depending on the level of detail.

- First, suffering is: "*Jāti'pi dukkhā, jarā'pi dukkhā,…..*". This verse we have already analyzed in "Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?," among others.
- The next verse succinctly states the causes for suffering (*dukkha samudhaya*): "the root cause is *taṇhā*. The tendency to attach to various things (*yayaṃ taṇhā*), make *bhava* (*ponobbhavikā*) through valuing such things (*nandirāga*) and giving priority to them (*abhinandini*). These things are: craving for sense pleasures (*kāma taṇhā*), *bhava taṇhā*, and *vibhava taṇhā*." The three types of *taṇhā* are discussed at: "Kāma Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā."
- The third verse is the truth about how to eliminate those causes: "By removing *taṇhā* without a trace (*yeva taṇhāya asesa-virāga-nirodho*), by giving without expecting anything back (*cāgo*), by cutting off all bonds (*paṭinissaggo*), by becoming un-entangled (*mutti*), by removing all attachments (*anālayo*)".
- And the fourth is the way to do that, i.e., via the Noble Eightfold Path that was stated in #3 above.
- There are other posts that further describe the above four Noble Truths in more detail. You can use the "Search" box on top right or scan the "Pure Dhamma – Sitemap" to locate relevant posts. There are so many ways to present the material.

5. Sections 4 through 7 describe how the Buddha attained the Buddhahood via comprehending *tiparivaṭṭa* (three walls of bondage) that keep one trapped in the rebirth process. That process of generating new rebirths is described by *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. That has never been known to the world (except during the times of previous Buddhas): "..***pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu...*".

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- We discussed the term *tiparivaṭṭa* or the "three rounds of bondage" briefly in the previous post. We will discuss it in more detail in the next post.
- I would like to first discuss the term, "..***pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu cakkhuṃ udapādi, ñāṇaṃ udapādi, paññā udapādi, vijjā udapādi, āloko udapādi...***".

6. When the Buddha attained the Buddhahood via comprehending this Dhamma that has never been known to the world, five types of special knowledge arose in him.

Those are *cakkhu, ñāṇa, paññā, vijjā, and āloka.*

- Here "*cakkhu*" is the "Dhamma eye", the ability to "see" the true nature of this world. We can loosely translate *ñāṇa* and *paññā* as "knowledge" and "wisdom".
- The next one is "*vijjā*" (the Sanskrit word is "*vidyā*"). This is the "ultimate science" about the world, what I called the "Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma." A Buddha Is the greatest scientist that comes to the world very infrequently.
- *Simultaneously with the comprehension of vijjā, one is totally removed from "this material world" or "āloka" ("*ā" + "*loka*"). The word "*āloka*" has other meanings, including "light", which we will discuss later.

7. Those five factors arise simultaneously in a Buddha upon attaining the Buddhahood, but all others attain them in stages. For a normal human being:

- "*Cakkhuṃ udapādi*" or "arising of the Dhamma eye" occurs upon attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, i.e., *sammā diṭṭhi.*
- "*Nanaṃ udapādi*" takes place upon attaining the *Sakadāgāmī* stage.
- "*Paññā udapādi*" takes place upon attaining the *Anāgāmī* stage.
- "*Vijjā udapādi*" takes place upon attaining the *Arahant* stage, where "*aloko udapadi*" takes place simultaneously.

8. In section 9, it is stated, "..āyasmato Koṇḍaññassa virajaṃ vītamalaṃ **dhammacakkhuṃ udapādi—*yaṃ kiñci samudayadhammaṃ sabbaṃ taṃ nirodhadhamman'ti*".**

- Upon hearing this first *desanā*, the ascetic Koṇḍanna became a *Sotāpanna* and , "dhamma cakkhuṃ udapādi" or "Dhamma eye arose in him".
- The next part of the verse, "***ya.m kiñci samudayadhamma.m sabba.m ta.m nirodhadhamman'ti***" states what that Dhamma eye grasped: "any Dhamma that gives rise to this world (*samudaya dhamma*), is a Dhamma that can be eliminated (i.e., it is a *nirodha dhamma*)".
- Thus at the *Sotāpanna* stage, one can "see" how this "*nirodha*" is done. Actually doing it leads to the next stages *Nibbāna,* and eventually to the *Arahanthood.*
- One gets to the *Sotāpanna* stage (overcoming the first round of the *tiparivaṭṭa*) by comprehending the wider world view, and by seeing the fruitlessness of "high levels of intoxication" just through that understanding.

9. When a *Sotāpanna* acquires the second knowledge ("*Ñāṇaṃ udapādi*"), that is when he/she really "**STARTS to see the *anicca* nature a bit more by cutting through apparent pleasures of the world with the Dhamma eye".** This process continues through the next phase "*Paññā udapādi*" when one is able to really see the adverse effects and the dangers of any sense pleasures and attains the *Anāgāmī* stage.

- Thus, as you can see, the actual "giving up" happens in a gradual and natural way. One does not need to, and one should not try to, give up sense pleasures by sheer will power (except of course those acts that are called "*pāpa kamma*" i.e., that lead to the suffering of other beings).

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- For example, one does not need to feel guilty about eating a nice meal, having a nice house to live in, etc. Those are the results of previous good *kamma vipāka*. But what one needs to do is to reduce the CRAVING for such things by comprehending the *anicca* nature of this world, i.e., by learning Dhamma and by contemplating. One would realize that cravings/desires for worldly things are fruitless.

10. I can give a simple example from my experience. A few years ago, my wife and I noticed that we had not watched television for many weeks. We decided it was pointless to keep paying for the cable service and canceled the service (We still read the news on the internet). Thus we had not deliberately stopped watching television. We had gradually stopped watching even without us noticing it for several weeks. Of course, there have been more changes like that since then. I just wanted to mention this to emphasize that Buddha Dhamma is not just a theory. It can be experienced: "..*sandiṭṭhiko, akāliko, ehipassiko*...".

- Many of you may wonder why is it a good thing to stop watching TV ("that is something I enjoy after a hard day at work"). But that is a perception we all get used to. I remember being very agitated at night watching TV coverage of the 2008 US presidential election season. It is more enjoyable to listen to or read Dhamma.
- **Please note that I am not saying that one needs to stop watching TV to attain *magga phala* or that one who has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage would necessarily not watch TV.** There was a *Sotāpanna* (named Sarakāni) during the time of the Buddha who could not give up his drinking habit as I mentioned in another post. Only at the ***Anāgāmī stage that one gives* up *kāma rāga* (sense pleasures) as mentioned above.** But each person could reduce or even give up some sense pleasures upon attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage, depending on one's personality (*gati*).

11. I also would like to point out that one should not restrict one's time just to learn Dhamma. One should also engage in meritorious deeds and make an homage to the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha as well. Those activities help get the mind to a state suitable to receive and comprehend Dhamma.

- This is a subtle aspect that was discussed in the "Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya," and a few other posts. Just like a seed needs suitable conditions (soil, water, sunlight, etc) to germinate and grow, one needs to make necessary conditions for the mind to be receptive to deep and subtle concepts by doing meritorious deeds that make one's mind joyful and calm. Engaging in giving (*dāna*) and living a moral life (*sīla*) help enormously with *Bhāvanā* (contemplation and comprehension).

16.7.4 Tiparivaṭṭa and Twelve Types of Ñāṇa (Knowledge)

January 29, 2016; revised January 7, 2019; February 22, 2020

Introduction

1. We discussed the ***tiparivaṭṭa*** (**three rounds of bondage**) briefly in the post "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction." Here we will discuss it in a bit more depth.

- We remind ourselves that the Buddha delivered this *sutta* to the five ascetics right after attaining the *Buddhahood*. The five ascetics first refused to believe that the ascetic Siddhartha had attained the *Buddhahood*. This and other details of Buddha's life described in the *Vinaya Piṭaka*, "Going forth (*Pabbajjā*)." This particular account is in the sub-section, "ON THE GROUP OF FIVE."
- According to that account, the five ascetics first refused to believe that ascetic Gotama had attained the *Buddhahood*. They did not believe Buddha's words!
- Some people ask me whether there is a way to know some other person has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage. Those five ascetics, who were with the ascetic Siddhartha for five years, could not even believe Buddha's own words. How can any of us figure out whether another person has attained *magga phala*? Unless that person declares it, there is no way to know. Even then, there is no way to verify it. Now let us get back to the *sutta*.

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Four Noble Truths Comprehended in Three Rounds (*Tiparivaṭṭa*)

2. At each round of the three rounds (*tiparivaṭṭa*,) three pieces of knowledge about the Four Noble Truths arose in the Buddha. Those 12 pieces of knowledge stated in section 4 through 7 of the *sutta*.

- We will follow the text of the *sutta* (you may want to print it out so that you can refer to each section): Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Text.
- Of course the Buddha attained all 12 types of knowledges together upon attaining the Buddhahood, but we (normal humans) achieve them in four stages of *Sotāpanna*, *Sakadāgāmi*, *Anāgāmi*, and *Arahant*.

The Three Rounds or Barriers

3. There are three rounds or barriers (*ti* + *parivaṭṭa*) to overcome: (1) The *apāyā* or the four lowest realms, (2) *kāma loka* (human realm and the six *deva* realms), (3) *rūpa loka* (16 *rūpi brahma* realms) and *arūpa loka* (4 *arūpi brahma* realms).

- At each round, one comprehends the Four Noble Truths to a certain extent.
- For example, when one becomes a *Sotāpanna* and overcomes the first round (barrier), he/she understands **all Four Noble truths** to some extent. When one becomes an *Anāgāmi* by overcoming the second round, he/she has understood **all Four Noble truths** to a higher level, and it is complete at the *Arahant* stage.
- The Four Noble Truths are discussed at, "Four Noble Truths – Suffering and Its Elimination."

First Noble Truth in Three Rounds

4. First is the knowledge about the suffering in the wider world of 31 realms, as stated in verse 4(i) (***Idan dukkhan ariyasaccan'ti me***). This Dhamma had never been known to the world. That is what a average human comprehends when he/she attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, and overcomes the first round of bondage in the three rounds (*tiparivaṭṭa*), i.e., becomes free of rebirths in the *apāyā*.

- Then that knowledge becomes even more evident when one starts to lose attachments to this world; verse 4(ii). That is the second round of *tiparivaṭṭa* overcome at the *Anāgāmī* stage. The keyword is "***pariññeyyan'ti***," which means "seeing with less attachment to sense cravings" or "*pirisindha*" ("*pirī*" or liking + "*sindha*" or removed in Sinhala). Thus an *Anāgāmī* will never be reborn in the *kāma loka* (i.e., overcome the second round of *tiparivaṭṭa*). [***pariññeyya***: [nt.] what should be known accurately]
- The last round is when "seeing" is done with all cravings removed, as stated by "***pariññātan'ti***." This happens to a human when attaining the *Arahant* stage. But here it is stated, "***pariññātan'ti me***," as stated by the Buddha, where "***me***" means "I" in verse 4(ii). That will become more clear in section 8. [***pariññāta***: [pp. of parijānāti] known for certain; comprehended; known accurately.]
- These three types of knowledge are about the First Noble Truth, *dukkha sacca*.

Second Noble Truth in Three Rounds

5. Section 5 describes three pieces of knowledge for Second Noble Truth, the causes for suffering (*dukkha samudaya*). The Four Noble Truths are succinctly stated in Section 3.

- At the second round of the *tiparivaṭṭa* the **root cause** for suffering identified as "*taṇhā*"; verse 5(i): ***Idan dukkhasamudayan ariyasaccan'ti me***. This is the knowledge a *Sotāpanna* acquires simultaneously with round 1 for *dukkha sacca*. See, "Taṇhā – How We Attach Via Greed, Hate, and Ignorance" for a discussion on *taṇhā*.
- In the second round, one realizes that cause for suffering is attachments to all sensory pleasures (*kāma rāga*): "***pahātabban'ti***," where "*pahā*" means "to remove". For an average human, this knowledge

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comes in two stages of *Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī*; verse 5(ii). [***pahātabba*** : which must be discarded, to be eliminated.]

- In the third round, at the *Arahant* stage, one realizes without any doubt that any *taṇhā* is a cause for suffering: "***pahīnan'ti***"; verse 5(iii). [***pahīna*** : [pp. of pajahati] eliminated; abandoned; destroyed.]
- These three types of knowledge are about the Second Noble Truth, *dukkha samudaya sacca*.

Third Noble Truth in Three Rounds

6. Section 6 describes the three pieces of knowledge for Third Noble Truth, stopping causes for suffering (*dukkha nirodhaya*).

- At the first round of the *tiparivaṭṭa* one realizes that taṇhā must be removed to end the suffering; ***Idaṃ dukkhanirodhan ariyasaccan'ti me***. As stated in section 3: "..*Yo tassā yeva taṇhāya asesa-virāga-nirodho, chāgo, paṭinissaggo, mutti, anālayo*..."This was discussed in the previous post, "Majjima Patipada – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World." That realization sets in at preliminary level in the first round (i.e., Sotāpanna stage.) verse 6(i).
- In the second round, the need to lose all attachments to sensory pleasures (*kāma rāga*) is realized: "***sacchikātabban'ti***." For a normal human, this knowledge comes in two stages of *Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī,* when one actually starts seeing the perils of *kāma rāga*; verse 6(ii). [***sacchikātabba***: [pt. p. of sacchikaroti] realising.]
- In the third round, one realizes without any doubt that any type of *taṇhā* (including *bhava taṇhā* and *vibhava taṇhā*) must be removed: "***sacchikatan'ti***"; verse 6(iii). [***sacchikata***: [pp. of sacchikaroti] realised; experienced for oneself.]

Fourth Noble Truth in Three Rounds

7. The way to accomplish this *nirodhaya* comes in three rounds, as stated in section 7.

- The Noble Eightfold Path as the way to liberation is first grasped in the first round. For a normal human, this knowledge is gained when attaining the *Sotāpanna* stage: ***Idaṃ dukkha nirodhagāmini paṭipadā ariyasaccan'ti me***. One "sees" the Path through the "Dhamma eye": verse 7(i). An enormous amount of defilements disappear just with this "clear vision". [***dukkha nirodhagāmini paṭipadā = magga***] [***nirodha***: [m.] extinction; cessation; the final truth.] [***paṭipadā***, (f.) [fr. paṭi+*pad*] means of reaching a goal or destination, path, way, means, method, mode of progress.]
- Then in the second round, it is realized that one must cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path (*bhāvanā*) to remove the root causes (verse 7(ii)): ***bhāvetabban'ti*** [***bhāvetabba***: [pt. p. of bhāveti] should be cultivated.]
- In the third round, it is realized that one has completed that task, and there is nothing else to be done (verse 7(iii)): ***bhāvitan'ti*** [***bhāvita***: [pp. of bhāveti] increased; cultivated; developed.]
- However, as I mentioned above, all 12 types of knowledge arose in the Buddha simultaneously, upon attaining the Buddhahood.

Declaring the Attainment of the Buddhahood

8. In section 8, the Buddha says: "I had NOT previously declared the Buddhahood since I had not attained all 12 types of knowledge..." Here, "***na*** *suvisuddhaṃ ahosi*" means "had **not** accomplished it completely".

- In the next phrase, the Buddha declares that he has now done that (*suvisuddhaṃ ahosi*), and that he is declaring to the ".. world of humans, *Devā, Brahmā*,.." that he has attained the Buddhahood.

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- In the next verse (Section 9,) he declares: "the vision arose in me (***dassanaṃ udapādi***) , unmovable calm mindset arose in me (***akuppā me vimutti***), this is my last birth (***ayaṃantimā jāti***), and there will be no more *bhava* for me (***natthi' dāni punabbhavo***)."
- Lastly: "*Idamavoca Bhagavā*": "Thus declared the Buddha."

The Last Long Section

9. Section 10 stats that one of the five ascetics, Koṇḍañña, attained the *Sotāpanna* stage at the conclusion of the *desanā*. This section was discussed in the previous post, "Majjima Patipada – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World."

- Then those *Devā* and *Brahmā* who attended the *desanā* identified in a repetitive manner; see, "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction."
- Note that this *sutta* mentions many of the 31 realms. Large numbers of *Devā* and *Brahmā* from most of those realms were present to hear the first discourse. I have marked in blue those different realms.

Path to Be Followed Sequentially

10. The important thing to understand is that one needs to go through these stages sequentially (only a Buddha goes through them at once). Some people try to get rid of "the perception of a self" even before the *Sotāpanna* stage. A "self" is going to be there until any kind of "*gati*" are still there. With the "*apāya gati*" removed at the *Sotāpanna* stage, one overcomes the first stage. "*Kāma gati*" reduce at the *Sakadāgāmī* stage, and eliminated at the *Anāgāmī* stage, thus overcoming the second round of bondage.

- The two *saṃyojanā* of *māna* and *uddhacca* go away only at the *Arahant* stage together with the other three *sanṃyojanā* of *rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga*, and *avijjā*. *Māna* is the perception, "I need to be treated well because I am superior in some way." The tendency to get at least irritated when not respected is *uddhacca*.
- However, the levels of *māna, uddhacca, avijjā* that an *Anāgāmī* has, are at much reduced level. They are gradually decrease through various stages of *Nibbāna* and disappear at the *Arahant* stage.
- Thus the critical step is to understand the nature of the wider world of 31 realms and get through the first round of bondage. That releases one from rebirths in the *apāyā* where the dangers are the highest. The only way to do that is to learn and contemplate the true and pure Dhamma. Relinquishing sense pleasures comes naturally after that. trying to give up sense pleasures forcefully before the *Sotāpanna* stage will only lead to frustration.

11. A normal human, no matter how intelligent, cannot grasp the dangers of existence in the wider world of 31 realms because of various forms of wrong views or *micchā diṭṭhi*. A Buddha discovers the existence of those realms and the unbearable suffering encountered (especially in the *apāyā*).

- Until one gets rid of the those wrong views and attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, it is impossible to "clearly see" the dangers of sense cravings.

Suttā Should Not Be Translated Word-by-Word

12. That is why a *sutta* cannot be translated word by word. A *sutta*, states the key ideas or steps. The key ideas need detailed explanations. This *sutta*, even though delivered overnight, is summarized in a few pages.

- The Buddha must have described what we discussed here plus much more during the several hours of delivery of the *sutta*. In the next post, we will try to discuss some details making the connection to concepts that we have already discussed in other sections.
- As we have seen, the same holds for other *suttā* and for *Paṭicca Samuppāda*. Just listing the eleven steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* will have no benefit. The steps in *Paṭicca Samuppāda* vary according to

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each individual *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycle of relevance (*akusala-mūla, kusala-mūla*, etc.) Yet, the steps are same.

16.7.5 Relinquishing Defilement via Three Rounds and Four Stages

February 4, 2016; revised September 12, 2019

Tiparivattaya – Three Rounds of Bondage to This World

1. Here we will link the concepts like *tiparivattaya* in the *sutta* to other basic ideas that we have discussed in other sections throughout the site.

- I want to emphasize that "relinquish" means "giving up voluntarily, through acquired wisdom."
- When one acquires wisdom, one realizes that defilement arise due to cravings for sense pleasures.
- The real danger is when cravings for sense pleasures lead to bad *kamma* (such as killing) that makes one eligible for the *apāyā*.

2. The Buddha gained all 12 types of knowledge at once in attaining the Buddhahood. However, an average human being will go through the *tiparivattaya* (or the three rounds of bondage) via four stages of *Nibbāna*. We can compare this to building a new complex structure.

- A ***Sotāpanna*** overcomes the **first round** by gaining the basic knowledge on the Four Noble Truths. Those are: what suffering is, the causes for suffering, stopping the causes from taking place, and the way to stop causes. It is seeing the plan to construct a building. All the details are in that blueprint.
- Let us continue with the analogy of constructing a building. The ***Sakadāgāmī*** stage is starting to build the building. With the basic structure finished, one is at the *Anāgāmī* stage. That overcomes the **second round**.
- When the building is all finished with the finer details, that is like attaining the ***Arahant*** stage. One has overcome the **third round**. There is nothing more to be done.

Sotāpanna Anugāmi

3. Even though the above analogy gives the basic idea, we need to examine it in more detail. It is the *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* (one who is striving to become a *Sotāpanna*) who does the bulk of the work. He/she needs to learn the necessary background on "how to design and build the building."

- He/she cannot do that without learning the critical fundamentals from a Noble Person who has gone through at least one of the three rounds (or one of the four stages).
- Thus to become a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi,* one must learn the true nature of the world from an *Ariya* (at least a *Sotāpanna*). There are several posts on this issue. One can find by doing a keyword search or by looking through the posts under "Sotāpanna stage of Nibbāna."

4. To become a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi,* one first needs to get rid of the ten types of *micchā diṭṭhi*; see, "Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage."

- First, the mind needs to grasp that it has to be devoid of the extreme levels of greed (*lobha*), hate (*dosa*). That leads to a gradual reduction of total ignorance (*moha*) via learning the right message of the Buddha, i.e., one needs to see the dangers in acting with *lobha, dosa, moha*.
- One cannot grasp the dangers of the rebirth process if one does not believe that the four lowest realms with unimaginable suffering exist. Those who are striving to become *Sotāpanna* need to carefully read about what constitutes *micchā diṭṭhi*, for example, "Key to Sotāpanna Stage – Diṭṭhi and Vicikicca."

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5. A subtle (but stronger) level of *micchā diṭṭhi* remains until one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*). That means one needs to begin understanding that it is not possible to achieve AND maintain ANYTHING to one's satisfaction.

- Just by having learned the true nature of this world (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*), a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi* gradually removes a bulk of defilement and attains the *Sotāpanna* stage. Now he/she can see the Path to the *Arahanthood*.
- It is important to note that he/she did not have to remove any attachments BY FORCE. All he/she did was to comprehend Dhamma to the level to see not only the unfruitfulness but the dangers of the rebirth process. See, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?."

Sotāpanna stage – First Round of Bondage Overcome

6. When one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage, one significantly reduces *lobha* (extreme greed), *dosa* (intense hate), and *moha* (sheer ignorance). They cut to the levels of *rāga* (attachment to worldly pleasures), *paṭigha* (tendency to become irritated when one does not get one wants), and *avijjā* (not fully knowing the true nature of the world). These terms discussed in "Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā."

- By going through this first round of the *tiparivattaya*, a *Sotāpanna* removes the bulk of defilement. See, "Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire." That illustrates **how one is capable of doing immoral acts that makes one to be eligible for the *apāyā***, just because one has *micchā diṭṭhi*.
- It is essential to realize that there are many people with *micchā diṭṭhi* who go through their lives without doing any such horrible acts. **However, the possibility to do such an act remains with one through future lives until one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage. That is what is meant by *anusaya*, the hidden defilement. They can be removed only via learning and comprehending Dhamma.**

7. What is the reason that a *Sotāpanna* WILL NOT do any highly immoral act that makes him/her eligible to be born in the *apāyā*? It is not something he/she does consciously. Such decisions come automatically. That is the result of comprehending *anicca* (unfruitful) nature of this world.

It sinks into one's mind that no matter what one can gain by doing such an act, it is going to far more dire consequences in the future. Not only that, but "what is the point of harming another being for anything in this world that one will have to eventually give up anyway?".

- It sinks to one's mind that no matter what one can gain by doing such immoral actions, it will lead to far more dire consequences in the future. Not only that but "what is the point of harming another being for anything in this world?." One will have to give up that eventually, when one dies!
- For example, one may kill someone and get a million dollars without getting caught, and may live a luxurious life. But he/she will pay for it by being born in the *apāyā* for millions of years to come.
- When one comprehends the *anicca* nature, one realizes deep down the foolishness (and the dangers) of such acts. *Anusaya* (craving) for such action will be removed when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage. One would have shed such "*gatī*" or character without a trace left. Again, there are many posts on these concepts.

The Second Round of the *tiparivattaya*

8. The second round of the *tiparivattaya* is tackled in by a *Sotāpanna* in two steps. First, to become a *Sakadāgāmī* and then to become an *Anāgāmī*. An *Anāgāmī* has gone through the second round.

- Remember that a *Sotāpanna* has reduced *lobha, dosa, moha* to the levels of *rāga, paṭigha,* and *avijjā;* see #4 above. *Rāga* means the attachments for things in this world, which are three basic types: (i) *Kāma rāga* means attachment to sense pleasures, i.e., those available in *kāma loka*. (ii) *Rūpa rāga*

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means attachment to *jhānic* pleasures in *rūpa loka*, and (iii) *Arūpa rāga* means attachment to *jhānic* pleasures in *arūpa loka*.

- *Kāma rāga* is actually of two "strengths": "*klesha kāma*" [*klesha* is in Sinhala (*kilesā* is in Pāli)] means attachment to sense pleasures, and "*vatthu kāma*" ("*vatthu*" means "property") is stronger because one also wants to own such sense objects.
- When a *Sotāpanna* sees the perils of sense pleasures and the tendency to angry (*paṭigha*), both *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha* are first reduced to the levels of a *Sakadāgāmī*. Here, one actually loses the "*vatthu kāma*" completely. Thus, a *Sakadāgāmī* is said to be "healthy forever" because he will never be born with a body that is subject to diseases. That means he will never be born at or below the human realm.
- As one sees the perils of *kāma assāda* (sensory pleasures) starting at the *Sotāpanna* stage, one begins to see the world more clearly; see, "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana – Introduction."

9. A *Sakadāgāmī* makes more progress via contemplating the drawbacks or perils (*ādīnava*) of sense pleasures and overcomes the second round of bondage to become an *Anāgāmī*. Thus at this stage one eliminates the "*klesha kāma*" [*klesha* is in Sinhala (*kilesā* is in Pāli)] component of the *kāma rāga*, AND remainder of *paṭigha*.

- Thus an *Anāgāmī* has given up all attachments to the *kāma loka* (those including the human and *deva* realms), and hence will not be born anywhere in *kāma loka*.

The Third Round

10. Now we can see that an *Anāgāmī* has only the *rūpa rāga* and *arūpa rāga* remaining with him/her (which are low levels of greed). Furthermore, there is no trace of hate (*dosa*) or friction (*paṭigha*) left. Thus only rebirths in the *brahma realms* are possible for an *Anāgāmī*. Of course, there is still some of *avijjā* left-over too.

- When an *Anāgāmī* overcomes those remaining defilement from his/her mind, the mind becomes purified. Then one attains the *Arahant* stage of *Nibbāna* by overcoming the third round of the *tiparivattaya*.

11. We are bound to the perpetual cycle of rebirths via ten fetters called "*sanyojana* = "san+yojana"; see, "What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)"; *yojana* means bond. *Sanyojana* is sometimes called *saṃyojana*.

- Those ten *sanyojana* (or *saṃyojana*) are also gradually removed as one goes through the three rounds or *tiparivattaya* in four stages.
- At the *Sotāpanna* stage, one removes the two *sanyojana* of *sakkāya diṭṭhi* and *silabbata paramasa* by removing *micchā diṭṭhi*. One also removes the *vicikicchā sanyojana* that is associated with *moha*, and thus reduces *moha* to *avijjā*.

12. At the *Sakadāgāmī* stage, one reduces the two *sanyojana* of *kāma rāga* and *paṭigha*. Those two entirely removed by attaining the *Anāgāmī* stage.

- In terms of *sanyojana*, an *Anāgāmī* has five left to remove: *rūpa rāga, arūpa rāga, māna, uddhacca,* and *avijjā*. With the removal of those, one attains the *Arahanthood*.

Summary

13. Thus we can see that there are many types of analyses one can do. They all mean the same thing at the end. One needs to first comprehend the three characteristics of this world (*anicca, dukkha, anatta*) to some extent to reach the *Sotāpanna* stage. That is the first round of *tiparivattaya*. Then going through the second and third rounds of bondage via the next three stages of *Nibbāna* leads to the complete comprehension of *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. That leads to stopping the *sansāric* (or *samsāric*) journey filled with so much suffering.

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14. Therefore, the whole journey is a truth-seeking mission about this world of 31 realms. That suffering can be intense in some realms. But one's comprehension of suffering is minimal at the beginning. The more one understands the true nature; one's mind AUTOMATICALLY gives up attachments to this world VOLUNTARILY.

- This is why *majjhimā paṭipadā* is not just "middle path" as discussed in a previous post in this series: "Majjhimā Paṭipadā – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World."

15. Thus, the *Dhammacakkappavattana sutta* (or *Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta*) gives the blueprint of what Buddha Dhamma is all about. What the Buddha did in the following 45 years was to describe this blueprint in detail in various ways.

- More details on the material in this post at "Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāna (Knowledge)."
- One could scan through all the posts at: Pure Dhamma – Sitemap

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16.8 Anguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts

June 20, 2018

Aṅguttara Nikāya has many short *suttā* (note that plural of *sutta* is *suttā*) with key information; see, "Nikāya in the Sutta Piṭaka." In this subsection, we will discuss many such *suttā* at various levels.

"Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma"

"Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma – 2"

16.8.1 Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma

June 20, 2018

1. *Dasa kusala* and *dasa akusala* are the foundations of Buddha Dhamma. Nature's laws are based on them.

- A wide variety of synonyms are given for *dasa kusala* and *dasa akusala* in a number of short *suttā* in *Aṅguttara Nikāya*; see, "Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts."
- *Dasa akusala* corrupt a mind and and they lead to *sansāric* suffering.
- *Dasa kusala* purify a mind and and they lead to permanent happiness (*Nibbāna*).

2. We can easily see connections to a number of **key Pāli words and concepts** with this information.

- The most potent of the *dasa akusala* is *micchā diṭṭhi*, which basically corrupts the mind and lead to other nine types of *akusala*. As we have discussed, *micchā diṭṭhi* is of two types: 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* and being unaware of *Tilakkhaṇa*.
- As one first starts getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, one's tendency to do other nine types of *akusala* will decrease. This is the same as saying that one will be cultivating *sammā diṭṭhi* and the tendency to do other nine types of *kusala* will also increase.
- One is fully on the mundane path when one gets rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. One switches to the Noble Path when one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.

3. This is why *dasa kusala* and *dasa akusala* are really the foundation of Buddha Dhamma. All deeper concepts like *anatta* are embedded in these; see, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link."

- I had used two other *suttā* (note that plural of *sutta* is *suttā*) not listed below to point out the connection to *anatta* in that post.
- The other concepts listed below: *Dhamma/Adhamma*, *Ariya dhamma/Anariya dhamma*, *Saddhamma* (beneficial d*hamma*)/*Assaddhamma*, *Sappurisa* (moral) *dhamma* /*Asappurisa dhamma*, *Sādhu* (praiseworthy)/*Asādhu*, *Tapaniya* (lead to a stressful mind) /*Atapaniya*, *Acayagāmi* (lead to rebirth)/*Apacayagāmi*, *Dukkudrayo* (lead to suffering) *dhamma* /*Sukkudrayo dhamma*, *Ariyo magga*/*Anariya magga*.
- Several other concepts become clear from other *suttā*, showing connections to other concepts. I may add more *suttā*, as I find them.

Pali	English
Kusala Sutta (AN 10.180)	
"*Kusalañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi akusalañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamañca, bhikkhave, akusalaṃ? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, akusalaṃ.*	***Akusala*: taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views (defined in terms of *dasa akusala*).**

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Pali	English
Katamañca, bhikkhave, kusalaṃ? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, kusalan"ti.	**Kusala:** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

Akusala Sutta (AN 10.136)

Pali	English
"*Akusalañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi kusalañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamañca, bhikkhave, akusalaṃ? Micchādiṭṭhi ... pe ... micchāvimutti—idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, akusalaṃ. Katamañca, bhikkhave, kusalaṃ? Sammādiṭṭhi ... pe ... sammāvimutti—idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, kusalan"ti.*	**Akusala:** Wrong views, wrong thoughts, wrong speech, wrong actions, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindset, wrong *samadhi*, wrong understanding, wrong *vimutti* (**defined in terms of *micchā* path**). **Kusala:** Opposites in the Noble Eightfold Path.

We see that *Kusala/Akusala* can be defined in two ways (*dasa akusala/dasa kusala* or *micchā* path/Noble Path), as shown by the above two *suttā*. The same is true for all other terms discussed below. However, I am listing only those *suttā* with the *dasa akusala/dasa kusala* definition below, in order to save space.

Dhamma Sutta (AN 10.182)

Pali	English
"*Dhammañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi adhammañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, adhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, adhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, dhammo"ti.*	***Adhammo*:** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. ***Dhammo*:** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

Ariyadhamma Sutta (AN 10.179)

Pali	English
"*Ariyadhammañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi anariya-dhammañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, anariyo dhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anariyo dhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyo dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyo dhammo"ti.*	***Anariyadhammo*:** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. ***Ariyadhammo*:** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

Saddhamma Sutta (AN 10.191)

Pali	English
"*Saddhammañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi asaddhammañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, asaddhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, asaddhammo.*	***Asaddhammo* (*Asath*/Bad *dhamma*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.

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Pali	English
Katamo ca, bhikkhave, saddhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, saddhammo"ti.	***Saddhammo* (*Sath*/Buddha *dhamma*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
Sappurisadhamma Sutta (AN 10.192)	
"*Sappurisadhammañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi asappurisadhammañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, asappurisadhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, asappurisadhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sappurisadhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sappurisadhammo"ti.*	***Asappurisa dhammo* (*Asath purisa* or wicked person's *dhamma*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. ***Sappurisa dhammo* (*Sath purisa* or Moral person's *dhamma*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
Sadhu Sutta (AN 10.178)	
"*Katamañca, bhikkhave, asādhu? Pāṇātipāto, adinnādānaṃ, kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisuṇā vācā, pharusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, byāpādo, micchādiṭṭhi—idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, asādhu.* *Katamañca, bhikkhave, sādhu? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī, adinnādānā veramaṇī, kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇī, musāvādā veramaṇī, pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī, pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī, samphappalāpā veramaṇī, anabhijjhā, abyāpādo, sammādiṭṭhi—idaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sādhū"ti.*	**Blameful (*Asādhu*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. **Praiseworthy (*Sādhu*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
Tapaniya Sutta (AN 10.185)	
"*Tapanīyañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi atapanīyañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, tapanīyo dhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, tapanīyo dhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, atapanīyo dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, atapanīyo dhammo"ti.*	**Stressful (Lead to heating the mind) (*Tapaniyo*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. **Calming (Lead to cooling the mind) (*Atapaniyo*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
Ācayagāmi Sutta (AN 10.186)	
"*Ācayagāmiñca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi apacayagāmiñca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, ācayagāmī dhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ācayagāmī*	**Lead to rebirth (*Ācayagāmi Dhammo*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.

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Pali	English
dhammo. *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, apacayagāmī dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, apacayagāmī dhammo"ti.*	**Calming (Lead to Nibbāna) (*Apacayagāmī Dhammo*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
Dukkhudraya Sutta (AN 10.187)	
"*Dukkhudrayañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi sukhudrayañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, dukkhudrayo dhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, dukkhudrayo dhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sukhudrayo dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sukhudrayo dhammo"ti.*	**Lead to suffering (*Dukkhudrayo Dhammo*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. **Calming (Lead to Sukha/Nibbāna) (*Sukhudrayo Dhammo*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
Vipāka Sutta (AN 10.188)	
"*Dukkhavipākañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi sukhavipākañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, dukkhavipāko dhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, dukkhavipāko dhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sukhavipāko dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sukhavipāko dhammo"ti.*	***Dukkhavipāko dhammo*:** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. ***Sukhavipāko dhammo*:** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
Ariyamagga Sutta (AN 10.189)	
"*Ariyamaggañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi anariya-maggañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, anariyo maggo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anariyo maggo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ariyo maggo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, ariyo maggo"ti.*	***Anariyo maggo*:** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. ***Ariyo maggo*:** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
Kaṇhamagga Sutta (AN 10.190)	
"*Kaṇhamaggañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi sukkamaggañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, kaṇho maggo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, kaṇho maggo.*	***Kaṇho maggo* (Dark path):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.

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Pali	English
Katamo ca, bhikkhave, sukko maggo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sukko maggo"ti.	***Sukko maggo* (Bright path):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

16.8.2 Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma – 2

June 27, 2018

This is the second post in a series. The first post: "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma."

1. *Dasa kusala* and *dasa akusala* are the foundations of Buddha Dhamma. Nature's laws are based on them.

- A wide variety of synonyms are given for *dasa kusala* and *dasa akusala* in a number of short *suttā* in *Aṅguttara Nikāya*; see, "Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts."
- *Dasa akusala* corrupt a mind and they lead to *sansāric* suffering.
- *Dasa kusala* purify a mind and they lead to permanent happiness (*Nibbāna*).

2. We can easily see connections to a number of **key Pāli words and concepts** with this information.

- The most potent of the *dasa akusala* is *micchā diṭṭhi*, which basically corrupts the mind and lead to other nine types of *akusala*. As we have discussed, *micchā diṭṭhi* is of two types: 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* and being unaware of the deeper laws of Nature including *Tilakkhaṇa* (sometimes *asubha* nature is also included, in addition to the *anicca, dukkha, anatta* nature).
- As one first starts getting rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*, one's tendency to do other nine types of *akusala* will decrease. This is the same as saying that one will be cultivating *samma diṭṭhi* and the tendency to do other nine types of *kusala* will also increase.
- One is fully on the mundane path when one gets rid of the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi*. One switches to the Noble Path when one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa*.

3. This is why *dasa kusala* and *dasa kusala* are really the foundation of Buddha Dhamma. All deeper concepts like *anatta* are embedded in these; see, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link."

- I had used the first two *suttā* (note that plural of *sutta* is *suttā*) listed below to point out the connection to *anatta* in that post.
- The other *suttā* listed below involve several more of **deeper** concepts: *Attho(Atto)*, *Āsava*, *Sāvajja* (Blamesworthy), *Uppādetabba* (should arise in a mind), *Āsevitabba* (to be associated with), *Bhāvetabba* (to be used), *Bahulikatabba* (to be used frequently), *Anussaritabba* (to be thought about or contemplated).
- In the previous post I discussed *suttā* involving the following **basic** concepts: *Dhamma/Adhamma*, *Ariya dhamma/Anariya dhamma*, *Saddhamma* (beneficial *dhamma*)/*Assaddhamma*, *Sappurisa* (moral) *dhamma* /*Asappurisa dhamma*, *Sādhu* (praiseworthy)/*Asādhu*, *Tapaniya* (lead to a stressful mind) /*Atapaniya*, *Acayagāmi* (lead to rebirth)/*Apacayagāmi*, *Dukkudrayo* (lead to suffering) *dhamma* /*Sukkudrayo dhamma*, *Ariyo magga*/*Anariya magga*;

see, "Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma."

- In future posts I will discuss other *suttā*, showing connections to other concepts.

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Pali	English
Attha Sutta (AN 10.181)	
"*Atthañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi anatthañca. Taṃ suṇātha, sādhukaṃ manasi karotha, bhāsissāmī"ti. "Evaṃ, bhante"ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosuṃ. Bhagavā etadavoca: "katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***anattho****? Pāṇātipāto, adinnādānaṃ, kāmesumicchācāro, musāvādo, pisuṇā vācā, pharusā vācā, samphappalāpo, abhijjhā, byāpādo, micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anattho.*	***Anattho*** **(One without refuge/protection):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views **(defined in terms of *dasa akusala*)**.
Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ***attho****? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī, adinnādānā veramaṇī, kāmesumicchācārā veramaṇī, musāvādā veramaṇī, pisuṇāya vācāya veramaṇī, pharusāya vācāya veramaṇī, samphappalāpā veramaṇī, anabhijjhā, abyāpādo, sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, attho"ti.*	***Attho*** **(One with refuge/protection):** Opposites: see, "Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link"
Attha Sutta (AN 10.137)	
"*Atthañca vo, bhikkhave, desessāmi anatthañca. Taṃ suṇātha, sādhukaṃ manasi karotha, bhāsissāmī"ti. "Evaṃ, bhante"ti kho te bhikkhū bhagavato paccassosuṃ. Bhagavā etadavoca: "katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***anattho****? Micchādiṭṭhi, micchāsaṅkappo, micchāvācā, micchākammanto, micchāājīvo, micchāvāyāmo, micchāsati, micchāsamādhi, micchāñāṇaṃ, micchāvimutti—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anattho.*	***Anattho*** **(One w/o refuge or protection):**: Wrong views, wrong thoughts, wrong speech, wrong actions, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindset, wrong *samadhi*, wrong understanding, wrong *vimutti* (defined in terms of *micchā* path).
Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ***attho****? Sammādiṭṭhi, sammāsaṅkappo, sammāvācā sammākammanto, sammāājīvo, sammāvāyāmo, sammāsati, sammāsamādhi, sammāñāṇaṃ, sammāvimutti—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, attho"ti.*	***Attho*** **(One with refuge/protection): Opposites in the Noble Eightfold Path.**

We see that *attho/anattho* can be defined in two ways (*dasa akusala/dasa kusala* or *micchā* path/Noble Path), as shown by the above two *suttā*. The same is true for all other terms discussed below. However, in order to save space, I will just provide the name of the *sutta* on the right that gives the definition in terms of *micchā* path/Noble Path.

Āsava Sutta (AN 10.183) and **Sāsava Sutta (AN 10.139)**	
"*Sāsavañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi anāsavañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***sāsavo dhammo****? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sāsavo dhammo.*	***Sāsava Dhamma*** **(that help cultivate *āsava*):** Wrong views, wrong thoughts, wrong speech, wrong actions, wrong livelihood, wrong effort, wrong mindset, wrong *samadhi*, wrong understanding, wrong *vimutti* (**defined in terms of *micchā* path**).

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Pali	English
Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ***anāsavo dhammo****? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anāsavo dhammo"ti.*	***Anāsava Dhamma*** **(that remove** ***āsava*****):** Opposites in the Noble Eightfold Path.

Sāvajja Sutta (AN 10.184) AND **Sāvajja Sutta (AN 10.140)**

"*Sāvajjañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi anavajjañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***sāvajjo dhammo****? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sāvajjo dhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***anavajjo dhammo****? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anavajjo dhammo"ti.*	***Sāvajja Dhammo*** **(blamesworthy):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. ***Anavajjo dhammo*** **(praiseworthy):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

Uppādetabbadhamma Sutta (AN 10.193) AND **Uppādetabba Sutta (AN 10.149)**

"*Uppādetabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi na uppādetabbañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave, na uppādetabbo dhammo? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, na uppādetabbo dhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave, uppādetabbo dhammo? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, uppādetabbo dhammo"ti.*	***na Uppādetabbo Dhammo*** **(*dhamma* that should not arise):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. ***Uppādetabba Dhammo*** **(*dhamma* that should arise):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

Āsevitabbadhamma Sutta (AN 10.194) and **Āsevitabba Sutta (AN 10.150)**

"*Āsevitabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi nāsevitabbañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***nāsevitabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, nāsevitabbo dhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***āsevitabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, āsevitabbo dhammo"ti.*	***Nāsevitabba dhammo*** **(*dhamma* that one should not be associated with):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. ***Āsevitabbadha dhammo*** **(*dhamma* that one should be associated with):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

Bhāvetabbadhamma Sutta (AN 10.195) AND **Bhāvetabba Sutta (AN 10.151)**

"*Bhāvetabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi na bhāvetabbañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***na bhāvetabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi— ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, na bhāvetabbo dhammo.* *Katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***bhāvetabbo dhammo****?*	**Dhamma thould not be used (*na bhāvetabbo dhammo*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views. **Dhamma that should be used (*bhāvetabbo dhammo*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

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Pali	English
Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, bhāvetabbo dhammo"ti.	

Bahulīkātabba Sutta (AN 10.196) AND **Bahulīkattabba Sutta (AN 10.152)**

"*Bahulīkātabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi na bahulīkātabbañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***na bahulīkātabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, na bahulīkātabbo dhammo.*	**Dhamma that should not be frequently associated with (*na bahulīkātabbo dhammo*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ***bahulīkātabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, bahulīkātabbo dhammo"ti.*	**Dhamma that should be frequently associated with (*bahulīkātabbo dhammo*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

Sacchikātabba Sutta (AN 10.198) AND
Sacchikātabba Sutta (AN 10.154)

"*Sacchikātabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi na sacchikātabbañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***na sacchikātabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, na sacchikātabbo dhammo.*	**Dhamma that should not be experienced (*na sacchikātabbo dhammo Dhammo*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ***sacchikātabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, sacchikātabbo dhammo"ti.*	**(*Dhamma* that should be experienced (*sacchikātabbo dhammo*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

Anussaritabbadhamma Sutta (AN 10.197) AND **Anussaritabba Sutta (AN 10.153)**

"*Anussaritabbañca vo, bhikkhave, dhammaṃ desessāmi nānussaritabbañca. Taṃ suṇātha ... pe ... katamo ca, bhikkhave,* ***nānussaritabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipāto ... pe ... micchādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, nānussaritabbo dhammo.*	**Dhamma that should not be thought about (*na anussaritabbo dhammo*):** taking a life, stealing, abusing sense pleasures, speaking untruth, slandering, harsh speech, gossiping, greed, ill-will, wrong views.
Katamo ca, bhikkhave, ***anussaritabbo dhammo****? Pāṇātipātā veramaṇī ... pe ... sammādiṭṭhi—ayaṃ vuccati, bhikkhave, anussaritabbo dhammo"ti.*	**Dhamma that should be thought about (*anussaritabbo dhammo*):** Opposites: see, "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"

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16.9 Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta

May 21, 2018; revised May 23, 2018

1. "*Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta*" is the correct name of the *sutta*, NOT "*Cetanākaranīya Sutta*" as it entitled at several websites including the Sutta Central website: "WebLink: suttacentral: Cetanākaraṇīyasutta (AN 11.2)." The English translation there is entitled accordingly and erroneously: "Making a Wish".

- *Cetana* is what one intends or wishes; *karaniya* means "what one should do", and "*na*" means "not". What the *sutta* is teaching is "Just by wishing such and such one will not get to *Nibbāna*."
- The correct title appears in the Pāli/Sinhala Buddha JayanathiTipitaka Series XXIII, *Angutttara Nikāya* (Part 6, p.586).
- Therefore, the English title of the *sutta* should be something like "Making a Wish Will Not Work".

2. It is a fairly short *sutta*. So, I decided to translate the full *sutta* and put it side-by-side with the Pāli version, so that one can see how it is translated.

- As mentioned above, there is no point in just chanting or repeating to oneself, "May I be free of this, May I be that", etc.
- One needs to map out what needs to be done to stop future suffering and follow that path. There are no easy solutions like sitting down in a quiet place and just chanting or even meditating, even though that should be a part of the whole process.
- This step-by-step process is summarized clearly in the *sutta*.
- I have put in bold every other verse, so it would be easier to match the English and Pāli verses.

"For a person engaged in moral conduct (*sīla*), and is thus moral and virtuous, **there is no need to wish (*cetanā*)**: "May I be able to act with a calm mind". It is in the nature of things that agitation of the mind does not arise in a person engaged in sīla, and is virtuous.	*"Sīlavato, bhikkhave, sīlasampannassa **na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ**: 'avippaṭisāro me uppajjatū'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ sīlavato sīlasampannassa avippaṭisāro uppajjati.*
"For a person free from an agitated mind, there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May happiness arise in me". It is in the nature of things that happiness (tranquility) arises in a person free from agitation in the mind.	***Avippaṭisārissa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'pāmojjaṃ me uppajjatū'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ avippaṭisārissa pāmojjaṃ uppajjati.***
"For a person with happiness (tranquility of mind), there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May joy arise in me". It is in the nature of things that joy arises in a person with a peaceful mind.	*Pamuditassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'pīti me uppajjatū'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ pamuditassa pīti uppajjati.*
"For a joyful person, there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May I feel lightness in the body". It is in the nature of things that a joyful person attains bodily lightness (*passaddhi*).	***Pītimanassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'kāyo me passambhatū'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ pītimanassa kāyo passambhati.***
"For a person with bodily lightness, there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May I experience *sukha*". It is in the nature of things that a person with bodily lightness experiences *sukha*.	*Passaddhakāyassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'sukhaṃ vediyāmī'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ passaddhakāyo sukhaṃ vediyati.*

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"For a person experiencing *sukha*, there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May my mind get to *samādhi*." It is in the nature of things that the mind of a person experiencing *sukha* gets to *samādhi*.

Sukhino, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'cittaṃ me samādhiyatū'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ sukhino cittaṃ samādhiyati.

"For a person who gets to *samādhi*, there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May I know and see the true nature of things in this world (*yathābhūta ñāna* or comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*)". It is in the nature of things that a person who gets to *samādhi* will see the true nature of this world. **(Here it is assumed that one is exposed *Tilakkhaṇa* from an *Ariya*; see #3, #4 below).**

Samāhitassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'yathābhūtaṃ jānāmi passāmī'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ samāhito yathābhūtaṃ jānāti passati.

"For a person with *yathābhūta ñāna*, there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May I not be attracted to temptations in this world (*virāga*) ." It is in the nature of things that a person who knows and sees things as they actually are, will be dispassionate towards things in this world.

Yathābhūtaṃ, bhikkhave, jānato passato na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'nibbindāmī'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ yathābhūtaṃ jānaṃ passaṃ nibbindati.

"For a person who thus naturally dispassionate, there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May I be free of cravings for things in this world". It is in the nature of things that a person who dispassionate through understanding of the real nature of things will be free of cravings.

Nibbinnassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'virajjāmī'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ nibbinno virajjati.

"For a person who is free of cravings, there is no need to wish (*cetanā*): "May I realize the knowledge of the final release from all suffering (*vimuttiñāṇadassana*)". It is in the nature of things that a person who is free of cravings will attain the final release from all suffering.

Virattassa, bhikkhave, na cetanāya karaṇīyaṃ: 'vimuttiñāṇadassanaṃ sacchikaromī'ti. Dhammatā esā, bhikkhave, yaṃ viratto vimuttiñāṇadassanaṃ sacchikaroti.

"In this way, *bhikkhus*, freedom from cravings (dispassion) has release from all suffering as its reward, Disenchantment has dispassion as its reward, *yathābhūta ñāna* has , disenchantment as its reward, *samādhi* has *yathābhūta ñāna* as its reward, *sukha* has *samādhi* as its reward, bodily lightness (*passaddhi*) has *sukha* as its reward, calm mind has bodily lightness as its reward. Joy has calm mind as its reward, freedom from an agitated mind has joy as its reward, moral conduct has freedom from an agitated mind as its reward.

Iti kho, bhikkhave, virāgo vimuttiñāṇadas-sanattho vimuttiñāṇadassanānisaṃso, nibbidā virāgatthā virāgānisaṃsā, yathābhūtañāṇadas-sanaṃ nibbidatthaṃ nibbidānisaṃsaṃ, samādhi yathābhūtañāṇadassanattho yathā-bhūtañāṇadassanānisaṃso, sukhaṃ samādhatthaṃ samādhānisaṃsaṃ, passaddhi sukhatthā sukhānisaṃsā, pīti passaddhatthā passaddhānisaṃsā, pāmojjaṃ pītatthaṃ pītānisaṃsaṃ, avippaṭisāro pāmojjattho pāmojjānisaṃso, kusalāni sīlāni avippaṭisārat-thāni avippaṭisārānisaṃsāni. Iti kho,

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"In this way, dhamma qualities cultivate and fulfill more dhamma qualities in the Noble Path in getting to from this shore to the Far shore (*Nibbāna*)."	*bhikkhave, dhammā dhamme abhisandenti, dhammā dhamme paripūrenti apārā pāraṃ gamanāyā"ti.*

3. The path to *Nibbāna* is not a straight step-by-step process in a linear fashion. Rather, a given person cycles through the steps over and over until the *Arahant phala* moment is attained.

- One starts with mundane *sīla*, and can get to early stages of *samādhi* even without hearing about *Tilakkhaṇa*. **One cannot proceed beyond that with just *sīla*, which is on shaky grounds until one comprehends *Tilakkhaṇa*.**
- Once one starts comprehending *Tilakkhaṇa* (and becomes a *Sotāpanna*/*Sotāpanna Anugāmi*), one's *sīla* (moral conduct) will become unbreakable: **It is called *Ariyakānta sīla*.**
- That is when one really gets into the Noble Eightfold Path.

4. In other words, there are two paths: One starts on the mundane path and with the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*, one switches over to the Noble Path; see, "Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart."

- Only a *Sammasambuddha* or a *pacceka Buddha* can figure out (or comprehend) *Tilakkhaṇa*, by themselves; all others have to learn *Tilakkhaṇa* from an *Ariya*.

5. Another key thing to note is that there is no mention about the need to attain *jhānā*.

Jhānā are a special kind of *samādhi*. It is good to cultivate *jhānā*, but they are not necessary to attain *magga phala*.

And there are an innumerable types of *samādhi*; one gets to *Ariya samādhi* (conducive to attain *Nibbāna*) with the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*.

6. Key words:

- ***Avippaṭisāra* (වීපිලිසර බව (vigilance) in Sinhala [vipilisara bava in Sinhala]):** One's mind is normally agitated. It tends to go everywhere. This is why it is hard for most people to comprehend Dhamma. When one really focus on maintaining moral conduct (*sīla*) and stays away from *dasa akusala*, this agitation of the mind will gradually diminish, and one will be able to concentrate on a given concept for longer times. [***Avippaṭisāra*** ; [a + vippaṭisāra] absence of regret or remorse]
- ***pāmojja* (සතුට or ප්‍රමෝද්‍ය (wellness) in Sinhala [satuṭa or pramodaya in Sinhala]):** Happiness or tranquility of mind is the closest English translation. This is below the "joyful state of mind" or ***pīti*** (ප්‍රීති in Sinhala [prīti in Sinhala]).
- ***passambhati/passaddha*:** calming down (lightness) of the physical body (කායික සැහැල්ලුව [kāyika sæhælluva] (physically light)).
- **nibbindati:** get weary of, unsatisfied with (කලකිරීම [kalakirīma] (disappointment)).
- ***virajjati*** (related to ***virāga*): absence of cravings.**
- ***vimutti*:** becomes free of suffering, final release (විමුක්ති [vimukti] (liberation)).

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16.10 Paṭhama Mettā Sutta

June 7, 2018; revised June 8, 2018; September 13, 2018; August 30, 2020

1. WebLink: suttacentral: Paṭhama Mettā Sutta (AN 4.125) clearly states the difference between *jhānā* cultivated by Noble Persons (*Ariyā*) and those who are merely on the mundane path (*assutavā puthujjano*). Here *assutavā puthujjano* means one who has not comprehended *Tilakkhaṇa;* one MUST have removed the 10 types of *micchā diṭṭhi* even to cultivate *anāriya jhāna*.

- Since *jhānic* states represent the same *rūpāvacara* realms, the *jhānic* experience could be the same for both *Ariya* and *anāriya jhāna* (I am not certain).
- However, the critical difference is that Noble Persons (who have cultivated *jhāna*) NEVER come back to *kāma loka* and attain *Parinibbāna*, while the *anāriyās* come back to *kāma loka*, and could be born in the *apāyā* too.
- That is because the *Ariyā* have REMOVED *kāma rāga* (*ucceda pahāna*), while *anāriyās* have only SUPPRESSED them (*vikkhambhana pahāna*).

[***pahāna*** : 'overcoming', abandoning. There are 5 kinds of overcoming:

(1) overcoming by repression (*vikkhambhana-pahāna*), i.e. the temporary suspension of the 5 hindrances (*nīvarana,* q.v.) during the absorptions,
(2) overcoming by the opposite (*tadanga-pahāna*),
(3) overcoming by destruction (*samuccheda-pahāna*),
(4) overcoming by tranquillization (*patipassaddhi-pahāna*),
(5) overcoming by escape (*nissarana-pahāna*).

[***nissaraṇa*** : [nt.] 1. going out; departure; 2. escape.]

(1) "Among these, 'overcoming by repression' is the pushing back of adverse things, such as the 5 mental hindrances (*nīvarana* q.v), etc., through this or that mental concentration (*samādhi,* q.v.), just as a pot thrown into moss-clad water pushes the moss aside....

(2) " 'Overcoming by the opposite' is the overcoming by opposing this or that thing that is to be overcome, by this or that factor of knowledge belonging to insight (*vipassanā* q.v.), just as a lighted lamp dispels the darkness of the night. In this way, the personality-belief (*sakkāyadiṭṭhi,* s. *diṭṭhi*) is overcome by determining the mental and corporeal phenomena ... the view of uncausedness of existence by investigation into the conditions... the idea of eternity by contemplation of impermanency ... the idea of happiness by contemplation of misery....

(3) "If through the knowledge of the noble path (s. *ariyapuggala*) the fetters and other evil things cannot continue any longer, just like a tree destroyed by lightning, then such an overcoming is called 'overcoming by destruction' " (Vis.M. XXII, 110f.).

(4) When, after the disappearing of the fetters at the entrance into the paths, the fetters, from the moment of fruition (*phala*) onwards, are forever extinct and stilled, such overcoming is called the 'overcoming by tranquillization'.

(5) "The 'overcoming by escape' is identical with the extinction and Nibbāna" (Pts.M. I. 27). (App.).]

2. The *Brahma Vihāra* in Buddha Dhamma are four types: *mettā* (loving-kindness), *karuṇā* (compassion, the opposite of *karuṇā* is anger), *muditā* (empathetic joy), and *upekkhā* (equanimity towards all beings).

- The four realms correspond to the four highest-intensity *rūpāvacara jhāna* levels (in *sutta* categorization of *jhāna*).
- We can clearly see the concept of *gati*; most translators do not even know what that word means.
- Instead of translating the *sutta* word-by-word, I have just provided the meaning of each verse.

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	Pāli	English
1	***Cattārome, bhikkhave, puggalā santo saṃvijjamānā*** *lokasmiṃ. Katame cattāro?*	*Bhikkhus*, **there are four types of "cooled down" individuals** (*santo*) to be found existing in the world. Which four?
2	*Idha, bhikkhave, ekacco puggalo* ***mettāsahagatena*** *cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati, tathā dutiyaṃ tathā tatiyaṃ tathā catutthaṃ. Iti uddhamadho tiriyaṃ sabbadhi sabbattatāya sabbāvantaṃ lokaṃ mettāsahagatena cetasā vipulena mahaggatena appamāṇena averena abyāpajjena pharitvā viharati. So tadassādeti, taṃ nikāmeti, tena ca vittiṃ āpajjati.*	*Bhikkhus*, There is an individual who cultivates ***mettā bhavana*** in four directions. Thus he keeps pervading above, below, and all around the universe with compassion.
3	*Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālaṃ kurumāno* ***brahmakāyikānaṃ devānaṃ*** *sahabyataṃ upapajjati. Brahmakāyikānaṃ, bhikkhave, devānaṃ kappo āyuppamāṇaṃ. Tattha* ***puthujjano*** *yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā* ***nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati.***	When he dies, he is reborn in the realm ***Brahmakayika*** realm. Those *devas* have a life-span of an eon (*Maha Kappa*). An ***anāriya* person** having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, **can be reborn in hell, animal womb, or the state of the hungry ghosts.**
4	***Bhagavato pana sāvako*** *tattha yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā tasmiṃyeva bhave* ***parinibbāyati****. Ayaṃ kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayaṃ adhippayāso idaṃ nānākaraṇaṃ sutavato ariyasāvakassa assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidaṃ* ***gatiyā*** *upapattiyā sati.*	But **a disciple of the Blessed One** (an *Ariya*), having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, **attains *Parinibbana* there**. The difference is in the ***gati*** between a Noble Person and an *anāriya* (*assutavatā puthujjanena*).
5	*Puna caparaṃ, bhikkhave, idhekacco puggalo* ***karuṇāsahagatena*** *cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati*,..(rest of the verse same as that of 2 above).	*Again, Bhikkhus*, There is an individual who cultivates ***karuna bhavana*** in four directions (rest same as in 2 above).
6	*Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālaṃ kurumāno ābhassarānaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjati. Ābhassarānaṃ, bhikkhave, devānaṃ dve kappā āyuppamāṇaṃ. Tattha* ***puthujjano*** *yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati.*	When he dies, he is reborn in the *Abhassara* realm. Those *devas* have a life-span of 8 eons (*Maha Kappa*). An ***anāriya* person** having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, can be reborn in hell, animal womb, or the state of the hungry ghosts.
7	***Bhagavato pana sāvako*** *tattha yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā tasmiṃyeva bhave* ***parinibbāyati****. Ayaṃ kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayaṃ adhippayāso idaṃ nānākaraṇaṃ sutavato ariyasāvakassa*	But **a disciple of the Blessed One** (an *Ariya*), having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, **attains *Parinibbana* there**. The difference is in the ***gati*** between an the noble ones and an *anāriya* (*assutavatā puthujjanena*).

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	*assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidaṃ **gatiyā** upapattiyā sati.*	
8	*Puna caparaṃ, bhikkhave, idhekacco puggalo **muditāsahagatena** cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati,..*(rest of the verse same as that of 2 above).	*Again, Bhikkhus*, There is an individual who cultivates ***mudita bhavana*** in four directions.
9	*Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālaṃ kurumāno Subhakinha devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjati. Subhakinha, bhikkhave, devānaṃ cattāro kappā āyuppamāṇaṃ. Tattha **puthujjano** yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati.*	When he dies, he is reborn in the *Subhakinha* realm. Those *devas* have a life-span of 4 eons (*Maha Kappa*). An ***anāriya* person** having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, can be reborn in hell, animal womb, or the state of the hungry ghosts.
10	***Bhagavato pana sāvako** tattha yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā tasmiṃyeva bhave **parinibbāyati**. Ayaṃ kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayaṃ adhippayāso idaṃ nānākaraṇaṃ sutavato ariyasāvakassa assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidaṃ **gatiyā** upapattiyā sati.*	But **a disciple of the Blessed One** (an *Ariya*), having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, **attains *Parinibbana* there**. The difference is in the ***gati*** between an the noble ones and an *anāriya* (*assutavatā puthujjanena*).
11	*Puna caparaṃ, bhikkhave, idhekacco puggalo **upekkhāsahagatena** cetasā ekaṃ disaṃ pharitvā viharati,..*(rest of the verse same as that of 2 above)	*Again, Bhikkhus*, There is an individual who cultivates ***upekkha bhavana*** in four directions.
12	*Tattha ṭhito tadadhimutto tabbahulavihārī aparihīno kālaṃ kurumāno vehapphalānaṃ devānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjati. Vehapphalānaṃ, bhikkhave, devānaṃ pañca kappasatāni āyuppamāṇaṃ. Tattha **puthujjano** yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā nirayampi gacchati tiracchānayonimpi gacchati pettivisayampi gacchati.*	When he dies, he is reborn in the *Vehapphala* realm. Those *devas* have a life-span of 500 eons (*Maha Kappa*). An ***anāriya* person** having stayed there, having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, can be reborn in hell, animal womb, or the state of the hungry ghosts.
13	***Bhagavato pana sāvako** tattha yāvatāyukaṃ ṭhatvā yāvatakaṃ tesaṃ devānaṃ āyuppamāṇaṃ taṃ sabbaṃ khepetvā tasmiṃyeva bhave **parinibbāyati**. Ayaṃ kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayaṃ adhippayāso idaṃ nānākaraṇaṃ sutavato ariyasāvakassa assutavatā puthujjanena, yadidaṃ **gatiyā** upapattiyā sati.*	But **a disciple of the Blessed One** (an *Ariya*), having used up all the life-span of those *devas*, **attains *Parinibbana* there**. The difference is in the ***gati*** between an the noble ones and an *anāriya* (*assutavatā puthujjanena*).
14	*Ayaṃ kho, bhikkhave, viseso ayaṃ adhippayāso idaṃ nānākaraṇaṃ **sutavato ariyasāvakassa assutavatā puthujjanena**, yadidaṃ **gatiyā** upapattiyā sati. Ime kho,*	*Bhikkhus*, this is the difference in outcomes due to **difference in *gati*** between a Noble Person and an *anāriya* (*assutavatā puthujjanena*).

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	bhikkhave, cattāro puggalā santo saṃvijjamānā lokasmin"ti.	

Notes:

1. The four *jhānic* states attained by an *Ariya* discussed in this *sutta* are from *anāriya jhāna*. Therefore, they are *jhānic* states attained specifically by a *Sotāpanna*, by SUPPRESSING *kāma rāga*. If a *Sotāpanna* attained even the first *Ariya jhāna*, then he/she would be born not in those four realms, but in the realms reserved for those who attained the *Anāgami phala* (realms #23 through #27; see, "31 Realms of Existence."

2. Note that by cultivating *mettā, karuṇā, muditā*, and *upekkhā bhāvanā*, one is born in *Brahmakāyika, Abhassara, Subhakinha*, and *Vehappala Brahma* realms with lifetimes of 20000, 40000, 60000, and 84000 *kappā*.

3. For more information on *jhānā*, see "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" and "Power of the Human Mind."

4. Information on 31 realms comes from *suttā* like this one. I have corrected the lifetimes of these four *rūpāvacara* realms in the post, "31 Realms of Existence."

5. Discussion at : "WebLink: Paṭhama Mettā Sutta (AN 4.125)."

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16.11 Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) – Kammakkhaya

June 11, 2018; revised April 12, 2020; December 29, 2020; January 7, 2021

What Is Meant by *Kammakkhaya*?

1. *Kammakkhaya* is a bit difficult concept to understand. WebLink: suttacentral: Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 57) explains it briefly and also clarifies how *pāpa* (*kaṇha*) *kamma* and *puñña* (*sukka*) *kamma* lead to bad and good *kamma vipāka* in various realms. *Kusala kamma* (also called *khammakkhayāya kamma* in this sutta) leads to *kammakkhaya* or "effectively nullifying" *kamma vipāka*.

- *Kaṇha* means "dark or black" (Sinhala word is "*kalla*"), and *sukka* is "white or bright" (Sinhala "*sudu*"). The King of Gods is named "Sakka" because he is engaged in *sukka* (*puñña*) *kamma*.
- Please read the post, "Kaṇha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya" before reading this one, because all these are discussed in detail there. You will not be able to understand this post without reading that.
- **Before discussing *kammakkhaya*, the Buddha also explains how one's *gati* (habits/character) can lead to corresponding future rebirths.**

Kukkuravatika Sutta (MN 57) – Introduction

2. The first half of the *sutta* describes the background, which led the Buddha to analyze various types of *kamma*. We will first go through the essence of the first half, just stating the essence.

- *Suttā* become boring only because the translators basically translate the whole *sutta* word-by-word. There are many repetitive statements in a *sutta* (done for various reasons, the effective oral transmission being one), and it is unnecessary to translate word-by-word.
- Furthermore, it is better to provide the essence of a verse rather than translating word-by-word, which can lead to wrong interpretations in some cases.

3. "*Evaṃ me sutaṃ— ekaṃ samayaṃ bhagavā koliyesu viharati haliddavasanaṃ nāma koliyānaṃ nigamo. Atha kho puṇṇo ca koliyaputto govatiko acelo ca seniyo kukkuravatiko yena bhagavā tenupasaṅkamiṃsu; upasaṅkamitvā puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko bhagavantaṃ abhivādetvā ekamantaṃ nisīdi. Acelo pana seniyo kukkuravatiko bhagavatā saddhiṃ sammodi. Sammodanīyaṃ kathaṃ sāraṇīyaṃ vītisāretvā kukkurova palikujjitvāekamantaṃ nisīdi. Ekamantaṃ nisinno kho puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: "ayaṃ, bhante, acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko dukkarakārako chamānikkhittaṃ bhojanaṃ bhuñjati. Tassa taṃ kukkuravataṃ dīgharattaṃ samattaṃ samādinnaṃ. Tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo"ti? "Alaṃ, puṇṇa, tiṭṭhatetaṃ; mā maṃ etaṃ pucchī"ti. Dutiyampi kho puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko ... pe ... tatiyampi kho puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: "ayaṃ, bhante, acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko dukkarakārako chamānikkhittaṃ bhojanaṃ bhuñjati. Tassa taṃ kukkuravataṃ dīgharattaṃ samattaṃ samādinnaṃ. Tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo"ti?*"

- **Translated:** "Thus have I heard. On one occasion, the Buddha lived in the Koliyan country where there was a Koliyans' town named Haliddavasana. Then Puṇṇa, an ascetic who lived like an ox (*govatiko*). This was a cult based on the belief that one can attain *Nibbāna* by subjecting the body to harsh living like an ox). He went with Seniya, an ascetic who lived like a dog (*kukkuravatiko*). Puṇṇa, the ox-mimicking ascetic, said to the Buddha: "Venerable sir, this Seniya is a naked dog-ascetic who does what is hard to do: he eats his food when it is thrown to the ground; he does everything like a dog. He has been practicing that for a long time. What will be his rebirth? What will be his future *gati*?
- "Enough, Puṇṇa, let that be. Do not ask me that." But Puṇṇa asked the question three times.

"Dog *Gati*" Leads to "Dog Births"

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4. "*Addhā kho te ahaṃ, puṇṇa, na labhāmi. Alaṃ, puṇṇa, tiṭṭhatetaṃ; mā maṃ etaṃ pucchīti; api ca tyāhaṃ byākarissāmi. Idha, puṇṇa, ekacco kukkuravataṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, kukkurasīlaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, kukkuracittaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, kukkurākappaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ. So kukkuravataṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, kukkurasīlaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, kukkuracittaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, kukkurākappaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ kāyassa bhedā paraṃ maraṇā kukkurānaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjati. Sace kho panassa evaṃdiṭṭhi hoti: 'imināhaṃ sīlena vā vatena vā tapena vā brahmacariyena vā devo vā bhavissāmi devaññataro vā'ti, sāssa hoti micchādiṭṭhi. Micchādiṭṭhissa kho ahaṃ, puṇṇa, dvinnaṃ gatīnaṃ aññataraṃ gatiṃ vadāmi—nirayaṃ vā tiracchānayoniṃ vā. Iti kho, puṇṇa, sampajjamānaṃ kukkuravataṃ kukkurānaṃ sahabyataṃ upaneti, vipajjamānaṃ nirayan"ti.*

Evaṃ vutte, acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko parodi, assūni pavattesi."

- **Translated:** Finally, the Buddha answered. "Here, Puṇṇa, if someone lives like a dog, he develops the dog-behavior or dog-habits fully. He develops the dog-mindset fully. If so, at his death, he will be reborn as a dog. **But if he also has a view as this: 'By this observance of "holy life," I shall be born a god,' then he will have a wrong view too.** Now there are two destinations for one with a wrong view: hell or the animal realm. So, Puṇṇa, if his dog-mimicking succeeds, it will lead to birth as a dog. if it fails, it will lead him to birth in hell (*niraya*) due to wrong views."
- When this was said, Seniya, the naked dog-duty ascetic, cried out and burst into tears.

5. *"Atha kho bhagavā puṇṇaṃ koliyaputtaṃ govatikaṃ etadavoca: "etaṃ kho te ahaṃ, puṇṇa, nālatthaṃ. Alaṃ, puṇṇa, tiṭṭhatetaṃ; mā maṃ etaṃ pucchī"ti. "Nāhaṃ, bhante, etaṃ rodāmi yaṃ maṃ bhagavā evamāha; api ca me idaṃ, bhante, kukkuravataṃ dīgharattaṃ samattaṃ samādinnaṃ. Ayaṃ, bhante, puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko. Tassa taṃ govataṃ dīgharattaṃ samattaṃ samādinnaṃ. Tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo"ti? "Alaṃ, seniya, tiṭṭhatetaṃ; mā maṃ etaṃ pucchī"ti. Dutiyampi kho acelo seniyo ... pe ... tatiyampi kho acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: "ayaṃ, bhante, puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko. Tassa taṃ govataṃ dīgharattaṃ samattaṃ samādinnaṃ. Tassa kā gati, ko abhisamparāyo"ti?"*

- **Translated:** Then the Blessed One told Puṇṇa: "Puṇṇa, I could not persuade you when I said: 'Enough, Puṇṇa, let that be. Do not ask me that.'" Then Seniya the naked-dog ascetic said: "Venerable sir, I am not crying because the Blessed One has said this about me, but because I have wasted my time practicing this foolish method. Venerable sir, this Puṇṇa is an ox-ascetic. He has long taken up and practiced living like an ox. What will be his birth? What will be his future *gati*?" "Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that." A second time and a third-time Seniya asked the same question.

Gati of an Ox Leads to Birth of an Ox

6. "*Addhā kho te ahaṃ, seniya, na labhāmi. Alaṃ, seniya, tiṭṭhatetaṃ; mā maṃ etaṃ pucchīti; api ca tyāhaṃ byākarissāmi. Idha, seniya, ekacco govataṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gosīlaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gocittaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gavākappaṃ bhāveti paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ. So govataṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gosīlaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gocittaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ, gavākappaṃ bhāvetvā paripuṇṇaṃ abbokiṇṇaṃ kāyassa bhedā paraṃ maraṇā gunnaṃ sahabyataṃ upapajjati. Sace kho panassa evaṃdiṭṭhi hoti: 'imināhaṃ sīlena vā vatena vā tapena vā brahmacariyena vā devo vā bhavissāmi devaññataro vā'ti, sāssa hoti micchādiṭṭhi. Micchādiṭṭhissa kho ahaṃ, seniya, dvinnaṃ gatīnaṃ aññataraṃ gatiṃ vadāmi—nirayaṃ vā tiracchānayoniṃ vā. Iti kho, seniya, sampajjamānaṃ govataṃ gunnaṃ sahabyataṃ upaneti, vipajjamānaṃ nirayan"ti. Evaṃ vutte, puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko parodi, assūni pavattesi."*

- **Translated:** Finally, the Buddha answered. "Here, Seniya, someone develops the ox-behavior or ox-habits fully. He develops the mindset of an ox. If so, at his death, he will be reborn as an ox. **But if he**

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also has a view as this: 'By this observance of "holy life," I shall be born a god,' then he will have a wrong view too. Now there are two destinations for one with wrong views: hell or the animal realm. So, Seniya, if his ox-mimicking succeeds, it will lead to birth as an ox. If it fails, it will lead him to birth in hell (*niraya*) due to wrong views."

- When this was said, Puṇṇa, the ox-duty ascetic, cried out and burst into tears.

7. *"Atha kho bhagavā acelaṃ seniyaṃ kukkuravatikaṃ etadavoca: "etaṃ kho te ahaṃ, seniya, nālatthaṃ. Alaṃ, seniya, tiṭṭhatetaṃ; mā maṃ etaṃ pucchī"ti. "Nāhaṃ, Bhante, etaṃ rodāmi yaṃ maṃ bhagavā evamāha; api ca me idaṃ, Bhante, govataṃ dīgharattaṃ samattaṃ samādinnaṃ. Evaṃ pasanno ahaṃ, Bhante, Bhagavati; pahoti bhagavā tathā dhammaṃ desetuṃ yathā ahaṃ cevimaṃ govataṃ pajaheyyaṃ, ayañceva acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko taṃ kukkuravataṃ pajaheyyā"ti. "Tena hi, puṇṇa, suṇāhi, sādhukaṃ manasi karohi, bhāsissāmī"ti. "Evaṃ, Bhante"ti kho puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko bhagavato paccassosi. Bhagavā etadavoca: "*

- **Translated:** "Then the Blessed One told Seniya the naked dog-duty ascetic: "Seniya, I could not persuade you when I said: 'Enough, Seniya, let that be. Do not ask me that.'"
- Then Puṇṇa said, "Venerable sir, I am not crying because the Blessed One has said this about me, but because I have wasted my time practicing this foolish *sīla*. Venerable sir, I have confidence in the Blessed One; thus, 'The Blessed One is capable of teaching us the Dhamma the right way.'
- "Then, Puṇṇa, listen and attend closely to what I shall say."—"Yes, venerable sir," he replied. The Blessed One said this:

Four Types of *Kamma*

8. "*Cattārimāni, puṇṇa, kammāni mayā sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā paveditāni. Katamāni cattāri? Atthi, puṇṇa, kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ; atthi, puṇṇa, kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ; atthi, puṇṇa, kammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ; atthi, puṇṇa, kammaṃ akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇhaasukkavipākaṃ, kammakkhayāya saṃvattati.*"

- **Translated:** "Puṇṇa, there are four kinds of actions (*kamma*) proclaimed by me after realizing them for myself. What are the four? There is dark action (*kaṇha* or *pāpa kamma*) with a dark result. A bright action (*sukka* or *puñña kamma*) brings a bright result. A dark-and-bright action (*kaṇhasukkaṃ*) brings a dark-and-bright result (*kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ*.) Then there is an action that is neither dark nor bright with the neither-dark-nor-bright result, an **action that leads to the destruction of defilements (*kammakkhayāya* or *kusala kamma*)**."

"Dark" *Kamma* With "Dark" Results

9. *"Katamañca, puṇṇa, kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ? Idha, puṇṇa, ekacco sabyābajjhaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti, sabyābajjhaṃ vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti, sabyābajjhaṃ manosaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti. So sabyābajjhaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā, sabyābajjhaṃ vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā, sabyābajjhaṃ manosaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā, sabyābajjhaṃ lokaṃ upapajjati. Tamenaṃ sabyābajjhaṃ lokaṃ upapannaṃ samānaṃ sabyābajjhā phassā phusanti. So sabyābajjhehi phassehi phuṭṭho samāno sabyābajjhaṃ vedanaṃ vedeti ekantadukkhaṃ, seyyathāpi sattā nerayikā. Iti kho, puṇṇa, bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti; yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati, upapannamenaṃ phassā phusanti. Evampāhaṃ, puṇṇa, 'kammadāyādā sattā'ti vadāmi. Idaṃ vuccati, puṇṇa, kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ. (1)"*

- **Translated:** "And what, Puṇṇa, is dark action with dark result? Here someone generates a suffering (***sabyābajjhaṃ*** or **destined to or bound by *dukha***) *kāyasaṅkhāra*, a *dukkhita vacīsaṅkhāra*, a *dukkhita manosaṅkhāra*. Having generated such *dukkhita abhisaṅkhara*, he is reborn in an *apāya*. When he is reborn in an *apāya*, he contacts appropriate *dukkhita* (painful) sensory contacts. Being touched by such painful contacts, he feels painful feelings, exclusively painful, as in the case of the beings in **hell (*niraya*)**. Thus a being's rebirth is due to a being's own actions. One's rebirth is through the

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actions one has performed. Thus I say beings are the heirs of their actions. This is called dark action with dark result."

"Bright" *Kamma* With "Bright" Results

10. *"Katamañca, puṇṇa, kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ? Idha, puṇṇa, ekacco abyābajjhaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti, abyābajjhaṃ vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti, abyābajjhaṃ manosaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti. So abyābajjhaṃ kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā, abyābajjhaṃ vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā, abyābajjhaṃ manosaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā abyābajjhaṃ lokaṃ upapajjati. Tamenaṃ abyābajjhaṃ lokaṃ upapannaṃ samānaṃ abyābajjhā phassā phusanti. So abyābajjhehi phassehi phuṭṭho samāno abyābajjhaṃ vedanaṃ vedeti ekantasukhaṃ, seyyathāpi devā subhakiṇhā. Iti kho, puṇṇa, bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti; yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati, upapannamenaṃ phassā phusanti. Evampāhaṃ, puṇṇa, 'kammadāyādā sattā'ti vadāmi. Idaṃ vuccati, puṇṇa, kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ. (2)"*

- **Translated:** "And what, Puṇṇa, is bright action with bright result? Here someone generates a pleasant life (***abyābajjhaṃ*** or **destined to or bound by *sukha***) *kāyasaṅkhāra*, a *sukkhita vacīsaṅkhāra*, a *sukkhita manosaṅkhāra*. Having generated such *sukkhita abhisaṅkhara*, he is reborn in a realm with happiness (*sukkhita*). When he is reborn in a such a realm, he contacts appropriate *sukkhita* sense contacts. Being touched by such *sukkhita* contacts, he feels *sukha* feelings, as in the case of ***subhakinha deva*** realm. Thus a being's rebirth is due to a being's own actions. One gets a rebirth through the actions one has performed. Thus, I say beings are the heirs of their actions. This is called bright action with bright result"

"Dark and Bright" *Kamma* With "Dark and Bright" Results

11. *"Katamañca, puṇṇa, kammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ? Idha, puṇṇa, ekacco sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti, sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti, sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi manosaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharoti. So sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi kāyasaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā, sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi vacīsaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā, sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi manosaṅkhāraṃ abhisaṅkharitvā sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi lokaṃ upapajjati. Tamenaṃ sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi lokaṃ upapannaṃ samānaṃ sabyābajjhāpi abyābajjhāpi phassā phusanti. So sabyābajjhehipi abyābajjhehipi phassehi phuṭṭho samāno sabyābajjhampi abyābajjhampi vedanaṃ vedeti vokiṇṇasukhadukkhaṃ, seyyathāpi manussā ekacce ca devā ekacce ca vinipātikā. Iti kho, puṇṇa, bhūtā bhūtassa upapatti hoti; yaṃ karoti tena upapajjati. Upapannamenaṃ phassā phusanti. Evampāhaṃ, puṇṇa, 'kammadāyādā sattā'ti vadāmi. Idaṃ vuccati, puṇṇa, kammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ. (3)".*

- **Translated:** "And what, Puṇṇa, is dark-and-bright action with a dark-and-bright result? Here someone generates *abhisaṅkhara* of both types. Then he is reborn in a realm with both happiness (*sukkhita*) and suffering (*dukkhita*). When he is reborn in a such a realm, he contacts appropriate *sukkhita* and *dukkhita* sensory contacts. Being touched by such contacts, he feels *sukha* and *dukha* feelings interchangeably, as in **human, *deva*, and *vinipātika*** realms. Thus a being's rebirth is due to a being's own actions. One gets a rebirth through the actions one has performed. Thus I say beings are the heirs of their actions. This is called dark-and-bright action with a dark-and-bright result". [***vinipātika*** : (adj.) [fr. vinipāta] destined to suffer in purgatory, liable to punishment after death.]

Neither Dark nor Bright *Kamma*

12. *"Katamañca, puṇṇa, kammaṃ akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇhaasukkavipākaṃ, kammakkhayāya saṃvattati? Tatra, puṇṇa, yamidaṃ kammaṃ kaṇhaṃ kaṇhavipākaṃ tassa pahānāya yā cetanā, yamidaṃ kammaṃ sukkaṃ sukkavipākaṃ tassa pahānāya yā cetanā, yamidaṃkammaṃ kaṇhasukkaṃ kaṇhasukkavipākaṃ tassa pahānāya yā cetanā—idaṃ vuccati, puṇṇa, kammaṃ*

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akaṇhaṃ asukkaṃ akaṇhaasukkavipākaṃ, kammakkhayāya saṃvattatīti. Imāni kho, puṇṇa, cattāri kammāni mayā sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā paveditānī"ti. (4)".

- **Translated:** "And what, Puṇṇa, is an action that is neither dark nor bright with the neither-dark-nor-bright result, action that leads to the **destruction of defilements (and *āsava*/*anusaya*)**? Such volitions (*cetana*) abandon actions that are dark or bright with dark-or-bright results. Such an action (*kamma*) is neither dark nor bright with a neither-dark-nor-bright result. Therefore, such actions lead to the destruction of **defilements (and *asava*/*anusaya*)**. **They do not lead to rebirth in any realm.)**
- These are the four kinds of *kamma* proclaimed by me after realizing them for myself with direct knowledge."

13. **It is important to realize that such *cetana* AUTOMATICALLY arises in those who have realized the "unsatisfactory and dangerous nature" of this world of 31 realms, i.e., *Tilakkhaṇa*.**

- **In that context, it is also important to understand that *cetana* is NOT conventional "intention," but is how good and bad mental factors (*cetasika*) AUTOMATICALLY arise in one's thoughts based on one's *gati*.**
- The above two points are the most important teachings from the *sutta*. This is explained in detail in the post, "Kaṇha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya."
- One also needs to understand that *cetana* is just a single mental factor. The "intention" comes from the incorporation of good or bad *cetasika*. **The *cetana cetasika* just incorporates relevant *cetasika* based on one's *gati*.** See #9 of "Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – What Is "Intention"?"

Puṇṇa and Seniya Understood

14. *"Evaṃ vutte, puṇṇo koliyaputto govatiko bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: "abhikkantaṃ, bhante, abhikkantaṃ, bhante. Seyyathāpi, bhante ... pe ... upāsakaṃ maṃ bhagavā dhāretu ajjatagge pāṇupetaṃ saraṇaṃ gatan"ti. Acelo pana seniyo kukkuravatiko bhagavantaṃ etadavoca: "abhikkantaṃ, bhante, abhikkantaṃ, bhante. Seyyathāpi, bhante ... pe ... pakāsito. Esāhaṃ, bhante, bhagavantaṃ saraṇaṃ gacchāmi dhammañca bhikkhusaṅghañca. Labheyyāhaṃ, bhante, bhagavato santike pabbajjaṃ, labheyyaṃ upasampadan"ti. "Yo kho, seniya, aññatitthiyapubbo imasmiṃ dhammavinaye ākaṅkhati pabbajjaṃ, ākaṅkhati upasampadaṃ so cattāro māse parivasati. Catunnaṃ māsānaṃ accayena āraddhacittā bhikkhū pabbājenti, upasampādenti bhikkhubhāvāya. Api ca mettha puggalavemattatā viditā"ti."*

- **Translated:** When this was said, Puṇṇa said to the Blessed One: "Magnificent, venerable sir! The Blessed One has made the Dhamma clear in many ways…From today let the Blessed One accept me as a lay follower who has gone to him for refuge for life."
- Seniya said to the Blessed One, "Magnificent, venerable sir! The Blessed One has made the Dhamma clear in many ways, as though an upside-down vessel was turned to the upside, revealing what was hidden, or showing the way to one who was lost or holding up a lamp in the dark for those with eyesight to see. I take refuge in the Blessed One, the Dhamma, and the Saṅgha. May I receive the going forth under the Blessed One?".
- "Seniya, one who formerly belonged to another sect and desired the going forth and the full admission in this Buddha Sasana lives on probation for four months. At the end of four months, if the *bhikkhus* are satisfied with him, they give him the going forth and the full admission to the *bhikkhus*' state. But I recognize individual differences in this matter."

Seniya became an *Arahant*

15. *"Sace, bhante, aññatitthiyapubbā imasmiṃ dhammavinaye ākaṅkhantā pabbajjaṃ ākaṅkhantā upasampadaṃ te cattāro māse parivasanti catunnaṃ māsānaṃ accayena āraddhacittā bhikkhū*

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pabbājenti upasampādenti bhikkhubhāvāya, ahaṃ cattāri vassāni parivasissāmi catunnaṃ vassānaṃ accayena āraddhacittā bhikkhū pabbājentu, upasampādentu bhikkhubhāvāyā"ti.

Alattha kho acelo seniyo kukkuravatiko bhagavato santike pabbajjaṃ, alattha upasampadaṃ. Acirūpasampanno kho panāyasmā seniyo eko vūpakaṭṭho appamatto ātāpī pahitatto viharanto nacirasseva—yassatthāya kulaputtā sammadeva agārasmā anagāriyaṃ pabbajanti, Tadanuttaraṃ—brahmacariyapariyosānaṃ diṭṭheva dhamme sayaṃ abhiññā sacchikatvā upasampajja vihāsi.

"Khīṇā jāti, vusitaṃ brahmacariyaṃ, kataṃ karaṇīyaṃ, nāparaṃ itthattāyā"ti abbhaññāsi. Aññataro kho panāyasmā seniyo arahataṃ ahosīti."

- **Translated:** "Venerable sir, if those who formerly belonged to another sect and desire the going forth and the full admission in this Dhamma and Discipline live on probation for four months, and if at the end of the four months the *bhikkhus* being satisfied with them to give them the going forth and the full admission to the *bhikkhus*' state, then I will INSTEAD live on probation for four years. At the end of the four years, if the *bhikkhus* are satisfied with me, let them give me the going forth and the full admission to the *bhikkhus*' state."
- (Clarification of the terms: **Probation** means what is called ***Sāmaṇera;*** the *bhikkhu* would wear the robes but has not yet been given **full admission or *Upasampadā***. Seniya was saying he was willing to spend **four years in probation**.)
- Then Seniya, the naked dog-ascetic, received the going forth under the Blessed One, and he received the full admission. And soon, not long after his full admission, dwelling alone, withdrawn, diligent, ardent, and resolute, the venerable Seniya became an *Arahant*.

16. The post, "Kaṇha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya," provides a simpler explanation of the key terms.

- Discussion of both posts at: "WebLink: Kusala/Akusala and Puñña/Pāpa Kamma."

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16.12 Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)

January 24, 2019; revised January 30, 2019; July 30, 2019; February 16, 2020; August 24, 2020 (#5 – #7)

Introduction

1. *Aggañña Sutta* is one of several complex *suttā* that requires a lengthy explaination. To understand the *sutta*, one needs to have a broad background in Buddha Dhamma. I have been very reluctant to write even this post, because it could lead to many questions in many people who do not yet have that necessary background.

- "*Agga*" means "highest," and thus, the word "*Aggañña*" means "highest knowledge," in this case, about our world.
- The Buddha delivered the *Aggañña sutta* to two *brahmins* (Vāseṭṭha and Bhāradvāja), to explain the "human origins." That not only *Vedic Brahmins* – but ALL LIVING BEINGS – on this Earth came from *Brahma* realms at the beginning of the Earth. In other words, each and every living being on this Earth right now was a *Brahma* at the beginning of the present Earth).
- I must forewarn that some features are in contradiction to existing "scientific theories." Please do not bring them up. I am aware of them. That is why I have been reluctant to write this post.
- However, there are some benefits, at least for those who have faith in Dhamma, in seeing how self-consistent Buddha Dhamma is.

Summary of *Sutta*

2. Following is a brief summary:

(i). The universe has no traceable beginning, just like for life.

(ii). The universe has "clusters or groups" of stars. Our Solar system is one of 10,000 "star systems" (*cakkavāla* or planetary systems; *chakrawāta* in Sinhala). There is an infinite number of such *cakkavāla* in the universe.

(iii). When a star in the vicinity of our Sun blows up in a few billion years, that blast will destroy 10,000 other star systems in the neighborhood. Such a "star explosion" has a particular name, a supernova, in modern science.

(iv). Such a cluster of 10,000 world-systems blows up from time to time in the universe. Again, scientists observed such supernovae every year.

(v). What science does not know yet is that those destroyed star systems re-formed over billions of years.

(vi). Not all 31 realms get destroyed when our Solar system blows up at the end of a *mahā kappa*. Higher lying Brahma worlds (where there is very little of "destructible matter") survive. That is where all living beings on this Earth ends up before the destruction of the Earth.

(vii). How all living beings end up in the *Brahma* realms is a long story by itself.

(viii). Then when the Earth is re-forms, those *Brahmā* — at the end of their lifetimes in those worlds — are reborn as humans with very light, *Brahma*-like bodies at first.

(ix). Then the life on Earth evolves to other lifeforms too. That is a "reverse evolution" compared to the "theory of evolution" currently accepted by science. After billions of years, the realms below the *Ābhassara Brahma* realm will be destroyed again. After billions of more years, it will re-form.

(x). So, that is the life cycle. It happens all over the universe at any given time. That is why scientists observe several supernovae even in our own galaxy each year (which has billions of *cakkavāla*).

Model of the Universe

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3. Therefore, life exists in an infinite number of "star systems" where a star provides the energy to sustain life. In our "Solar system", life exists in 31 realms centered on Earth that are located inside, on the surface, and extending out into space. Of course, the Sun is our star.

- In the post "31 Realms of Existence," these 31 realms are listed. The information there comes from several *suttā*. In particular, the "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta" names many of those spheres. Most versions of the *sutta* just skip that section. The following pdf file has the full text of the *sutta* can be accessed in : WebLink: PDF Download: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta-3.

4. A Buddha appears only in one *cakkavāla* out of that cluster of 10,000 such *cakkavāla* in that group; that is our Earth. *Brahmā* and *devas* from those 10,000 systems (*dasa sahassi lokadhātu*) can come and listen to Dhamma on the Earth.

- Of course, humans from those worlds do not have access to Buddha Dhamma.
- So, we can see how rare it is for a human to be able to "have access" to Buddha Dhamma. Even on our Earth, there are many *mahā kappā* without a single Buddha appearing!

Model of the Solar System (*Cakkavāla*)

5. The Buddha stated that the length of one *kappa* or *kalpa* in Sinhala) unimaginably long. He gave the following comparison. In than the time, a man can wear away a mountain of solid granite one *yojanā* (about 7 miles) around and one *yojanā* high, by stroking it once every hundred years with a silk cloth.

- The WebLink: suttacentral: Pabbata Sutta (SN 15.5); has the above analogy; see, "Saṃsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory."

6. A *mahā kappa* consists of 4 "*antakkappa*," as explained in the WebLink: suttacentral: Kappa Sutta (AN 4.156):

"*Cattārimāni, bhikkhave, kappāssa asaṅkhyeyyāni. Katamāni cattāri? Yadā, bhikkhave, kappo saṃvaṭṭati,..kappo saṃvaṭṭo tiṭṭhati,..kappo vivaṭṭati,..kappo vivaṭṭo tiṭṭhati, ..*"

- "There are four incalculable *kappā*. **Destruction** takes place for a *kappa*, **remains in that state (void)** for a *kappa*, **re-formation** takes place over a *kappa*, and then it **exists in that state (the Earth as we know it)** for a *kappa*."
- **That last stage is where the Earth is now.**
- Each incalculable *kappa* has **20 *kappā***.

7. The Solar system will last another 5 billion or so. Thus the total time in the existence of the current Sun (and Earth) is about 10 billion years according to modern science. That is the **existence phase** lasting 20 *kappā,* assuming that the current scientific estimate is correct.

- The other three *kappā* take 10 billion years each, and that is how the time for a complete cycle takes 40 billion years.
- The Earth (and the whole Solar system) keeps going through this cyclic process that takes roughly 40 billion years per cycle, i.e., for a *mahā kappa* (with the above assumption.)
- This cycle will keep repeating. There was no "Big Bang" beginning.

Migration of Living Beings at Destruction/Re-Formation of Earth

8. When the Sun dies in the future, it will start expanding and will expand to reach the Earth. Long before that, all life on Earth would have been destroyed.

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- So, what happens to all the living beings on Earth? We remember that while humans and animals live on the Earth, those beings belonging to the other three lower realms live on or underneath the Earth's surface. All those will perish.
- It is a long story, but all those beings move to higher realms as the Earth starts to get hot.

9. We remember that the *deva* and *Brahma* realms lie above the Earth. But the "density" at those realms are well below the "density" of things at the surface. As we know, *deva* bodies are much less dense than human bodies, and *Brahma* "bodies" are even more subtle.

- One critical thing we learn from science is that "more dense stuff" burn first. For example, in an incinerator, we can burn anything dense. But of course, gases are not get burned (i.e., not decomposed.)
- There is virtually nothing much of what we call "material" in those realms. Whatever is there will be gradually decay and replaced by other "fine matter." Of course, all beings in those realms will have long but finite lifetimes too.
- The deduction is that all those realms above the *Ābhassara Brahma* realm will not be destroyed in the destruction phase. That is why the lifetimes of some *Brahmā* are many *mahā kappā*.

10. The bottom line is that eventually, all realms below the *Ābhassara Brahma* realm will be destroyed. By that time, all the living beings would have "migrated" up to that realm.

- How do all these living beings, including those in the *apāyā*, migrate to higher realms?
- That is related to the fact that when the Earth starts getting "hot," those "mind pleasing sense objects" will be destroyed over time. Living beings will have less and less "sense attractions," and thus, their minds will be temporarily freed from "*upādāna*."
- That needs a detailed explanation, but those who understand *Paṭicca Samuppāda* may be able to at least a glimpse of how it happens.

11. When the Earth is re-formed about 20 billion years after its destruction (10 billion years remaining in the destructed state, and 10 billion years for the re-formation,) those *Brahmā* will start coming down to those newly-formed lower realms.

- That also will take some explaining. But the critical point is that with time, old "*gati*" (which have been lying dormant as *anusaya*) start to re-surface, and the activation of *Paṭicca Samuppāda* cycles will ensure those "downward paths."

Conflicts with Current Scientific Theories

12. Now, we immediately run into difficulties with the **current scientific knowledge** of Earth's history. According to current understanding, first humans appeared only about 2 million years ago. Note that a billion years is 1000 million years!

- Therefore, what we described above is a "reverse evolution" compared to the "theory of evolution" currently accepted by science.
- We need to go back only 500 years to see how a prevailing world view changed and became compatible with Buddha Dhamma. See #13 below.
- I have discussed how Buddha Dhamma has so far withstood past such "contradictions"; see, "Dhamma and Science – Introduction." I just hope the next revision in science will happen during my lifetime.

13. For example, only 500 years ago, the accepted "world view" was that Earth was at the center of the universe with all the stars were embedded in a "WebLink: wikipedia.org: celestial spheres."

- If someone tried to explain that the Earth was actually rotating around the Sun, he would have had a hard time. In fact, Galileo spent the rest of his life in solitary confinement after providing evidence that the Earth was rotating around the Sun.

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- Of course, no one will be prosecuted for proposing any theory these days. Still, they will not be taken seriously by the scientific community.
- As new experiments/observations provide further evidence, an accepted scientific view changes to accommodate the new evidence. For example, the above change in the world view took place after the invention of the telescope by Galileo.
- Of course, it is only rational to adopt that scientific method for mundane purposes. That is the only way science can make progress.
- However, when one comprehends Buddha Dhamma, one can get to a better understanding of our world.

The Rarity of Buddha Dhamma in the World

14. There have been four Buddhas in this *mahā kappa*, and one more Buddha will appear before the destruction of this Earth and the Solar system.

- Then after 30 billion more years, the Earth will come to existence again in this cyclic process (not exactly the same Earth).

15. In the WebLink: suttacentral: Vepullapabbatta Sutta (SN 15.20), the Buddha provides the names of the three Buddhas **on this Earth** (in this *mahā kappa*) before him: Kakusandha, Koṇāgama, and Kassapa. He describes how a particular mountain had three different names and three different heights during those Buddha's times.

- The point there is that those Buddhas had been on this Earth at times far part from each other. Considering that the age of the Earth is about 4.5 billion years, it is reasonable to assume that they were about a billion years apart.
- One piece of evidence in the *Tipiṭaka* for material from previous Buddhas had been transmitted via *Vedic* teachings (with superficial meanings) is given in the post, "Arogyā Paramā Lābhā.." (see #8 there).

16. By the way, the existence of Buddha Kassapa before the Buddha Gotama help explain many questions that people have on the connection between *Vedic* terms and Buddhist terms. Some examples are kamma (*karma*), *Bhikkhu* (*Bhikshu*), *paññā* (*pragnā*), *jhāna* (*dhyāna*), *Nibbāna* (*Nirvāna*), and so on.

- After the end of the Kassapa Buddha *Sāsana*, his teachings were transmitted as *Vedic* teachings, of course, without the deeper meanings. I will need to write some posts just on this issue.
- A good example is the *Ānāpāna bhāvanā*, which got transmitted as "breath meditation".
- After re-gaining Buddha Kassapa's interpretation during the time of our Buddha, by the current time, the *Vedic* description has retaken hold again. It will be restored in the coming years, But, of course, it will again disappear to be re-discovered by the Maitreya Buddha in the future.

17. Furthermore, there have been only 7 Buddhas within the past 91 *mahā kappā*; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāpadāna Sutta (DN 14)."

- There have been 30 *mahā kappā* without a single Buddha before the current *mahā kappa*. That is 1200 billion years years or over a trillion years!
- An even in this *kappa*, the Gotama *Buddha Sāsana* would last only 5000 years, a negligible time in terms of a *kappa*. **Thar is why we should not waste this rare opportunity.**

Origins of the World – Limits of Inquiry

18. The human mind is naturally curious. We want to know everything, especially regarding this wondrous place called the universe. It is mind-boggling, but exciting at the same time. I used to spend a lot of time reading science fiction as well as speculations about the origins of the universe, etc. when I was growing up.

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- One time, Ven. Moggallāna, who was only second to the Buddha in psychic (*abhiññā*) powers, wanted to explore the universe and see for himself how far he could go. He got lost! Buddha had to come to his rescue.
- Then there is the account about a *yogi*, Rohitassa, who developed *abhiññā* powers. He wanted to see the end of the world and took off looking for it, got lost and died. He was reborn a *deva*, came to see the Buddha and told the Buddha about his quest. See, "WebLink: accesstoinsight.org: Rohitassa Sutta: To Rohitassa."

19. Cosmology is one of the things that the Buddha declared "unthinkable (*acinteyya*)" for an average human; see, "WebLink: suttacentral: *Acinteyya Sutta* (AN 4.77)":

"There are these four things that should not to be conjectured about and would bring **anxiety and madness** to anyone who speculates. Which four? (i) capabilities of a Buddha, (ii) subject of *jhānā*, (iii) detailed knowledge of *kamma*/*kamma vipāka*, (iv) origins of the world.

- One can spend a lifetime looking into the details of those subjects, and getting no where.
- However, as we saw above, some insights can be gained by having a rough idea about those subjects. One gets into trouble when one tries to get into details.
- We will explore some more aspects in the future, that are beneficial for progressing on the Path.

20. Please keep that in mind when you make comments at the discussion forum. There are a few things we can learn from the *sutta*, but it is useless to get into arguments about how **it contradicts scientific findings at the present time**.

- I have opened a new topic, "Post on "WebLink: puredhamma.net/forums: Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)" for comments and questions at the discussion forum.
- Also, please read the post carefully before making a comment or asking a question. There is a lot of material there.

July 12, 2019: I have started a new subsection, "Origin of Life" to discuss the necessary background material for future posts on the *Aggañña Sutta*.

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16.13 Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41) – Akuppā Cētōvimutti

February 28, 2019; #21 added March 1, 2019

1. Most *suttā* have been translated word by word, without paying attention to the context or to the underlying teachings. I hope this *sutta* translation will convey what I mean by that statement.

- This *sutta* basically explains why it is necessary to reduce cravings for sense pleasures and to stay away from *dasa akusala* — and eventually to get rid of them — if one wants to cultivate *Ariya jhāna*.
- **Just suppressing** sense cravings (*kāma rāga*) induces *jhāna* too; see,"Jhānic Experience in Detail – Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2)."
- However, to attain *Nibbāna* (***akuppā cetovimutti***), one needs to remove those cravings at each *jhānic* state; see, "Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (Dhyāna)." In this post, we discuss the step-by-step process.
- Still, **getting rid** of sense cravings (*kāma rāga*), is not an easy task. It needs to be done by contemplating on the drawbacks (and dangers) of them — called *ādīnava* (pronounced "aadeenava") — , and also the benefits (*ānisamsa*) of giving up such cravings (renunciation); see, "Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna."

2. One could follow the Pāli version while reading: "WebLink: suttacentral: Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)" and the "WebLink: suttacentral: English Translation" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Sinhala Translation" at that same website. It is a useful website, but translations are not correct for some key Pāli words.

- *Suttā* are designed to be extremely repetitive, and that enabled faithful oral transmission over the first 500 years. But, **in the written form**, it is not necessary to translate the whole *sutta* word-by-word to understand its message. In fact, that could be very boring reading.
- So, I will start off with lengthy translation at first, and cut it short as I proceed to the end in order to make it readable, yet (hopefully) provide the key ideas.
- We also need to keep in mind that the *Bodhisatta* before becoming the Buddha, had learned how to get to all the *jhānā* from other *yogis*. One can attain ***cetovimutti*** (highest *jhāna*) by such *anāriya* techniques like breath meditation, but those *jhānā* are not stable. As described below, the Buddha figured out to cultivate unbreakable (stable) *jhāna* and attain the *Buddhahood* with ***akuppā cetovimutti***.
- That is the process described in this *sutta*, which we discuss now.

3. Thus I have heard. On one occasion, the Blessed One was staying in Malla near a Mallan town named Uruvelakappa. Then early in the morning the Blessed One, having put on his robes and carrying his bowl and outer robe, went to Uruvelakappa for alms. Having gone into Uruvelakappa for alms, after his meal, on his return from his alms round, he said to Ven. Ānanda, "Stay here, Ānanda, while I go to the forest for the day's abiding."

- "As you say, lord," Ven. Ānanda replied.
- Then the Blessed One went to the forest and sat down at the root of a tree for the day's abiding.

4. Then Tapussa the householder went to Ven. Ānanda and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. As he was sitting there, he said to Ven. Ānanda: "Venerable Ānanda, we are householders who indulge in sensuality, delight in sensual pleasures, enjoy sensual pleasures, rejoice in sensual pleasures. For us, staying away from sensual pleasures — or renunciation — seems like jumping off of a cliff (it is hard to contemplate). Yet I've heard that in this Buddha *Sāsana* there are young *bhikkhus* (monks) who have given up sense pleasures and have attained peace of mind and ultimate release from suffering. How are those *bhikkhus* different from most people like us?"

- "This is true, householder. Let's go ask the Blessed One to explain this".

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5. Then Ven. Ānanda, together with Tapussa the householder, went to the Blessed One and, on arrival, having bowed down to him, sat to one side. Then Ven. Ānanda said to the Blessed One: "*Bhante*, Tapussa the householder, here, has said to me, 'we are householders who indulge in sensuality, delight in sensual pleasures, enjoy sensual pleasures, rejoice in sensual pleasures. For us, staying away from sensual pleasures — or renunciation — seems like unappealing as jumping off of a cliff. Yet I've heard that in this Buddha *Sāsana* there are young monks who have given up sense pleasures and have attained peace of mind and ultimate release from suffering. How are these monks different from most people like us?"

6. "So it is, Ānanda. So it is. Even I myself, before attaining the Buddhahood, when I was still an unawakened *Bodhisatta*, I thought: 'abstaining from sensual pleasures (*nekkhamma*) is good, peace of mind (*viveka*) is good'. But such thoughts free of sense cravings (*nekkhamme cittam*) would not sink in (*na pakkhandati*), would not purify (*na pasidati*), would not calm down (*na santitthati*) my mind, and it would not become liberated (*na vimuccati*)".

- Then a thought occurred to me: "What is the reason that such thoughts free of sense cravings (*nekkhamme cittam*) would not sink in (*na pakkhandati*), would not purify (*na pasidati*), calm down, would not calm down (*na santitthati*) my mind so that it would not become liberated (*na vimuccati*)?".
- Then this thought occurred to me: "I have not seen the dangers/drawbacks (*ādinava*) of sensual pleasures; I have not contemplated the dangers/drawbacks of sensual pleasures at depth (*abahulikato*). I have not understood the rewards of renunciation (*nekkhamme ānisamsa*). I have not contemplated at depth (*anāsevita*) the rewards of renunciation. That's why my mind would not become liberated (*na vimuccati*)."
- Then this thought occurred to me: "If, I see the dangers of sensual pleasures and the benefits of renunciation of sense pleasures, such thoughts free of sense cravings (*nekkhamme cittam*) will sink in (*pakkhandati*), will purify (*pasidati*), will calm down (*santitthati*) my mind so that it will become liberated (*vimuccati*)".

My comment: One needs to pay attention here to the Buddha describing to Tapussa how he had thought about the above thought process. But, he figured out exactly how to do that only on the night of attaining the *Buddhahood*:

7. "At a later time — *aparena samyena* — (the night of attaining the *Buddhahood*), having seen the drawback of sensual pleasures, I pursued that theme; I contemplated on the drawbacks of sense pleasures, and understood the rewards of renunciation, and **understood the solution of getting rid of cravings (*āsāvās*)**. Then my mind firmly held such a mindset, calmed down, and was released from such sensual thoughts.

- Above paragraph describes what happened on the night of the Enlightenment when he finally realized *āsavakkhaya ñāna*, how to remove *āsāvās* by contemplating on *Tilakkhaṇa*; see, "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Asavas."
- As we know, he went through six years of various types of suffering to discover *āsavakkhaya ñāna.*
- **Now we get back to the difficulties faced by the *Bodhisatta* in the intervening six years in trying to make the first *jhāna* unbreakable or stable.**

8. "Withdrawn from sensuality (*vivicca kāmehi*), withdrawn from immoral (*vivicca akusala dhammehi)*, I entered and remained in the vicinity of the **first *jhāna*** with rapture and pleasure born from that restfulness (*vivekajam*), **accompanied by *savitakka/savicara* (*nekkhamma/avihimsa* thoughts)**."

- "However, I was still beset with recurring perceptions of sensuality (*kāmasahagatā saññāmanasikārā samudācaranti*). That was a suffering for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so, those recurring sensual thoughts was an affliction for me".

(Note that the *Bodhisatta* experienced this problem early when he learned how to get to *jhānā* by his early *anāriya* teachers: Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. He developed the pathway

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during those intervening six years, but successfully implemented it only on the night of Enlightenment via *āsavakkhaya ñāna*).

9. **"At a later time (the night of attaining the *Buddhahood*)**, having seen the drawback of *vitakka*, I pursued that theme; I contemplated on the drawbacks of *vitakka*, and understood the rewards of *avitakka*, **when I understood the benefits of getting rid of cravings (*āsāvās*)**. Then my mind firmly held such a mindset, calmed down, and was released from such sensual thoughts.

- Now we get back to the difficulties faced by the *Bodhisatta* with the second *jhāna*, before the night of the Enlightenment.

10. "Then I thought: 'I should get to the *samādhi*-generated (*samādhijam*) **second *jhāna*** that is free of these thoughts burdened with (*vitakka/vicāra*)'". **Here it is important to realize that *vitakka* means to have the mind set on a defiled thought object and *vicāra* means to keep it there.**

- "However, in the **second *jhāna***, such thoughts free of *vitakka* (i.e., *avitakka*) would not sink in, would not purify, calm down, would not calm down my mind so that it would not become liberated (*avitakke cittaṃ na pakkhandati nappasīdati na santiṭṭhati na vimuccati*)".
- Then this thought occurred to me: "I have not seen the dangers/drawbacks (*ādinava*) of *vitakka*; I have not contemplated the dangers/drawbacks of *vitakka* at depth (*abahulikato*). I have not understood the rewards of *avitakka* (*avitakke ānisamsa*). I have not contemplated at depth (*anāsevita*) the rewards of *avitakka*. That's why my mind would not become liberated (*na vimuccati*)".
- "**At a later time (the night of attaining the *Buddhahood*)**, I was able to enter and stay in the vicinity of the **second *jhāna*** that was devoid of such defiled thoughts (*vitakka*) and with *pīti* and *sukha*.

11. This is a recurring theme for the rest of the *sutta*. The difficulty encountered at each *jhāna* level starting from the next verse, and the solution found on the night of Enlightenment.

- I am going to skip a few repeating steps here, for the third and fourth *jhāna*.

12. I was able to enter and stay in the vicinity of the **third *jhāna*** that was devoid of *pīti* but with *sukha*.

- However, even then the perception of *pīti* kept arising in me (*pitisahagata sannamanasikara samudacaranti*). That was an affliction for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so, those recurring *pīti* was an affliction for me.
- "**At a later time (the night of attaining the *Buddhahood*)**, verse is skipped here.

13. I was able to enter and stay in the vicinity of the **fourth *jhāna*** that was devoid of *sukha* but with *upekkha*.

- However, even then the perception of *upekkhā sukha* kept arising in me (*upekkhasukhasahagata sannamanasikara samudacaranti*). That was an affliction for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so those recurring *upekkhā sukha* was an affliction for me.
- "**At a later time (the night of attaining the *Buddhahood*)**, verse is skipped here.
- Now we get to the *arūpāvacara jhāna*, and the steps are basically the same.

14. I was able to enter and stay in the vicinity of ***ākāsānañcāyatana*** by thinking, "Infinite space," and transcending of perceptions of *rūpa* , with the disappearance of perceptions of *paṭigha*, and not heeding various *ārammaṇa* ('*yannūnāhaṃ sabbaso rūpasaññānaṃ samatikkamā paṭighasaññānaṃ atthaṅgamā nānattasaññānaṃ amanasikārā* ").

- However, even in the vicinity of *ākāsānañcāyatana,* perceptions of *rūpa* kept arising in me, and that was an affliction for me (*..iminā vihārena viharato rūpasahagatā saññāmanasikārā samudācaranti. Svassa me hoti ābādho*).

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15. "**At a later time (the night of attaining the *Buddhahood*)**, having seen the drawback of forms (*rūpa*), I pursued that theme; I contemplated on the drawbacks of *rūpa*, and understood the rewards of *ākāsānañcāyatana*, **when I understood the benefits of getting rid of cravings (*āsāvās*)**. Then my mind firmly held such a mindset, calmed down, and was released from such sensual thoughts.

16. I was able to enter what I thought was *viññāṇañcāyatana,* the infinitude of consciousness.

- "As I remained there, I was beset with attention to perceptions dealing with the dimension of the infinitude of space (*ākāsānañcāyatanasahagatā saññāmanasikārā samudācaranti*). That was an affliction for me. Just as pain arises as an affliction for a healthy person, even so the attention to perceptions dealing with the dimension of the infinitude of space that beset me was an affliction for me.

17. So at a later time, having seen the drawback of the dimension of the infinitude of space (*ākāsānañcāyatana*), I pursued that theme; having understood the reward of the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness (*viññāṇañcāyatana*), I familiarized myself with it. My heart leaped up at the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness, grew confident, steadfast, and firm, seeing it as peace. With the complete transcending of the dimension of the infinitude of space, [perceiving,] 'Infinite consciousness,' I entered and remained in the dimension of the infinitude of consciousness.

- The *sutta* goes through the rest of the *arupavacara jhāna*. At each stage, the Buddha on the night of Enlightenment was able to REMOVE each *jhāna* factor, not just bypass it as in *anāriya jhāna*.
- **This was done by contemplating on the *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta* nature of each *jhānic* state.**

18. "So at a later time, having seen the drawback of the **dimension of neither perception nor non-perception** (***nevasaññānāsaññāyatana***), I pursued that theme; … With the complete transcending of the dimension of neither perception nor non-perception, I entered and remained in the **cessation of perception and feeling (*saññāvedayitanirodha*)**. And as I saw with discernment, the mental fermentations (*āsavā*) were totally eliminated.

- It is important to note that *saññāvedayita nirodha* cannot be attained via *anāriya jhāna*. This is *Nibbāna* experienced by a living *Arahant*.

19. "Ānanda, as long as I had not attained and emerged from these nine step-by-step dwelling-attainments in forward and backward order in this way, I did not claim to have attained the *Buddhahood* that is supreme in the cosmos with its *Devās, Mārās*, and *Brahmā*, with its contemplatives and *brāhmans*, with its royalty and common people.

- But as soon as I had attained and emerged from these nine step-by-step dwelling-attainments in forward and backward order in this way, then I did claim to have directly awakened to the right self-awakening supreme state in the cosmos with its *Devās, Mārās*, and *Brahmā*, with its contemplatives and *brāhmans*, its royalty and common people. Knowledge and vision arose in me: 'My release is unshakable (***akuppā me cetovimutti***), **This is the last birth and there is now no rebirths (*ayamantimā jāti, natthi dāni punabbhavo'"ti*).**

20. That is the step-by-step process of getting to the "total detachment" from the 31 realms of this world via successive *Ariya jhānic* states. That ultimate release of the mind attained this way is called ***akuppā cetovimutti***.

- Of course, one can get to the same ultimate state (*Arahanthood*), without going through *jhāna*, and that is called ***paññāvimutti***; see, "Pannāvimutti – Arahanthood without Jhāna."
- It is also clear that a *paññāvimutti Arahant* cannot get to the *saññāvedayita nirodha* state during his/her lifetime.

21. The efforts by the *Bodhisatta* to figure out how to remove *āsavā* (including *kāma rāga*) — mainly by inflicting many bodily sufferings — for six years, are described in detail in the following two *suttā*: "WebLink: suttacentral: Bodhirājakumāra Sutta (MN 85)" and "WebLink: suttacentral: Mahāsaccaka Sutta (MN 36)."

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16.14 Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) – Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering

May 23, 2019; revised March 20, 2020

Introduction

The Pāli version of the *Yamaka Sutta* can be found at: "WebLink: suttacentral: Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85)." This is an important *sutta* which clearly explains what *Nibbāna* is and what the Buddha's description of a living being is. It makes it clear that a "living being" exists "in this world" only as long as its craving for the five aggregates exists (which is inevitably accompanied by a lot of suffering). There is no "real person" that exists to be annihilated.

- On one occasion the Venerable Sāriputta was dwelling at Sāvatthi in Jetavanārāma built by Anathapiṇḍika. At that time the following wrong view had arisen in a *bhikkhu* named Yamaka. "As I understand, **a *bhikkhu* who attains the *Arahanthood* would not exists after death and thus would be annihilated ."**
- A number of *bhikkhus* heard that such a wrong view had arisen in *bhikkhu* Yamaka. They approached the Venerable Yamaka and exchanged greetings with him, after which they sat down to one side and said to him: "Is it true, friend Yamaka, that such a view as this has arisen in you: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a *bhikkhu* whose *āsavā* are destroyed would not exist after death and thus would be annihilated'?"
- "Exactly so, friends. As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a *bhikkhu* whose *āsavā* are destroyed would not exist after death and thus would be annihilated."
- "Friend Yamaka, do not speak thus. Do not misrepresent the Blessed One. It is not good to misrepresent the Blessed One. The Blessed One would not speak thus: 'A *bhikkhu* whose *āsavā* are destroyed would not exist after death and thus would be annihilated.'"

2. Although he was admonished by other *bhikkhus* in this way, *Bhikkhu* Yamaka still held on to that wrong view and declared: "As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a *bhikkhu* whose *āsavā* are destroyed is annihilated and does not exist after death."

- Since those *bhikkhus* were unable to detach the Venerable Yamaka from that wrong view, they left and approached Venerable Sāriputta, and told him all that occurred, adding: "It would be good if the Venerable Sāriputta would approach *bhikkhu* Yamaka and explain to him out of compassion for him." Venerable Sāriputta consented by silence.

Analysis by Ven. Sāriputta -1

3. Then, in the evening, the Venerable Sāriputta emerged from seclusion. He approached the Venerable Yamaka and exchanged greetings with him, after which he sat down to one side and said to him: "Is it true, friend Yamaka, that such a wrong view as this has arisen in you: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a *bhikkhu* whose *āsavā* are destroyed is annihilated and and does not exist after death'?"

"Exactly so, friend."

- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, is **form (*rūpa*)** *nicca* or *anicca* (can or cannot be maintained as one likes)?"—"*anicca*, friend."…"If something is *anicca* does it lead to *sukha* or *dukha*?'— "It leads to *dukha*, friend."

"If something is of *anicca*, *viparināma* nature, then it cannot be maintained as one likes and is subjected to unexpected changes. Would it be appropriate to take that to be me, to be mine, or my *attā* ("self" is the translation used in English)?" – "That is not appropriate, friend".

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- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, is ***vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa*** – are they *nicca* or *anicca*?"—"*anicca*, friend."…"If something is *anicca* does it lead to *sukha* or *dukha*?'— "*dukha*, friend".

"If something is of *anicca*, *viparināma* nature, is it appropriate to take that to be me, to be mine, or my *attā*?" – "No, friend".

(**My comment:** Thus it is clear that it does not make sense to take any or all five ENTITIES of *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa* as me, as mine, or my *attā*.)

Analysis by Ven. Sāriputta -2

4. Now Ven. Sāriputta goes one step further.

- "Whatever kind of form there is, Yamaka, whether past, future, or present, internal or external, gross or subtle, inferior or superior, far or near: this is called the form aggregate (*rūpakkhandha*). It is not appropriate to take any of those as "me, to be mine, or my *attā*." The same is true for the other four aggregates".
- "When one comprehends this Yamaka, one will not take any of those five aggregates as "me, to be mine, or my *attā*." Then one will be liberated".
- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard the body (part of *rūpakkhandha*) as a living being?"—"No, friend."—"Do you regard *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, or *viññāṇa* as a living being?"—"No, friend."

(**My comment:** Thus it is clear that it does not make sense to take any or all five AGGREGATES of *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa* as me, as mine, or my *attā*.)

Analysis by Ven. Sariputta -3

5. Now Ven. Sariputta goes one step further).

- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard a living being as in its body?"—"No, friend."—"Do you regard a living being as apart from its body?"—"No, friend."—"Do you regard a living being as in its *vedanā*? As apart from its *vedanā*? In *saññā*? As apart from *saññā*? In its *saṅkhāra*? As apart from *saṅkhāra*? In its *viññāṇa*? As apart from its *viññāṇa*?"—"No, friend."
- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard *rūpa*, *vedanā*, *saññā*, *saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa*, taken together, as a living being?"—"No, friend."
- "What do you think, friend Yamaka, do you regard a living being as one who is without *rūpa*, without *vedanā*, without *saññā*, without *saṅkhāra*, without *viññāṇa*?"—"No, friend."
- "**But, friend, when a living being is not understood by you to be real and actual here in this very life,** is it appropriate for you to declare: 'As I understand the Dhamma taught by the Blessed One, a *bhikkhu* whose *āsavās* are destroyed is annihilated and does not exist after death'?"
- "Formerly, friend Sāriputta, when I was ignorant, I did hold that wrong view, but now that I have heard this Dhamma teaching of the Venerable Sāriputta I have abandoned that wrong view and have made the breakthrough to the Dhamma."

My Comments

6. The following are My comments:

1. This is the main point of the whole *sutta*. **It is not possible to talk about the destruction or annihilation of a "person" or a "living being" that does not truly exist.**

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2. We conventionally talk about a person, but in reality, there is no such "person", just a collection of five aggregates that keeps CHANGING at every moment according to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*; see, "Paṭicca Samuppāda – Overview").
3. This incessant continuation of the five aggregates hopping from one realm to another among the 31 realms can be called a "life-stream". The Buddha said that he could not see a discernible beginning of such a life-stream. We all have existed from a beginning that cannot be traced back. During most of that time, we have suffered so much in the four lower realms. We could say that death of an *Arahant* is the end of that "life-stream" (and end of suffering!); see, "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream").

Analysis by Ven. Sariputta -4

7. Now, Ven. Sariputta wants to make sure that Ven. Yamaka has fully understood.

- "Suppose, friend Yamaka, they were to ask you: 'Friend Yamaka, when a *bhikkhu* is an *Arahant*, one whose *āsavās* are destroyed, what happens to him with the breakup of the body, after death?'—being asked thus, what would you answer?"
- "If they were to ask me this, friend, I would answer thus: 'Friends, form is of *anicca* nature; anything of *anicca* nature leads to suffering and passing away. In the same way, *vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra*, and *viññāṇa* are all of *anicca* nature; anything of *anicca* nature leads to suffering and passing away. I would answer that way".
- "*Sādhu Sādhu*, friend Yamaka!"

Summary

8. There is more in the *sutta*. But the main point is in the above section.

This is why the Buddha rejected both extremes of the existence of an existing "self" or denial of an existence.

- At every moment there is an existence, complete with *vedanā* (suffering/pleasures); those *vedanā* arise momentarily and pass away. But there is no *attā* or a "self" that is unchanging.
- But the problem is that those *vedanā* are real, and for the most part are *dukha vedanā*, not *sukha vedanā,* in the long run in the rebirth process.
- In order to stop any *dukha vedanā* from arising, one MUST terminate the continuation of the arising of the five aggregates, i.e., the rebirth process. It is not possible to have *sukha vedanā* AND to be free of *dukha vedanā* anywhere in the 31 realms.
- Arising of the five aggregates is inevitable as long as *avijjā* is present. As long as *avijjā* is there, the *Paṭicca Samuppāda* process continues (and leads to suffering.) Removal of *avijjā* happens at the *Arahant* stage with optimization of *paññā* (wisdom.)
- For an *Arahant* with that optimized *paññā,* this vision becomes crystal clear. Thus he/she would not grasp (*upādāna*) a new *bhava* at the *cuti-paṭisandhi* moment. That is how this incessant continuation of a lifestream comes to an end. It is not an annihilation of a "person"; it is the end of suffering!

9. The moment-to-moment change of the five aggregates happens automatically (based on one's *gati*), via the "Idappaccayatā Paticca Samuppāda" process.

- This is why it is important to learn Buddha Dhamma, get rid of "bad *gati*," and to cultivate "good *gati*": "9. Key to Anapanasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gathi)." Then one's five aggregates will automatically evolve in the direction of *Nibbāna*.
- That is the same as following the Eightfold Path: *Sammā Diṭṭhi, Sammā Saṅkappa, ...Sammā Samādhi.*

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XVII Myths or Realities?

April 29, 2016

1. In this section, I plan to address some concepts and practices in Buddha Dhamma that appear to be myths and/or contradictions to many. Some are indeed myths, but some are not. And sometimes it depends on the interpretation. There are two aspects to some of these practices.

- It is hard for people from various religions to understand why Buddhists pay respect to *Bodhi* trees or *pagodas* (*chetiya*) which look like pyramids with different shapes.
- On the other hand, even many Buddhists who worship them do not really know why they are doing it.
- Some of the practices are outright myths, like the belief that one can attain *Nibbāna* by doing breath meditation; there is no basis to that. How can one remove defilements (greed, hate, ignorance) by concentrating on the breath?
- However, some of them can be shown to be **verifiable and inter-consistent fundamentals of nature: realities or verities.**

2. Then there are other concepts like a *Bodhisattava* getting "*niyata vivarana*," or confirmation from another Buddha that he WILL become a Buddha at such and such a time. How does that tally with the concept that one can change one's future drastically by even a single act, and that *kamma* is not deterministic?

3. The value and strength of Buddha Dhamma comes from its unshakable foundational concepts (axioms) and inter-consistency. There is nothing inconsistent in the practices or concepts in true and pure Buddha Dhamma.

- But it requires some background material in order to be able to discuss some of these issues. Buddha Dhamma cannot be assessed with conventional thinking. One needs to comprehend the basics of Buddha Dhamma first.
- The more one understands the basic premises, the easier it will become for one to sort out myths from realities.
- After two years of posting essays on key concepts, we are at a stage to start discussing some of these issues. With time, we will have enough background to cover more of these issues.

o Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude

o Paramita and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?

o Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gathi

o Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?

o Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?

o Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years

o Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping?

Also see, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" in the subsection, "Origin of Life"

Also see, "Myths about Meditation" in the subsection, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)"

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17.1 Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude

April 29, 2016; December 1, 2017

1. The conventional interpretation of *Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā* (here "*locana*" is pronounced "lochana") is that Buddha paid his gratitude to the sacred *Bodhi* tree that gave him shade when he attained Enlightenment (Buddhahood). In current literature, it is described as the Buddha spending the second week after attaining Enlightenment — looking at that *Bodhi* tree even without blinking — as an act of gratitude for sheltering him during that Noble effort.

- It is true that the *Bodhi* tree was (and still is) a special tree, and has many unique properties which we will discuss in a future post.
- But there is no basis to the interpretation that he was looking at the *Bodhi* tree without even blinking. There the word "*animisa*" is incorrectly translated as "unblinking". **What he did during that week was related to his acts of gratitude that were to follow**.

2. *Nimisa* or *nimesa* is a moment, and *animisa* is "without pausing for even a moment". "*Lo*" is for the "*lokaya*" or "world", "*ca*" is for the *citta* (thoughts), and thus "*locana*" is basically contemplation, in this case about his long path to the Buddhhood (*bodhi* is the "path to Enlightenment", thus the name 37 *Bodhipakshika Dhamma,* where "*pākshika*" means "relevant to" or "associated with". The current English translation is 37 Factors of Enlightenment, which is not too far off).

- What the Buddha did during that *Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā* (for 7 days) was to trace back to the time that he started fulfilling the requirement for the Buddhahood (*pāramitā*), i.e., scanned the memory records (*nama gotta*) of his previous lives to see who helped him during that whole time.
- Records of our past remain intact basically forever; see, "Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Thalaya (Mind Plane)" and "Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)."
- After leaving the site of the *Bodhi* tree, he spent the first several years (and even at later times) locating those who helped him during that whole time and helped them attain *Nibbāna*. We will discuss some cases below.

3. It is said that it took the Buddha (or rather the *Bodhisattva*) a "*sāra asenkkheyya kappa lakhayak*" to fulfilled the requirements (*pāramitā*) to attain the Buddhahood. See, "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)" for a simple explanation of *paramita*.

There are four *asenkkheyya kappas* in a *mahā kappa,* and *"lakhayak"* is 100,000. But human beings live in *kāma loka* only during one *asenkkheyya kalpa* and during the other three *asenkkheyya kappas* the *kāma lokas* (and some of the lower lying *rūpa lokas*) are destroyed and re-formed. We will discuss this in detail later.

- Thus in calculating the *pāramitā* time, "*asenkkheyya kappa lakhayak*" actually takes the time of a *mahā kalpa*. I have not yet been able to find out what "*sāra"* means to my satisfaction even though I have come across some estimates. Thus, the time taken to fulfill the *pāramitā* was some number ("*sāra"*) of hundred thousand *mahā kappas.*
- However, there are other data points that give us an idea how long that is. According to the *Tipiṭaka*, there have been 512,000 Buddhas that appeared in our world during the time Buddha Gotama to fulfill his *pāramitā*.
- There have been only 7 Buddhas during the past 31 *mahā kappas*, and with the Maithreya Buddha that is expected to appear before the end of this *mahā kappa*, there would be 8 Buddhas in those 31 *mahā kappas*. Thus if we assume there is roughly a Buddha appearing for every four *mahā kappas*, then the time taken for our *Bodhisattva* to complete the *pāramitā* would be roughly two million *mahā kappas.* If we take a *mahā kappa* to be about 30 billion years (see, "Sansāric Time Scale"), then this time would be around 60 trillion years!

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- Regardless of the actual time taken, it can be assumed to be truly mind-boggling. Working nonstop (that is what "*animisa*" means), it took the Buddha fully seven days to cover this time span (recall the *nama gotta*).
- Of course many of the key people had been with him in repeated lives; this is why it took so long (seven days) for the Buddha to go through those records.

4. When the Buddha left the site of the *Bodhi* tree seven weeks after attaining the Buddhahood, he immediately started "paying back debts" to them.

- **This highlights the importance in paying back debts and showing gratitude for those who come to help; see, "Kamma, Debt, and Meditation."**
- One of the ten wrong views is the belief that there is no merit in paying back debts or showing gratitude; see, "Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi," and "Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis."
- Buddha's own actions were to highlight the importance of getting rid of that wrong view.

5. It is said that he first wanted to pay back his most recent "teachers": Alara Kalama and Uddaka Ramaputta. Unfortunately, both had died recently and both had been born in the *arūpa loka* (they had both cultivated *anāriya arūpa jhānā*). In *arūpa loka*, beings do not have eyes or ears, and thus are unable to learn Dhamma. Thus the Buddha was not able to help them.

- Next, he thought about the five ascetics (Kondanna, Bhaddiya, Vappa, Mahānāma, and Assaji) who had attended to him while he was practicing austerities for six years. It is those five ascetics that the Buddha delivered the first and second discourses at the Deer Park at Isipathana: *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta* and the *Anatta Lakkhana Sutta* (*Anatta* is the third of the *Tilakkhaṇa*: *anicca, dukkha, anatta*). They all became *Arahants* after the two discourses.
- Then the Buddha sought out and preached Dhamma to Yasā, a son of a wealthy brahmin, who lived nearby. Yasā and 54 friends of his became *Bhikkhus* and soon attained the *Arahantship*.

6. It is also important to note that most of those who helped the *Bodhisattva* in in his efforts, had also filled versions of *pāramitā* to be major disciples of the Buddha. They themselves had worked towards liberation (*Nibbāna*) in previous lives.

- This is why most of them were able to attain the *Arahanthood* or various stages of *Nibbāna* in short times.
- Even these days, it is easier for some than others because of their past efforts. Thus no one should be discouraged in their efforts. The efforts will pay off in time, possibly even later in this life or in future lives.

7. By the time the Buddha left Isipathana, there were thus 60 Arahants in his *Sāsana*. After sending them in different directions to propagate his message of liberation, the Buddha himself left towards Uruvela, to meet the three Kassapa brothers and their followers who had been with him in numerous lives in the long past.

- On the way there, he intercepted 30 young wealthy men who were looking for a woman who had robbed them of their valuables. That was not an accidental meeting either. All 30 of them had encounters with the Buddha in previous lives and were ready to comprehend the Dhamma. They all attained Arahanthood shortly.

8. Upon arriving in Urevala, the Buddha had to spend a considerable time and effort to convince the Kassapa brothers that were not *Arahants*. They were *yogis* who were under the impression that they had already attained liberation, and were very reluctant to embrace the Buddha Dhamma. Finally, they became disciples of the Buddha and all 1000 of them attained the *Arahanthood* upon hearing the *Aditta Pariyaya Sutta*.

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- Then the Buddha traveled with those 1000 *Arahants* to Rajagaha, the capital of the Kingdom of Magadha. King Bimbisara became a *Sotāpanna* and offered the Buddha his first monastery, the Bamboo Grove in Rajagaha.

9. While the Buddha was residing in the Bamboo Grove two brahmins, Upatissa and Kolita, met Assaji Thero (who was one of the five ascetics), and became *Sotāpannas* upon hearing a single verse from the Asssaji Thero. Then they came to see the Buddha and requested to become *bhikkhus*, and attained the *Arahanthood* within two weeks.

- Of course they became the two chief disciples of the Buddha: Ven. Sariputta and Ven. Moggallana.

10. Then the Buddha, accompanied by the *bhikkhus*, made the way to Kapilavatthu, his father's Kingdom. Here, he was able to help numerous people who had been together with him many, many lives in the past.

- By the way, it is those who have mutual debts to each other who are born into the same family and share common relatives and friends. Thus one's obligations are mostly in that order. Of course one is most indebted to one's parents.
- Just so this will not convey the wrong message, this is not to condone the common practice of "giving perks" to family and friends by misusing government resources, done by many politicians today. One should give only things of one's own.

11. Thus the first several years of Buddha's life was dedicated to helping those who had been with him and helped him in many ways through multiple rebirths in his endeavor to become a Buddha. Of course, neither a *Bodhisattva* (until becoming a Buddha) nor his helpers "knew" that was the case beforehand. That is how nature works. The next post in this series discusses this issue.

- It is easy to see that people with same interests always tend to stay together, because they have similar *gathi*. This is a very deep concept that we have encountered many times. A simple explanation is given in the post, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."

12. King Suddhodana, Prince Siddhartha's father, attained the *Arahanthood* just before passing away about five years after the Enlightenment of the Buddha.

- The Buddha, as a mark of gratitude to his mother who was born as a *deva* in *Tavatimsa deva* realm, preached the *Abhidhamma* to his mother together with other *devas* continuously for three months. The principal topics of *Abhidhamma* were then repeated by the Buddha to Venerable Sariputta, who subsequently worked with his clan of 500 *bhikkhus* to compile the *Abhidhamma Piṭaka* that we have today.
- Of course, both Princess Yasodhara and Prince Rahula entered the monastic order and attained *Arahanthood* too.
- Numerous other relatives entered the monastic order and attained various stages of *Nibbāna*.
- A fairly good book that goes through this timeline is "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nanamoli. It is important to note that the *Tipiṭaka* itself does not show the actual timeline of events; it is categorized according to other criteria.

13. Sometimes, it is not only those who help each other, but also arch enemies that follow each other through the cycle of rebirths (*saṃsāra*). While almost all other relatives of the Buddha (Prince Siddhartha) were able to attain *Nibbāna*, there were a few who could not overcome their deeply-embedded hatred towards the Buddha.

- The best examples were Devadatta and King Suppabuddha, who were the brother and father, respectively, of Princess Yasodhara. They both eventually ended up in the *niraya* (hell) for committing violent acts towards the Buddha.

Next, "Paramita and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?", ……

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17.2 Pāramitā and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?

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1. Pāli is a "phonetic language", meaning it does not have grammar rules. Most meanings come from sounds. This is why many people get into trouble trying to apply grammar rules to Pāli.

- Luckily, most Pāli words have related Sinhala words, so one with a good Sinhala knowledge and the basics of Buddha Dhamma can understand many Pāli terms. This is called "*pada nirukthi*" or clarifying via using some key phrases and sounds. (But it takes a special knowledge or "*patisambidha ñāṇa*" of a *jāti Sotāpanna* to glean the meanings of key words like *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* without anyone's help).
- The word,"*pāramitā*" comes from "*pireema*," or to fulfill. There are certain conditions that have to be met while one is purifying one's mind to become a Buddha; actually, the 80 great disciples (*mahā savaka*) of the Buddha also have to fulfill less stringent conditions.
- Attaining *magga phala* — including *Arahantship* — do not have such requirements. Yet, those also require cleansing one's mind over multiple lives. No goals can be achieved without an effort. Even when one wins a lottery, there is a reason (a good *kamma vipāka* from previous lives).
- See, "Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)" for a simple explanation of *pāramitā*.

2. The above paragraphs may give the impression that one "knows" that one is fulfilling *pāramitā* to be a Buddha or a great disciple. **They do not know that they are gradually fulfilling such requirements.** It is only when a *Bodhisattva* reaches a certain stage of progress, he gets told by Buddhas at those times:

- First he gets "*aniyata vivarana*" meaning he is told by a Buddha that he is likely to become a Buddha in the future, because has acquired "Buddha *gathi*" through his moral *gathi* and his drive for finding truth in past lives.
- Then when more "Buddha *gathi*" are acquired and firmly established with time, a later Buddha may give "*niyata vivarana*," i.e., that he will definitely become a Buddha.
- We discussed this in detail in the post, "Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude."

3. At first it seems that this "*niyata vivarana*" appears to say that the future can be deterministic. But in most cases, future is not deterministic; one can change one's future drastically by one's determined efforts; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

- The key lies in one's *gathi* (*āsava* and *anusaya* are related). It is comparatively easy to remove/change those *gathi* that one has acquired recently, but the longer one acts according to those *gathi*, they become deeply-embedded. One gets "*niyata vivarana*" when one's Buddha *gathi* are unshakable, so to speak.
- This is closely related to the fact that when one attains any stage of a *magga phala*, that is never removed in future rebirths.

4. To give a very simple example, a child who has just memorized, but not grasped the concept of adding, may be able to give the correct answer if that particular addition has been memorized. But a child who has grasped the concept of addition can add any two numbers, and that "knowledge base" cannot be removed from him.

- This is the same thing that happens when one attains the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*, for example. When one grasps the fact that nothing in these 31 realms can be maintained to one's satisfaction for long times, That "base level of comprehension of the nature of this world" is not going to change ever, even though future lives.

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- With that level of understanding, one does not have to consciously think to avoid the drastic immoral actions that make one eligible to be born in the *apāyā*; thoughts of such actions never come to a *Sotāpanna*'s mind.

5. In another example from the *Tipiṭaka*, once there was going to be a war between two factions. *Bhikkhus* asked Ven. Sariputta which side was going to win, and Ven. Sariputta named the winning side.

- But when the war was fought months later, the other side won. The *bhikkhus* were perplexed; how can a prediction of Ven. Sariputta be wrong? They went and asked the Buddha. The Buddha said that Ven. Sariputta's prediction was correct based on the conditions at that time. But as unforeseeable factors came into play, the outcome changed.

6. The world is extremely complex, and it is not possible to make predictions most of the time. In fact, this is related to the *anicca* nature: any *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) can undergo unexpected change, called *viparinama*.

- But some *gathi* and *kamma* can become so strong that it becomes virtually impossible to change the outcome. For example, if one kills one's parent, it is not possible to avoid birth in the *apāyā* in the very next birth.
- In the same way, when one's views about this world become clear to some level, and one can truly "see" the dangers of births in the *apāyā*, or the unfruitfulness of such actions, one's mind become permanently averse to such actions. That is when one becomes a *Sotāpanna*.
- Through the next two stages (*Sakadāgāmī* and *Anāgāmī*), one's mind becomes purified to the extent that one will cease to enjoy sense pleasures automatically, and then one will never be born in *kāma loka*. At the *Arahant* stage, one see the dangers of rebirth anywhere in the 31 realms.

7. But all those stages can be attained only if one is taught the correct path by a Noble Person, who has attained one of the four stages of *Nibbāna*. The special aspect of a Buddha is the ability to figure out that without anybody's instructions. And the mind of a Buddha is much more pure than that of an *Arahant*.

- Even when one attains the *Arahanthood*, some *sansāric* habits remain. Those are not defilements but just habits in the sense of doing something in a particular way, for example. Many such cases are mentioned in the *Tipiṭaka*. One *Arahant* could not remove the habit of addressing others in an inappropriate manner, even though there was no malice involved. Another *Arahant* had the habit of jumping over puddles on the road.
- But the mind of a Buddha was perfect. Not even a minor behavioral problem could be detected in a Buddha.

8. This can be compared to removing dirt from a glass of water. One could filer the water and get rid the big pieces of contaminants first. Then one could use better filters to remove even smaller particles. Now there may not be any visible contamination. But for all practical purposes, the water is clean and that can be compared to an *Arahant*.

- But there may be still some contaminant molecules there that can be uncovered only with a chemical analysis. Perfectly pure water without even a single molecule of a contaminant can be compared to the purity level of a Buddha.
- In fact, another meaning of "*pāramitā*" is "*pereema*" or "to filter". As one keeps filtering out contaminants (defilements) from one's mind it becomes more and more pure. Filtering to the ultimate level is fulfilling "*pāramitā*."

9. A person who eventually become a Buddha starts off as a scientist or a philosopher in today's terminology. It is started via one of two paths and both need to be fulfilled: "*kim sacca gavesi, kim kusala gavesi*": investigations of truth and morality.

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- *Sacca* (pronounced "sachcha") means the truth; "*kusala*" is of course morals, and "*gavesi*" is one who investigates. One starts off with the intention of finding the how the nature works, and also what are morals and the origins of morals.
- Even today, we can assign such labels to many of the scientists and philosophers. Of course only a minute fraction of them will eventually become a Buddha or a great disciple, but that is how one starts.

10. That habit (*gathi*) of looking into the truth and morals grows through successive lives. Most of them drop off due to external influences, and due to unexpected circumstances. But those few who get to cultivate those *gathi* keep cultivating them. As I said before, one may not had even heard of a Buddha for many eons while cultivating such *gathi* inadvertently. It is just that when one on the right (or even wrong) path, nature starts guiding one: "*Dhammo ha ve rakkathi dhammacari.*"

- By the way, one could start as a man or a woman, but the Buddhahood is attained by only a man. This and several other things "that would not happen" are discussed in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Bahudhātuka Sutta (MN 115)."
- In our rebirths process, one could change sex. Actually, the sex change can happen even during a lifetime (these days such transgenders are common).
- In the rebirth process, we all have been born a man and a woman innumerable times. If I remember correctly, the *Bodhisatva* was a woman when she started cultivating *pāramitā* to becomes Buddha. But at some point (probably after getting *niyata vivarana*), he had been a male.
- There is a slight difference between male and female. That may not be politically correct to say these days, but that is the reality. One is a man or a woman because one has cultivated the corresponding *gati*. No matter how many laws are passed, the military is always going to be dominated by men, for example.

11. In the *Tipiṭaka*, it says the usual progression of one's character (*gathi*) buildup is *dāna* (giving), *seela* (moral conduct), *bhāvanā* (mostly loving kindness towards others), and culminating in *paññā* (wisdom).

- While these main ones are being cultivated, there are others that simultaneously cultivate, and there are actually ten of them called *dasa pāramitā*. The others are: *viriya* (effort), *khanti* (patience), *adhittana* (determination), *metta* (loving kindness), *nekkhamma* (renunciation), and *upekkha* (equanimity).
- The process has been analyzed in great detail. For example, each of those ten grow into higher stages: *upa pāramitā* (middle) and *aramatta pāramitā* (ultimate). As one keeps making progress through successive lives, such *gathi* get amplified and one makes advances to those higher stages.
- As we saw in the previous post, "Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude," it takes an unimaginably long time to purify the mind and get to the perfect mind of a Buddha.

12. As an example, let us consider the *dāna pāramitā.* Here one starts with mundane giving (*dāna)*, i.e., giving to the needy, to animals, to elders and *yogis*, etc.

- Then one advances to the *abhaya dāna.* Here one comprehends the fact that each and every sentient being values one's life the most, and thus does everything possible to save lives. It has even a deeper meaning too: *abhaya* means remove "*bhaya*" or fright. Thus the *metta pāramitā* grows simultaneously too. Most categories are inter-related, and grow together.
- The highest is *dhamma dāna.* It of course starts with teaching morals to others, and living an exemplary life. It is when one becomes a Buddha, that one start teaching the Buddha Dhamma (the way to eliminate *bhava* or "*bhava udda*" and to attain *Nibbāna*).

13. As I said before, such instructions about *dasa pāramitā* are not known to the world for even through eons. There are many *mahā kappas* where not a single Buddha is born. Thus it is not like following a set instructions. Those qualities grow as one's *sansāric gathi* without even realizing that one is fulfilling such requirements.

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- Even today, we can see many people, regardless of their religions or cultures, engage in such activities. Many of today's scientists, teachers, physicians, philanthropists, etc. could be in such early stages.
- Thus we should always respect and honor those who live such exemplary lives regardless of their religions or cultures or any other categorization. One is considered "suitable for paying respects" only based on one's actions.

14. It is informative to see why there are special categories of five Buddhas, seven Buddhas, 24 Buddhas, and 28 Buddhas in Buddhist literature. All these Buddhas are named and discussed in the following Wikipedia article:

WebLink: WIKI: List of the named Buddhas

- After striving for a long time as discussed in #3 above, our *Bodhisattva* first obtained "*niyata vivarana*" that he will definitely become a Buddha in the future, from Buddha Dipankara, who was the 24th Buddha preceding Buddha Gotama. A *Bodhisattva* customarily obtains "*niyata vivarana*" from 24 Buddhas before attaining the Buddhahood. The last Buddha that our *Bodhisattva* obtained *"niyata vivarana"* was from Buddha Kassapa.
- Before obtaining "*niyata vivarana*," our *Bodhisattva* obtained "*aniyata vivarana*" or "not confirmed, but very likely" from three Buddhas named Tannankara, Medhankara, and Saranankara. As the Bodhisattva kept fulfilling the requirements, they were first fulfilled during the time of Buddha Deepankara, as mentioned above.
- The special aspect of the seven Buddhas is that those were the most recent Buddhas. There have been four Buddhas (Kakusanda, Konagama, Kassapa, Gotama) in this *mahā kappa*, and there were 30 *mahā kappas* prior to that which did not have even a single Buddha. In the *mahā kappa* before that there were 2 Buddhas (Siki and Vessabhu); Prior to that there was only a single Buddha in the *mahā kalpa that was* 91 *mahā kalpa* earlier. So, there have been only 7 Buddhas within the past 91 *mahā kappas,* and the timeline are discussed in the "WebLink: Suttacentral: Mahapadana Sutta (DN 14)."
- The present *mahā kappa* is a very special one, having the maximum number (five) of Buddhas in a given *mahā kappa.* We have had four Buddhas so far, and there is going to be one more, Buddha Maithreya, before this *mahā kappa* comes to an end.

15. Finally, *pāramitā* are also associated with one striving to become one of the 80 disciples of a future Buddha.

- Furthermore, one striving to attain the *Arahanthood* (or *Nibbāna*) is also fulfilling *pāramitā*.

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17.3 Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gathi

May 28, 2016

1. Many people consider the recital of *namaskaraya* followed by the 24 supreme qualities of the Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha (*Tiratana vandanā* or *Tisarana vandanā*) in three possible ways: (i) recite them mechanically (and erroneously), (ii) disregard them as unimportant, or (iii) even consider the practice as "mythical" per benefits of their recital.

- These qualities are called "*suvisi guna*," where *suvisi* means 24 and *guna* are the qualities.
- These qualities (and the meanings of the words *Tisarana Vandana*) are discussed briefly in "Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha"; correct way to recite them are also discussed there.

2. As I have discussed in many posts, there are many things in this world that we do not really understand. Many of the Buddhist practices have become "mystical" simply because their true interpretations as well as their correct usage have been lost. This current topic is a good example. One can reap many benefits by understanding the true meanings of these phrases AND by reciting them correctly. I have experienced these benefits.

- Now, this does not mean one can attain *Nibbāna* (or the *Sotāpanna* stage) by reciting them day and night. This is simply one of the many tools available to calm the mind and to slowly but surely change one's character (*gathi*) over time.
- As everything else with Buddha Dhamma, it is all in one's mind. If one has the motivation and the drive to learn and apply these tools, they can bring many benefits not only in this life but in future lives. But it is not like taking a pill for a headache; one cannot expect results quickly. We have developed "bad *gathi*" over beginning-less rebirths and it is not easy to change them quickly.

3. First of all, we all have seen how it is possible to convey a given message by just changing the tone. The words, "come here" can give different meanings based on the way how the words are uttered. When a parent says, "come here" to a child with love and affection, the child would be delighted to oblige. The same parent can get angry at the same child and yell, "COME HERE!", the child is likely to cringe and back out afraid of a possible spanking.

- The "*gathi* sound" ("*gathi handa*" in Sinhala) in the two cases were totally different even though the words were the same; see below. The way the same phrase was uttered made a difference to the child's mind.

4. Many Pāli words have a different kind of power too; certain words can influence the mind strongly.As we will discuss in future posts, the early humans had a single language called Magadhi from which Pāli words originated. It was a universal language with the effects conveyed by the way the words were pronounced.

- This is why I mentioned in other posts also that Pāli is a phonetic language. Grammar rules are secondary.
- Just by listening to a recital of a *pirith desanā* (i.e., recital of *suttā*) can make a change in one's mindset, which may be even visible to others. There is a subliminal message (*saññā*) in the *suttā* that the mind can grasp, even if the person may not understand what is being said.
- **The words themselves, how they are uttered, and even who utters them, are "embedded" in "*gathi* sounds".**

5. There are several such examples mentioned in the *Tipiṭaka*. A famous example is about a frog who was attentively listening to a discourse of the Buddha. Of course a frog could not understand what the Buddha was saying. But the "*gathi* sound" ("*gathi handa*" in Sinhala) that came from the Buddha combined with *sansāric gathi* of the frog led the frog to attentively listen to the pleasing sound from the Buddha and to have a pleasant mindset.

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- While listening to the discourse, the frog was accidentally killed by the walking stick of a person there, and the frog was born in a *deva loka* instantaneously. His name was Manduka *deva* and he immediately realized how he was born there. He came back to listen to the same discourse and attained a *magga phala*.
- Then there were a bunch of bats who resided in a cave that was used by *Bhikkhus* who used to recite *pirith* every night. Those bats were all said to have born as children in the same village and to have attained *Arahantship* later. There are few other accounts as well.

6. These may sound like myths, but when one learns Abhidhamma and understands the power of a "*somanassa sahagata citta*" , (or a "thought with joy"), one could make the connection. We all, including animals who had been humans at some point in the past, have accumulated good *kamma* seeds as well as bad ones from the past.

- One of the factors that comes into play at the dying moment is the state of the mind. If the mind is highly perturbed or is "covered with" *panca nivarana* (see, "Key to Calming the Mind – The Five Hindrances"), then it allows conditions for a bad *kamma* seed to come into play. But while listening to *Dhamma* or *pirith*, those *panca nivarana* are temporarily suspended and that allows for a good *kamma* seed to come into play; see, "Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi."
- One's *gathi* are not fixed. Even a person with many immoral *gathi* has some moral ones as well. What kind of *gathi* operates at a given moment depends on one's state of mind.

7. Now we can come back to the issue of "*gathi* sound" that we mentioned in #5 above. *Tisarana vandanā* especially has the power to change one's mindset, if recited correctly.

- Entities with same *gathi* always naturally tend to be close to other entities with same *gathi*. This can be clearly seen anywhere. People who like sports get together. People like to party all the time, hang out with others who like to do the same. This is discussed in a simple but illustrative post: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- This is why in Asian Buddhist countries it is customary to turn on *pirith* (recital of *suttā*) on the radio in the mornings and/or at night. This is supposed to keep undesired beings away and attract benevolent beings to the houses. It is actually effective if done properly. Those *pretas* with immoral *gathi* do not like to hang around when such chanting are being played. On the other hand, *devas* of the lowest realm (*Bhummataka devas*) like to stay close to such sounds/environments.

8. Another related property is "*gathi ruva*" or "*gathi* picture". The obvious example is a picture of a Buddha, not the distorted laughing Buddha, but the serene Buddhas like shown below.

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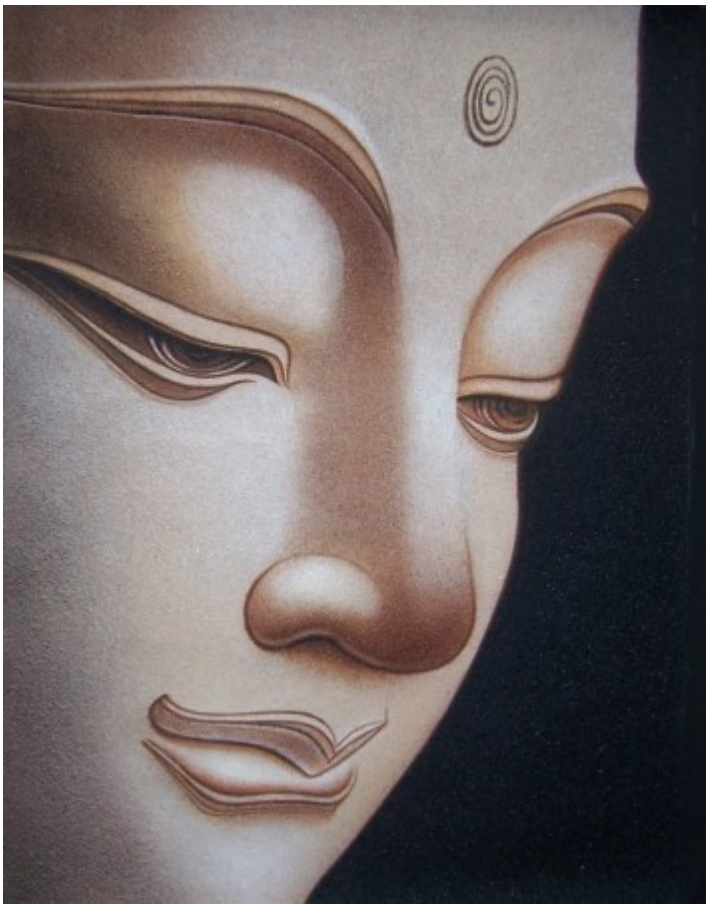

- This is why most meditators keep a Buddha statue in the meditation room. It is just another factor that helps in getting to the right mindset.
- Then there is "*gathi* suvanda" or "*gathi* smell". Burning incense gives an odor that is also compatible with a meditation environment. A perfume on the other hand, is a distraction. A good perfume is compatible when going out on a date; that sets a compatible environment for sense pleasures.
- All these subtle things add up to make a difference. And how much of a difference depends on the person too. Some people do not need any of such "incentives" to get onto even *jhānā*. But for some others they could make a difference.

9. In order to establish this point we can think about a "party atmosphere" compared to a "meditation atmosphere". When someone organizes a party or a dance, one decorates the room with bright colors, eye catching pictures, sensual fragrances, loud music, etc. That is the environment with "matching *gathi*" for such an event. That would be a disastrous setting for a meditation session; one would not be able to concentrate at all.

- On the other hand, a meditation atmosphere is not compatible for a dance. One cannot dance to *pirith* or to *Tisarana vandanā*. It provides a setting that is calm and peaceful, and conducive for contemplation.
- Another aspect is that people when attracted to *Dhamma* will start skipping parties as I have. I would rather stay home and learn *Dhamma* rather than going to a noisy environment let alone a party.
- One will start associating with different people too, if one seriously gets into Dhamma. It is not done by sheer will power; rather it just happens because one's *gathi* change. It is just natural for "likes to get together with likes", the Law of Attraction: "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gathi), and Cravings (Āsavas)."

10. This concept actually works at a deeper level too. We emit electromagnetic radiation (*cittaja rūpa*) according out *gathi* and mindset at a given moment. Whatever the types of *Dhamma* that are attracted at

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any given time are compatible with that state of the mind. A deeper discussion is at "What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis."

- For example, when we are angry we never receive more good thoughts. If we are arguing with someone, what always comes to mind are just bad thoughts, bad memories about that person.
- On the other hand, when we are calm and in a joyful mood, we mostly think about good memories.
- When one is at a funeral, one's thoughts and complexion becomes attuned to that environment: one sees and hears people crying, and one gets sad and one's face shows that as well; one does not feel like laughing. On the other hand, when one is at a party it is totally opposite atmosphere, and one feels like laughing and dancing.
- Other people can also be affected by our mindset. It is quite pleasant to look at a Buddhist monk. They just have that calm demeanor which is part of their cultivated *gathi.* In fact, our bodies also change over time according our *gathi*. There are other people whom we can instantly recognize as "rough characters".
- This is a deep subject with many complexities and even exceptions. But I hope I have been able to convey the basic idea.

11. When one is reciting *Tisarana vandanā* correctly in a suitable environment, one's *gathi* will change at least during that short time for the better. One will be able to grasp deeper concepts during meditation following the recitation. When one does this over a long time, one's salient *gathi* will gradually change too.

- I know mine have changed over the past several years, and in particular within the past several months. It is a process that needs a bit of time to get traction, and then the results becomes clear one day. When I first wrote the original post (which I just revised), my enthusiasm for reciting *Tisarana vandanā* was not that high.
- However, I do not want to over emphasize this aspect. It can be considered a tool that could make a difference for some people.

12. For those who may be trying to cultivate the *anicca saññā* (i.e., comprehend what is meant by *anicca, dukkha, anatta*), reciting *Namasakaraya* followed by *Tisarana vandanā* could be helpful. I am providing the recordings below.

- The Buddha has also stated that when one is in a dangerous situation or gets frightened by something, reciting *Budu Guna* (*Ithipi so Bhagavā…..*) can help getting rid of the fear. One could recite this just before going to bed and it might help with falling asleep; again, it depends on one's own *gathi*, how faithfully one does it, whether it is done with *saddhā*, etc.

Here is a recital of the *Namaskaraya* by the Venerable Thero (you need to adjust volume control on your computer). It is normally recited three times:

WebLink: Listen to the verses of Namaskaraya recital

Here is a recording of the *Tisarana vandana* by the Venerable Thero (You need to control the volume level on your computer):

WebLink: Listen to the verses of Tiratana Vandana

Pāli text (click to open the pdf file):

WebLink: PDF File: Tiratana Vandana

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17.4 Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?

December 18, 2015; revised August 29, 2019

Introduction

1. The Buddha described a "much wider" world of 31 realms, compared to the just two realms (human and animal) that we experience. See, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- The Buddhist worldview is not a theory or speculation. The Buddha could "see" each of the 31 realms of this world. He could "see" how a life-stream moves from one realm to another based on *kamma vipāka* and prevailing conditions, i.e., *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- Many *suttā* describe Buddha's and his disciples' visits to *brahma* and *deva* planes. Others describe visits of *brahmā* and *devas* to the human world (mainly to listen to the discourses of the Buddha and to ask questions from the Buddha). In the latter category, there are 81 *suttā* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Devatā Saṃyutta (SN 1.1 ~ 1.81)" and 111 *suttā* in the "WebLink: suttacentral: Devaputta Saṃyutta (SN 2.1 ~ 2.30)" in the *Saṃyutta Nikāya*.

2. Even though devas and *brahmā* do not have to face much suffering during their lifetimes, those lives have finite lifetimes. When they die, they are mostly born in the lower realms.

- The importance of those realms is that living beings spend most of their time in the rebirth process in those apāyā. See, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."
- Several *suttā* discuss the unbearable suffering in hell and other lower realms; see below. Also, see my post on August 28, 2019, at the discussion forum on, "WebLink: Pure Dhamma Forums: Questions on Posts in the "Origin of Life" Subsection." It discusses "life in hell".
- The following book provides vivid details of life in hell, compatible with the description in the *suttā*: "A Guided Tour of Hell – A Graphic Memoir" by Samuel Bercholz (2016). He first describes an "out-of-body experience" that is similar to many given by others (seeing his body from above), but the second experience is a "trip to the hell".

3. Here we will discuss more indirect evidence from our experiences for the existence of hell (*niraya*). This post also provides a bit more information on the way to clarifying the role (and importance) of the human brain.

- Beings in most realms do not have the capacity to change their destiny; they just pay off their past *kamma*, whether good *kamma* in *deva* or *brahma* realms or bad *kamma* in the human and lower realms (*apāyā*).
- Among living beings, it is mostly humans who can mold their future; they are the ones who can cultivate *citta* with high *javana* power. They are ones who do (*abhi*)*saṅkhāra* that lead to both good and bad rebirths (via improving the character or "*gati*"). They either enjoy the fruits of those in good realms or pay for them in the *apāyā*, and eventually — after long times — come back to the human realm. That is what all of us have been doing from an untraceable beginning.

Genuine Hell Sounds or Not?

4. Here is a well-circulated youtube video that claims to playback the "sounds of hell" recorded in a deep underground mine in Siberia. I must warn that these sounds are horrific, even though the recording is likely to be a fake; see below.

WebLink: youtube: Siberia Hell sounds

There is a post describing the background of this video: WebLink: skeptoid.com: The Siberian Hell Sounds and refers to the following youtube video proving that the above video is a hoax:

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- If it is a fake (as it appears to be), it does not make sense to try to fool people by making videos such as above. One should realize that truth always comes out at the end.
- Still, debunking the "hell sounds" video does not prove that the hell does not exist either.

Do We Need Firsthand Experience on the Existence of Hell?

5. We should ask the following question. Is it necessary for us to directly observe something with our five physical senses to believe its existence?

- When many people hear about the *apāyā* — other than the animal realm that we can see — or heavenly worlds of *devas*, they refuse even to consider their existence. That is because "they cannot see those realms." (By the way, there are four *apāyā* (*niraya, preta, asura,* or animal).
- But science disproves that contention. Science was not aware of the existence of billions of galaxies and an uncountable number of planetary systems like our solar system until the 20th century. Then better instruments became available; see, "Wrong Views (Miccha Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis." There are many such examples given in the "Dhamma and Science" section.
- However, the Buddha was able to see those realities 2500 years ago by purifying his mind. We can also "see' the existence of some of these realms if we can cultivate *abhiññā* powers.
- It is not a good idea to refuse to consider anything that cannot be confirmed with one's direct experiences. That is discussed in detail in several posts, including "Wrong Views (Miccha Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis."

Description of Life in Hell in the *Suttā*

6. I am going to summarize what we can glean from the *suttā* (plural of *sutta* is *suttā*) in the Tipiṭaka of the four *apāyā* and other realms including the *niraya* (or the hell). The general layout of the 31 domains was summarized in the post, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

- The *niraya* is in the deep interior of the Earth. The "hell beings" have solid bodies that can withstand various forms of torture. A "hell being" is born via *opapatika* birth, with a full physical body capable of experiencing the suffering.
- The hell-wardens who impart those sufferings to the hell beings are also living beings. They are born in the *niraya* because of their "*gati*" (character qualities) due to the "*saṅkhāra*" that they developed in previous lives. Their bodies are tolerant of the harsh conditions in the *niraya.* They do not suffer like hell-beings.
- There are many posts in the website on "*gati.*" For an introduction, see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavas)."
- "WebLink: suttacentral: Devadūta Sutta (MN 130)" describes "hells" or "*niraya.*" A translation at: "WebLink: suttacentral: Devaduta Sutta: The Deva Messengers." A similar *sutta* about some realms located close to Earth is the "WebLink: suttacentral: Āṭānāṭiya Sutta (DN 23)." A translation at, "WebLink: suttacentral: The Āṭānāṭiya Discourse (DN 23)."

7. *Devadüta Sutta* explains in vivid detail how the hell-wardens torture a hell being. There is a king Yama (or probably many kings) in each *niraya* (there are several). He interrogates some of the newly arrived hell-beings "who were at the borderline" and just barely made it to the hell. He reminds him/her of the opportunities that he/she had to understand the bad consequences of their actions.

- It is important to note that the king Yama interrogates only those new arrivals that are from the human realm. There is an uncountable number of beings born in the *niraya* from other *apāyā.* They move from one *apāya* to another until a rare opportunity comes to get out of the *apāyā.*

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- Such a Yama king is born there also according to the "*gati*" they had cultivated in previous lives; see below. Like all other living beings, those hell wardens and king Yama have finite lifetimes.

Based on Experience – Not Speculation

8. It is significant to note the ending of the *sutta*, where the Buddha says, "I tell you this, monks, not from having heard it from another contemplative or *brahman*. On the contrary, I tell you this just as I have known for myself, seen for myself, understood for myself." That is what I mean when I say all that the Buddha had experienced what he taught. He could "see" all of 31 realms.

- Of course, we have to have faith in the Buddha to believe that. However, we can see that all he had taught is self-consistent. There are no contradictions; see, "Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency."

9. There are close comparisons in the world that we experience. A good example is the comparison of policemen to the hell-wardens. They both like to punish those who have done immoral acts. Being a policeman is not easy; they are under stress, and it is not easy to deal with rough criminals. Not everyone can be a policeman (or policewoman).

- They have cultivated "*gati*" or habits that do not tolerate "bad behavior." They always think about ways to find and bring to justice those who do immoral deeds.
- King Yama is like a criminal judge; he also has similar *gati* comparable to hell-wardens but does not engage in personally punishing the culprits.

Body Types in Different Realms

10. A discussion on the body types can illustrate the point that the specific kamma vipāka prepares the physical body. Each body type can experience *vipāka* in according to *gati* of that being.

- The hell-being is born in a *niraya* to experience the *kamma vipāka* corresponding to *kamma* done with hate, like killing or torturing others. But that *kamma* was done after cultivating "hate *saṅkhāra"* for long times.
- A *preta*'s body is in such a way to experience hunger; many have huge bodies with tiny mouths so that they can never satisfy hunger. One is born a *preta* because one has cultivated "*preta saṅkhāra."* One will always be thinking about sense pleasures and also crave for what others have. That applies not just to the poor. One can be wealthy, but still may not be satisfied with what one has. On the other hand, there may be a poor person who is satisfied with what he/she has and does not cultivate "*preta saṅkhāra.*"
- The "*asuras*" are those who have cultivated "*asura saṅkhāra,"* i.e., those who like to get "free rides." They depend on others for their needs and are too lazy to work and make a living. Those who steal or embezzle money from others also have similar *gati*.
- Animals (called "*thirisan*" because they have all three "*san*" of *lobha, dosa, moha*) have a mixture of those *gati*; see, "What is 'San'?."
- One cultivates particular *saṅkhāra* because one has a specific character or *gati*. And the more *saṅkhāra* one does (thinking, speaking, and doing certain things), the more established *gati* become, which in turn leads to corresponding *jāti* (births); see, "Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control."

Comparison with Modern Science

11. In the post "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma," the 31 realms were represented by spherical shells with a sphere in the middle and the bodies of the beings in lower realms were higher in general than the bodies of the living beings in the higher realms. Each "inhabited" planetary system has all 31 realms. But most planetary systems are not "inhabited."

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- Scientists say that the nearest planetary system to the solar system is Alpha Centauri, which is located 4.37 light-years away; see, WebLink: wikipedia: Alpha Centauri. A light-year is a distance traveled by light in a YEAR at the speed of 299 792 458 m/s (186,000 miles/second).
- That is a humongous distance that cannot be traveled with current technology or any technology in the foreseeable future. It would take 100 years to reach that star system; see WebLink: wikipedia: Project Longshot. Thus it is doubtful that we will verify the existence of life in other planetary systems during our lives.
- However, there are other living beings in the solar system itself that science has not found. That is in agreement with scientists' admission that only 4% of the mass of the universe is explainable by science.

12. The *niraya or hell* is located deep inside the Earth, and those beings have very dense bodies.

- The other three *apāyā* are located at and close to the surface of the Earth. Of course, the animals live among humans, and *asuras* are said to live mostly in the oceans. The *petas* also live on the surface of the Earth just like us, but normally we cannot see them. They all have body densities comparable to humans, except for *petas*. Some *petas* have "fine bodies" suffer not via bodily punishments, but mentally: they can recall the past lives and bad deeds that led to the *preta bhava*.
- There are three other human realms close to the Earth that we cannot see. Most *deva* realms lie well-above the surface of the Earth. The *brahma* realms are even further out. Of course, *devas* have much less dense bodies than humans, and *brahmas'* bodies are finer at higher realms. At the highest *brahma* realm, an *arupa brahma* has only one *suddhaṭṭhaka*, the *hadaya vatthu*; see, "The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka."
- The body types in the 31 realms have been discussed in the previous post: Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kaya.

Births Correspond to Gati (Character Qualities)

13. Roughly speaking, we can say beings with more immoral "*gati*" are born with denser bodies inside or on the surface of the Earth. Their thick bodies are used to impart *kamma vipāka* either via torture or via bodily ailments and diseases.

- The beings in the *deva* and *brahma* realms, who have less and less dense bodies do not suffer bodily ailments. At the end of their *kammic* energy, they disappear and are born at the next realm appropriate for the most potent *kamma* seed they have. It could be in a lower sphere, including the *niraya* (unless they had attained at least the *Sotāpanna* stage).
- Thus beings with better and better "*gati,"* i.e., "*deva gati*" and "*brahma gati*" are located further and further away from the surface of the Earth, and those hell-beings with the "worst *gati*" are located below the surface of the Earth.

14. Therefore, each living being can be said to "carry his/her dhamma"; here, dhamma means "to bear." More precisely, each *bhava* carries its *dhamma*, and when the *bhava* changes, the types of *dhamma* one carries changes.

- A hell being is carrying a heavy load and has the most significant burden. *Devas* carry very light loads, they have negligible suffering during that lifetime, and *brahmā* even lower.
- But the load carried by a being cannot always be determined by the body density. Some *petas* have light bodies and their *kamma vipāka* are imparted by the mind, not physically via the body.

Our Own Experiences

15. We all have seen some children when they don't get their way and become mad, fall on the floor and cry. It is as if they want to go towards the *niraya* (sometimes they bang their heads on the floor). That is a reflection of their "*gati*" AT THAT MOMENT.

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- In the same way, they (and even adults) jump up with joy. It is as if they are trying to go up towards the higher realms. Again it is a reflection of their "joyous *gati*" at that moment.
- Another example is the behavior of criminals. We all have seen pictures of criminals when they come to the court of law: their heads are lower. They feel a heavy burden.
- On the other hand, when we have done something exemplary, we feel good and keep our heads high. Our bodies feel lighter too.
- These may not be Earth-shattering observations, but they are consistent with the Buddha's world view.

16. Thus each of us can momentarily live in the *apāyā* or higher *deva* and *brahma* realms.

- I am sure anyone can recall such moments. When we get outraged, we burn inside, our bodies even get heated, faces get reddish, and we sweat. It is not a pretty sight to see a furious person or even a child.
- On the other hand, when we are calm and relaxed, especially after doing a moral deed, we feel good, and our body language reflects that. We are confident; we feel lighter, and also are "cooled down" inside. It is always a pleasure to look at Buddhist monks.

17. Thus even though we may not see the beings in the other realms, many indicators are consistent with the "bigger world picture" of the Buddha. We have reasons from our experiences to believe the existence of such realms. That may be a small part of the whole story, but indirect pieces of evidence like this are always consistent with Buddha Dhamma; we will discuss more in the future. These are things that one can contemplate during insight meditation and verify for oneself.

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17.5 Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?

June 17, 2016

1. A friend of mine alerted me to a recent article on possible dangers of mindful meditation:

Weblink: BBCRadio: Is Mindfulness Meditation Dangerous?

- It seems that there are possible dangers in not only "mindful meditation" but other types of meditation too. I did a Google search and found that there are many articles, videos, and podcasts on the subject. You can do the same just to get an idea (try, "dangers of meditation" and "dangers of meditation youtube") .
- There is a recent book, "The Buddha Pill" by Miguel Farias (2015), which downplays benefits of meditation and also points to some reported bad outcomes.
- There is a vast amount of misinformation out there. So, I thought of writing down my own thoughts based on the Buddha Dhamma that I understand and practice. In genuine Buddhist meditation too, one may encounter some discomforts as I will discuss below. But those are temporary and definitely not dangerous.

2. First of all, 99% of "Buddhist meditation programs" that are being taught and practiced today are not compatible with Buddha Dhamma, the original teachings of the Buddha. Let us first discuss this point.

- The goal of the Buddha was NOT to teach practices and methods by which to attain temporary relief from daily stresses of life. Such procedures had been in practice even when the Buddha (Prince Siddhartha) was born 2500 years ago.
- For example, breath meditation used by even Theravāda Buddhists today was a practice that was rejected by the Buddha; see, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section and in particular, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)," which discusses breath meditation.

3. I do not either dispute or agree with the findings reported in the above articles or the above book. I do not know those specific cases, and it does not matter either because those meditation techniques are not "Buddhist meditations".

- There are many varieties of meditation techniques used by so-called "Buddhist meditators"; most are a waste of time and some are definitely bad. For example, one of the dangerous techniques is to try remove all thoughts that comes to one's mind. One could lose memory (and perception) if this is done for a long time.
- The Buddha said to stop IMMORAL thoughts, not ALL thoughts. There is a big difference between the two. Furthermore, he encouraged cultivating moral thoughts (*Ānāpāna* is "*āna*" AND "*pāna*"; see, "6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)."

4. The suffering that the Buddha really focused on was the *sansāric* suffering, i.e., unimaginable suffering in some realms of this world which consists of 31 realms; see, "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma" or other posts on suffering.

- For a normal human, It is not possible to avoid births in the future in the four lowest realms (*apāyā*) filled with suffering without attaining at least the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. Not only any bad actions done in this life, but bad actions done in previous lives can contribute. We have been lucky to get this human life due to a past good action (*kamma*), but all of us have done both good and bad actions in our deep past.
- **Future births in the *apāyā* is stopped not by "erasing" those past bad *kamma*, but mainly by a subtle mechanism which involves understanding the Buddha's world view.**
- This website is all about explaining that complex process, but I can state what the end result is: the solution is to remove greed and hate from our minds which happens to a large extent when one

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comprehends the "bigger world picture" of the Buddha (which is called getting rid of ignorance of the correct world view or attaining *sammā diṭṭhi*).

5. Thus one could take one of three approaches:

- One could learn pure Buddha Dhamma, the original teachings of the Buddha, and understand his world view. When one learns and comprehends this wider world view, one can clearly see the possibility of much suffering in future lives.
- The other approach is to believe in the above stated conclusion, i.e., that getting rid of greed and hate from one's mind will remove future suffering, and to start working on it.
- But there is a third approach, which is to do both in parallel.

6. The third approach above is the best approach since it accelerates the process of cleansing. Furthermore, one can experience relief from not only future suffering but also in this life.

- However, it must be understood that it is not possible to remove all types of suffering in this life by meditation. What we experience in this life are results of what we have done in the past. It is possible to avoid some bad outcomes but not all; see, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."
- Another fact which is not discussed correctly is that there could be some physical discomfort one can experience when one really gets into deep meditation. But this is not dangerous at all, and is actually an indication that one is actually progressing!
- The best way to convey the information is to describe my own experience (at least parts of it). Even though each person's experience will be different, there are some common themes.

7. First of all, one does not even need to understand what *Nibbāna* is in order to get started. Even though it is possible to describe what *Nibbāna* is (there are many posts at the site), it is not easy to truly comprehend what is meant by stopping rebirth process, especially at early stages.

- As an example, a child in the primary school may say she wants to be a scientist; that is her goal, because she has heard that it is a good occupation. But she has no idea what a scientist does.
- In the same way, most Buddhists know that *Nibbāna* is a coveted and worthy goal, but have no idea what it is. Most have not even thought much about it. They know that it involves stopping the rebirth process, but If pressed some may even say they do not "really want to attain *Nibbāna* yet; I want to enjoy life a bit more". That is because it is not easy to comprehend the dangers of such "enjoyments".
- However, the above child knows that she has to work hard and get good grades in school in order to become a scientist in the future. As she makes progress through the primary, secondary, and high school, she will gradually get a better idea of what becoming a scientist means and involves. It becomes even more clear when she gets a university education, and finally she may enter graduate school to actually become one.
- Most Buddhists can be compared to that child stuck in the primary or secondary school: they refrain from immoral actions to some extent, but have not proceeded any further due to a number of reasons: lack of time, lack of understanding the urgency to do something before one gets old and the brain starts slowing down, etc.

8. On the other hand, most beginners to Buddhist meditation may not have any idea what *Nibbāna* is or even may not believe in the rebirth process. And one does not need to.

- As I have tried to explain in many posts, *Nibbāna* has many levels starting from just a relaxed state of mind all the way to stopping the rebirth process. One needs to proceed gradually, experiencing the increasing level of relief on the way.
- Any reasonably moral person can see the benefits of living a moral life. Most religions teach how to live a moral life, at least to some degree.

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- The first thing to do is to try extending this way of moral living by incorporating factors that may not necessarily taught in other religions; for example, killing animals is not considered immoral in many of the major religions.
- Killing other people for any perceived benefit is an inconceivably bad idea. We have to stop calling such ideas as "religious" regardless of the "religious label" attached. One would be bound for the worst sufferings imaginable for billions of years.

9. I think we live in a world today that is too "politically correct". We are afraid to even give our honest points of view for the fear of being labelled "insensitive to other religions or cultures". We should be free to point out and condemn immoral and harmful actions.

- For me there are no religious or cultural boundaries; we live this life for about 100 years and may be reborn in a different culture which may follow a different religion; "Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society." However, it is not good to impose sudden cultural changes that could lead to major disruptions in societies.
- My intention is to make as much progress as possible in this short time left, and to help others who may be interested.
- I also think it is a disservice not to share with others something that one has experienced to be of value. It is of course up to others even to bother reading about it.

10. Going back to our discussion, one should try to avoid things that we know deep inside to be bad: engaging in dishonest and harmful behavior. This of course has many facets and levels. So, one should start stopping actions such as: taking advantage of others in any way, engaging is sexual **misconduct**, avoiding drugs and cutting down on alcohol, etc.

- This gradual process is describe in detail in the first several posts in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section. What I like to do here is to point out some key points that I think could be useful.

11. **It is obvious that meditation, at least in beginning, does not require one to even sit down.** Before one gets to that stage, one needs to remove some cobwebs from the mind that have accumulated over time.

- Some people cannot sit down and concentrate anyway; the mind likes to wander around. This "agitation" is due to greed and hate, even though it may not be obvious. What breath meditation does is to force the mind to concentrate on breathing in order to stop this wandering temporarily.
- And it does work for some people. But any calming effect is temporary. One may feel good during a meditation retreat, but when coming back to real life, the mind goes back to the agitated state.
- Thus if one just does the standard "breath meditation" (without doing crazy things like trying to stop all thoughts) it is unlikely that they will experience any bad psychological effects, but it is bad in the sense of being an utter waste of time in the long run.
- Many people I know to be meditators are stuck in this stage for tens of years, enjoying the temporary relaxation and refusing to get out of that "comfort zone". By their own accounts, they have not made significant progress. But for some reason, they are still "being hopeful".

12. Genuine Buddhist meditation is focused on long term effects. As the title of the book in #1 above implies, many people believe that going to a meditation session is like taking a pill for a headache; one is after a quick, temporary solution.

- Buddhist meditation starts with stopping immoral activities that one can clearly see, such as those mentioned in # 8 and #10 above.
- If one can persevere for a few weeks or months (depending on how much "cobwebs" are there), one should start experiencing a better state of mind. One will be able to concentrate on a given task (even a mundane task) better. In a few months one can look back and see that one has changed in some ways.
- Then one can incorporate more "good habits" and discard more bad habits. One will start seeing the futility of lyin

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- By the way, one will be able to absorb more from the posts at this site with time too.

13. As time goes, one can try "sitting down" meditation sessions. Just sit in a quiet room away from disturbances, and think about a Dhamma concept. One could even read a post and contemplate on it while reading.

- Actually, this is what I did in my early days. I would be sitting at my desk and either reading a book or listening to a discourse on the internet from my teacher Thero. As I contemplated and started comprehending some concepts, I felt joyful in the mind, and I could start feeling a lightness in the body with time.

14. This is the beginning of a process that the Buddha described as, "*preethi manassa kāyo passaddathi, passadda kāyo sukhanthiyathi, sukhino samādhiyathi.*" That means, "joy in the mind (from absorbing Dhamma) leads to lightness in the body, lightness in the body leads to happiness (*nirāmisa sukha*), and that leads to *samādhi* (enhanced concentration and a relaxed mind)".

- Once one starts feeling joy in the mind and lightness in the body, there is no stopping. Because now one can clearly see the benefits.
- Then it becomes easier to grasp deeper concepts, which in turn leads to more joy, etc. and the whole process repeats and accelerates.
- However, how much progress one makes depends on many factors. Some have practiced meditation in previous lives and they progress relatively fast. Regardless of the actual time taken, most should be able to make at least some progress. If it appears that one has not cultivated meditation in previous lives, it is time to start now.

15. **When one is making more progress (especially when one begins to grasp *anicca, dukkha, anatta*), there could be some physical discomforts that one can feel.** When I started feeling those, luckily I had heard about that from my teacher Thero's discourses (by the way, I have not met the Thero or talked to him personally; both times I went to Sri Lanka he was not available).

- Different people feel this kind of discomfort in different body parts above the waist. I am not talking about leg pains due to sitting cross-legged, etc. If a given posture becomes uncomfortable, one just needs to change the posture: one could straighten out the legs or go for a walk. Some people can sit cross-legged for longer times simply because they are more flexible or have had more practice. Mine started in the head, throat, and hands. They were not painful at all; they are more like pressure waves. But if one did not know that it could happen, one could be concerned. Because it happens only during formal sit-down meditation sessions.
- Other possible "symptoms of progress" are sweating and becoming thirsty (if this is the case, keep a glass of water close-by). Yes. all these are good symptoms; they indicate that the body is beginning to respond.
- This was my first personal confirmation that it is not the body that gives rise to consciousness. It is ALWAYS the mind that controls the body. My mind decides when I want to do a meditation session. Furthermore, I can change my body sensations with my thoughts!
- I have not yet heard anyone else experience it, but my body freezes when I get into *jhānā* (up to the third). It really freezes, like a statue. If someone comes and tries to pull my hands apart, it is difficult for them to do. But when I decide to stop the session, the body unfreezes within seconds. This is undeniable evidence that the mind can control the body.
- The explanation for these (and other types of) experiences involves the concept of the *gandhabba* that I have been discussing for some time now. These are discussed in, "Possible Effects in Meditation – Kundalini Awakening."

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17.6 Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttas for 1500 Years

November 21, 2018; April 25, 2020

Introduction

1. This is a true story about a boy (Dhammaruwan) who recited complex and lengthy Pāli *suttā* at five years of age, which sounded very different from current chantings. Furthermore, he remembers accounts of his previous life 1500 years ago, when he accompanied the famous Buddhaghosa on his trip to Sri Lanka.

- Dhammaruwan was born on November 18, 1968, in Matale, Sri Lanka. At the age of about two years he would sit in meditation and then start chanting. At times he would speak in a language not understood by his mother, who tried to hush him up.
- His step-father encouraged the boy to continue and regularly made recordings of the chants.
- These accounts come from the book, "WebLink: wisdompubs.org: Rebirth in Early Buddhism and Current Research" by *Bhikkhu* Anālayo (2018), and WebLink: discourse.suttacentral: Skype interview with Ven. Bhikkhu Bodhi, 16th September 2014. Both *Bhikkhus* have had long-term interactions with Dhammaruwan.

Previous Life in India – 1500 Years Ago

2. According to Dhammaruwan's memories, he learned the Pāli chants in a former lifetime in India, where he had been born as the son of a *Brāhmin* and trained in memorization of the *Vedas*. He had gone forth as a Buddhist monk and become a student of the eminent monk Buddhaghosa at Nālandā, India. For a historical time line, see, "Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background."

- **My comment:** This means Dhammaruwan was born a human over 1500 years ago: That is another piece of evidence that a human *bhava* can last thousands of years during which one may be reborn with a human body many times. In between those rebirths, one would be in the *gandhabba* state, just with the mental body; see, "Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein" and "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction." Further more, both Dhammaruwan in that previous life and Buddhaghosa were *Vedic Brāhmins* before converting to Buddhism. That is how those breath and *kasina* meditations got into Buddhism. See, "Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?."

3. After being trained as a *bhāṇaka* (a reciter), he was chosen to accompany Buddhaghosa from India to Sri Lanka. Having come to Sri Lanka, he stayed with Buddhaghosa at the Mahāvihāra in Anurādhapura, of which he remembers various details.

- These recordings of Dhammaruwan are strong evidence for rebirth. How could a child of age 3-5 even remember such complex Pāli words?
- The way he recites the *suttā* — the way he pronounces Pāli words — is better than most *bhikkhus* today. But the recitals sound different from those that we hear these days; instead of monotonic chants of today, keywords stand out in this recital style.
- One can clearly see that Dhammaruwan, as an adult, chants just like any other adult today; see #6 below.

Recitals From 1500 Years Ago

4. Here is a youtube video of a few of his recitals:

WebLink: youtube: Dhammaruwan - Maha Mangala, Karaniya Metta and Ratana Sutta

Here are recordings of several *suttā*, with downloadable links:

***Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*:**

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WebLink: Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta Download

***Mahā Mangala, Ratana,* and *Karaniya Metta Suttā*:**

WebLink: Mahā Mangala, Ratana, and Karaniya Metta Suttā Download

***Bojjhanga Sutta*:**

WebLink: Bojjhanga Sutta Download

Information From *Bhikkhu* Bodhi Interview

5. The following is an excerpt from the interview mentioned above with *Bhikkhu* Bodhi in 2104, which had a discussion on Dhammaruwan about a quarter of the way into the interview:

"There is almost no other rational explanation [apart from real past life memories] for how he could know these *suttā*. The sceptic might say he must have listened to monks chanting them over the radio. We might accept that explanation if he had recited the *Metta Sutta* (Sn 1.8), the *Mangala Sutta* (Sn 2.4), or the *Ratana Sutta* (Sn 2.1), or maybe even the *Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta*. But even that would be somewhat stretching the bounds of credulity: that a 3 or 5 year old boy should be reciting the whole *Dhammacakka Sutta* (SN 56.11) just by listening to it on the radio, without any text in front of him. But as a 7 or 8 year old he also chanted the entire *Girimānanda Sutta* (AN 10.60), and that is just so rarely chanted by monks on the radio. And then there is a recording of him reciting passages from the *Paṭṭhāna*, the book of conditional relations in the *Abhidhamma*. I didn't compare his recitation with the text, because he doesn't say which portion he's reciting … the *Paṭṭhāna* consists of six or seven volumes of very repetitive text with just minor variations.

Then his intonation is very different from the contemporary Sri Lankan style of chanting. Just by listening, you can tell it's coming from another era. It's not the modern style of Sri Lankan chanting. And then there's something very interesting. I don't think anything has been published or spread around about this. Years ago I was listening to his recitation of the *Mahānidāna Sutta* (DN 15) with the PTS Pāli edition in front of me, where they have footnotes with variant readings. I found that in a number of places where there were differences between the Sinhala and the Burmese script editions he was reciting in accordance with the Burmese script edition. But not always: there were a few places where there were differences, and he was following the Sinhala edition. But in maybe 65% of the cases where there was a difference, he was following the Burmese script edition".

"Old Recital Ability" Lost at Age Twelve

6. Dhammaruwan lost this ability to recite in this particular fashion after about 12 years of age. These days, when he chants the same *suttā*, he recites them like current *bhikkhus* recite them.

- Even in those early years, he was not able to recite in that "special way" at any time. According to *Bhikkhu* Bodhi: " You know, you'd ask him, "Ruwan recite such and such a text," and he was not able to do it. But occasionally he would say to his adopted father, Bertie: "Uncle, uncle, I'm starting to remember. I'm starting to remember!" Then Bertie would get the tape recorder and set it up and record his recitation."
- Therefore, the ability to recite that way was not there all the time, even in those early years.
- Now, of course he has lost those memories and recites those *suttā* just like anyone else recites them these days.

Here is a recording of the *Karaniya Metta Sutta* as an adult (chanting starts @2 minutes):

WebLink: Karaniya Metta Sutta as an adult Sutta Download

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Related Information

7. Bhikkhu Anālayo's book has complete transcripts of all the recorded *suttā* that Dhammaruwan recited; see, pp. 167-237.

- Other rebirth stories and evidence for rebirth are discussed in, "Evidence for Rebirth."

In the following video, a child describes her life as a *deva* during the time of the Buddha (in Sinhala.) She says the Buddha was different than depicted in the current statues @21 minutes).

WebLink: youtube: දෙවිලොව විස්තරය - පරෙ භවය දකින දරුවකුගෙ විස්තර Buddhist Heaven

- More information at, "Mental Body – Gandhabba," "Gandhabba (Manomaya Kaya)," and "The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma."

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17.7 Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping?

May 5, 2019

These are issue that are a bit hard to understand for those who do not have a deeper understanding of Buddha Dhamma.

1. First of all, paying respects to the Buddha (and symbols representing him) cannot be equated with "prayer" in many other religions. Praying is associated with making a request from a higher being (a God, a Brahma, etc), and those requests are for making one's life better, to solve a mundane problem one has, or asking for a material gain.

- The prayers are requests to the gods for mundane things and protection. The gods are asked to bestow health, wealth, material things, and to provide for various needs; they are also asked to forgive one's transgressions.
- In some cases, offerings are made to the higher being(s) first, and then one prays for whatever one desires, as in Hinduism (nowadays, this is practiced even in some Buddhist temples).
- Buddhists do not pray. They engage in meditation, contemplating the true nature of this suffering-filled world. There is nothing in this world that is worth craving (and thus praying for).

2. On the other hand, the primary goal of a Buddhist is to stop the rebirth process and attain *Nibbāna*; see, "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?."

This itself is hard for many to understand, especially for those who do not believe in the rebirth process. But the Buddha taught that one's existence does not end at the death of physical body; one will be reborn endlessly in one of 31 realms "in this world"; see, "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?."

- Rebirth process continues as long as one thinks that existence in this world is fruitful and, some day, will lead to true happiness. The Buddha explained that acting with greed, hate, and ignorance causes this wrong perception.
- One part of ignorance is not believing in rebirth.
- Suffering is present at any of those 31 realms and thus suffering exists even in the highest *brahma* realms; see, "31 Realms Associated with the Earth."
- Therefore, the goal of a true Buddhist is to stop the rebirth process all together. This is done by cleansing one's mind. Learning the world view of the Buddha and following his Noble Eightfold Path, which includes contemplation (meditation) and living moral life (*sīla*), will lead to cleansing of the mind; see, "Living Dhamma."

3. Therefore, there is nothing to ask from the Buddha; the Buddha no longer lives in this world. It is actually quite the opposite. Understanding Buddha's teachings (Buddha Dhamma) leads to the realization that there is nothing in this world that is worth craving or desiring for. In fact, it is those cravings traps one in the rebirth process.

- The only way to stop future suffering is to learn the true nature of this world and see not only the futility (unfruitfulness), but also the dangers in craving for worldly things.
- A Buddhist never asks favors from the Buddha nor requests forgiveness for any immoral deeds committed. A true Buddhist tries to abstain from immoral deeds, speech, and thoughts by controlling one's mind, i.e., by being mindful; see, "Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta."
- So, why do Buddhists pay respects to symbols representing the Buddha?

4. A big part of a life of a Buddhist is to "pay back debts" and also pay respects to those with higher wisdom. One of the first acts of the Buddha after his attaining Enlightenment was to look back at previous lives and to recall who helped him (in past lives) in his efforts to attain the *Buddhahood*; see, "Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojā – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude."

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- Then he spent a significant part of his early years after Enlightenment to seek and teach Dhamma to those people, as explained in the above post.
- True comprehension of Buddha Dhamma leads to the realization that the greatest gift one could have is to receive the true and pure Buddha Dhamma: the way to stop even a trace of suffering from arising.
- The worship of the Buddha (using symbols that represent him) means paying homage, veneration and devotion to him and what he represents, and not to a stone statue, a picture, etc.

5. There is a second — and equally important — aspect of paying respects to the Buddha. This is more to be experienced. When I was child in Sri Lanka, our family used to go to the temple regularly, especially on Full Moon days when *bhikkhu* would deliver a discourse (*desanā*).

- We would go to the temple ahead the scheduled delivery of the *desanā*, and would offer flowers to the Buddha, light some oil lamps and incense, and recite several *gāthās* while make those "offerings". Then we would sit and listen to an hour-long *desanā* by a *bhikkhu*.
- That really helps calm the mind and get in to a mindset where one is able to forget about the day-to-day stresses and comprehend the *desanā*.
- The calm and serene image of the Buddha is conducive to calming one's mind, and the offerings of pretty flowers symbolize one's intention of not being attached (and not to crave for) worldly things.

6. Some people say that Buddhists worship statues, in the sense of believing that those statues have some inherent magical power.

- But such ideas are quite incorrect. Buddhists do not 'worship' Buddha statues any more than Christians worship the cross or Muslims the Kaaba.
- Like the cross and the Kaaba, a Buddha statue, a *Bodhi* tree, or a *stūpa* is a symbol that can be seen as helpful in showing devotion, uplifting and calming the mind, and thus enables one to meditate with a calm mind.

7. Now let us discuss the significance/purpose of making offerings.

- There are many kinds of offerings: meals to the *bhikkhus* are the most meritorious among the "giving" (*dāna*) category.
- Making offerings to the Buddha is also done traditionally; small portions of the food that is prepared for the *Bhikkhus* is first offered in the name of the Buddha, before the food is offered to the *bhikkhus*.
- Giving to poor or anyone in need and even feeding hungry animals are all meritorious deeds.

8. Making offerings to *devas* is just another category. The mechanism of how that works is hard to imagine for most people.

- I remember listening to a *desanā* by Waharaka *Thero*, where he mentioned that those food offerings can be used by higher devas to feed their underlings (there are different levels, just like in the human world). He mentioned that when people offer nice-smelling fruits etc, just after the offering, the aroma would be gone (if it is done right). That means the "essence" (*ojā*) of the food has been extracted.
- However, one does not need to offer large quantities. The higher *devas* can make the offering to "multiply" to feed many.
- I don't want to get into that issue right now, since this is not a critical issue, and could bring out more questions than answers. There are many things about other realms (as well as about our own realm) that we do not fully understand.

9. Offering flowers, incense, etc do not belong to that "*dāna*" category discussed in #7 and #8 above.

- In Buddhist temples, such "offerings" are made to the Buddha.

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- In reality, these "offerings of the second kind" setup the necessary background for the mind to grasp the Buddha Dhamma, and thus to lead to "*bhava uddha*" (stopping existences in any of the 31 realms), which is the real meaning of "Buddha"; see, "A Buddhist or a Bhauddhaya?."
- For example, those flowers symbolize the *anicca* nature. They are pretty when they offered, but in a couple of days they become wrinkled and eventually wither away. One is supposed not to admire the beauty of the flowers, but to contemplate on the *anicca* nature clearly displayed by the decay of those flowers; see, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta."
- The incense offered emit an odor that conducive to meditation. Even though it is a pleasing odor, it is very different from those fragrances that one wears to a party, which has the tendency to encourage "seeking sense pleasures".
- In other words, those fragrances worn to a party lead to sensual thoughts, whereas the smell of incenses is conducive to meditation, since it helps calm the mind.

10. Lighting of candles or oil lamps also provide a suitable background for meditation and contemplation. Light symbolizes wisdom.

- Comprehending Buddha Dhamma leads to the opening of the "*Dhamma* eye", and enables one to "see the true nature of the world of 31 realms", i.e., existence in any of those realms is NOT devoid of suffering.
- Furthermore, an oil lamp symbolizes the how the rebirth process is maintained by cravings. Just as oil keeps an oil lamp burning, cravings (*tanhā*) fuel the rebirth process.

11. Finally, the practice of paying respects to the Buddha using symbols representing him was started at the time of the Buddha. There are at least two accounts in the *Tipiṭaka* where the Buddha himself recommended this practice.

- First, in the *Mahāparinibbāna Sutta*, when it was getting close to the *Parinibbāna* (death) of the Buddha, Ven. Ananda asked him how people can pay respects to the Buddha after his *Parinibbāna*.
- The Buddha advised: "..*stūpās* should be made for the Buddha at the crossroads. People can offer flowers, incense, etc and pay respects, and that will be for their benefit and happiness".
- Here is the relevant section: WebLink: suttacentral: DN 16 Mahāparinibbāna Sutta (29. Ānandapucchākathā), where it is stated: "..*Cātumahāpathe tathāgatassa thūpo kātabbo. Tattha ye mālaṃ vā gandhaṃ vā cuṇṇakaṃ vā āropessanti vā abhivādessanti vā cittaṃ vā pasādessanti tesaṃ taṃ bhavissati dīgharattaṃ hitāya sukhāya*."

12. There is another *sutta* which describes how planting of *Bodhi* trees was recommended by the Buddha himself too: When the Buddha was absent from *Jetavanarāma*, devotees naturally missed him, so Ven. Ananda, Buddha's attendant, asked the Buddha what in his absence might be used to pay homage to him.

- The Buddha answered that bodily relics, things reminiscent of him and things that he had used, in particular the great *Bodhi* tree under which he had attained Enlightenment.
- Ven. Ananda then had a seed of the *Bodhi* Tree brought to *Jetavanārāma* and planted so that it would be, as the Buddha himself said, as if the Buddha were constantly present at *Jetavanārāma*.
- This account is in the WebLink: suttacentral: Kāliṅgabodhijātaka; see the English translation: "WebLink: suttacentral: Kalinga-Bodhi Jātaka."

The bottom line is that just like giving (*dāna*) or living a moral life, paying respects to the Buddha via any of those different ways cannot directly lead to *Nibbāna* (*magga phala*). But all of them can help set the background for one to get to the mindset that makes it easier to comprehend the deep *Dhamma* of the Buddha.

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XVII References

I

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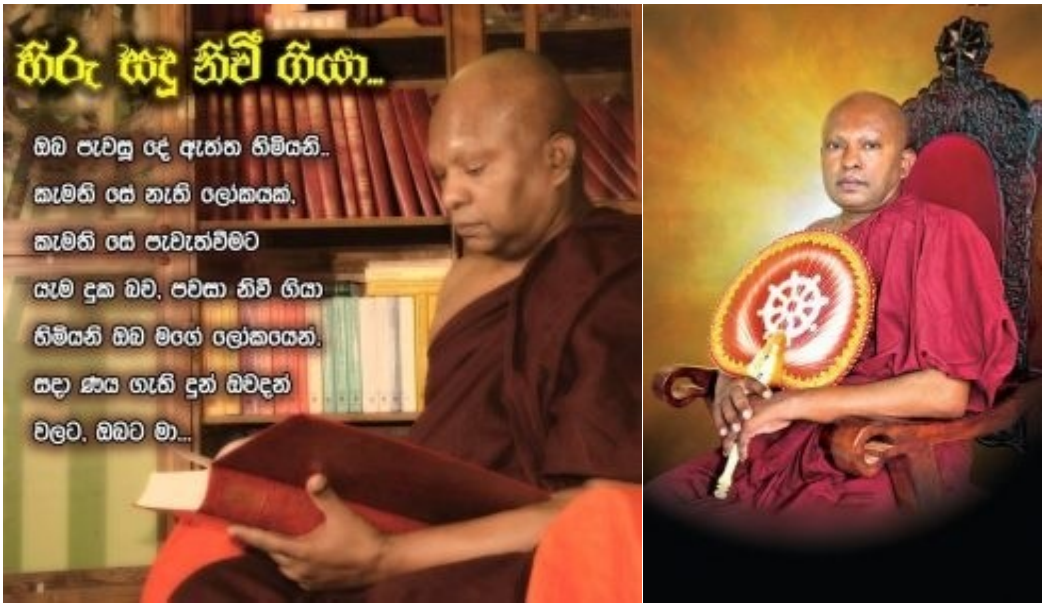
18.1 Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero

March 9, 2017; Pictures of *dhāthu* added June 10, 2017; Revised September 7, 2017; February 6, 2018; *desanā* on *jhāna/magga phala* added April 28, 2018; revised #4, #5 on July 18, 2020; new #7 on December 12, 2020



1. It is with great sadness that I report the *Parinibbāna* of my Noble teacher, Waharaka Abhyaratanalankara *Thero* a month ago, on February 9, 2017.

- Even though he had not confirmed attaining the *Arahanthood*, several years ago he had declared that he would not be reborn again. That means he would at least reach the *Antara Parinibbāna* state; see the video below.
- The *Antara Parinibbāna* state is reached when someone dies with three *saṃyojana* of *kāma rāga, rūpa rāga*, and *arūpa rāga* removed. (But without the removal of *māna, uddhacca*, and *avijjā saṃyojana*. Then one cannot grasp a new *bhava* in any of the 31 realms).
- The *gandhabba* would still survive the death of the body and come out and stay alive until the *kammic* energy for the human *bhava* is exhausted. At that time, since a new *bhava* cannot be grasped, the actual *anupadisesa Nibbāna* will take place. That is explained at the discussion forum topic "Antara Parinibbana" and also in the post, "Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka."
- From the accounts below, it is appears that he did attain *Parinibbāna* (i.e., bypassed the *Antara Parinibbāna* state) at the dying moment.

2. When the news came out first, it was not clear whether the *Thero* had passed away or whether he was in *Nirodha Samāpatti*. Breathing stops while one is in *Nirodha Samāpatti,* but the body does not get cold. The body was warm for six days, but then it started to get cold. Therefore, his death was not declared for six days.

- Even though I made trips to Sri Lanka in 2014 and 2015, both times, I did not get an opportunity to meet him because he was not well.

3. He was the first person to extract the true meanings of the critical Pāli words in the *Tipiṭaka* in recent times— after hundreds of years.

- It appears that his *Patisambhidhā Ñāṇa* (the knowledge to extract the meanings of words) was at the same level as many of renowned *Arahants* at the time of the Buddha.

4. As I discussed in the post, "Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala," one has to learn the correct Dhamma from a Buddha or a true disciple of the Buddha. He was able to bridge a gap that will

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hopefully last until the end of the *Buddha Sāsana* (Ministry) of Buddha Gotama, i.e., for 2400 years from now for a total of 5000 years.

- I am grateful to his followers in Sri Lanka (Ven. Attidiye Sudheethadheera Thero and others) who made recordings of thousands of hours of his *desanās* over the years. They have organized those recordings here: "WebLink: waharaka.com: Waharaka Sadaham Desana" (updated September 11, 2017).
- Unfortunately, those are available only in the Sinhala language. I will do my best to convey these actual teachings in English on this website.
- I was able to meet Ven. Walasmulle Abhaya and Ven. Attidiye Sudheethadheera (both of whom were laypeople at that time) on a trip to Sri Lanka in early 2014 and also in 2015. They provided me with many *desanā* recordings before they became available on the internet. I am also grateful to Dr. Neranga Abeysinghe, with whom I had many discussions. He also updated me on recent events of Waharaka *Thero*'s last days.
- Ven. Walasmulle Abhaya conducts regular *desanās* and meditation sessions. Recordings of those at: "WebLink: Nirapekshathwayemaga."
- **September 7, 2017:** Just yesterday, I came to know about Ven. Rathupasketiye Vimukthirathana in Sri Lanka. His *desanas* (in Sinhala) at: "WebLink: youtube: Ariya Asankathaya."
- **August 15, 2019**: I have forgotten to add a link to a good set of English *desanas*: "WebLink: youtube: Dharmayai Obai Sermons – English (From 2017-07-30)." I have not met this *Venerable*, but these *desanas* are based on Waharaka interpretations.
- **July 18, 2020: Cultivating *jhāna* is a good way to make progress on the Path.** However, initially, those *jhānā* are *anariya* in nature. As one makes progress, they will be converted to *Ariya jhāna*. Some people may be under the false impression that getting into *jhāna* necessarily means *magga phala*. Furthermore, even the first *Ariya jhāna* requires the REMOVAL of *kāma rāga*. See, "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

5. **April 28, 2018**: Here is a *desanā* by Waharaka *Thero* where he present clear evidence that *jhāna* is not necessary to attain *magga phala* (it is in the Sinhala language):

WebLink: Download "Are Jhāna Required for Magga-Phala"

- The main point the *Thero* makes is that we know that there are *jāti Sotāpannas* born in the human realm. But if a *jhāna* were REQUIRED to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, then that person WOULD NOT be born in the human realm, but in a *brahma* realm corresponding that *jhāna*.
- Furthermore, just by listening to correct Buddha Dhamma and/or attaining *jhāna* does not make one become a *Sotāpanna*. The *Thero* points out that Devadatta ended up in an *apāya*, even though he had not only cultivated *jhāna* but had supernormal powers (*iddhi*) too. Devadatta obviously listened to many discourses from the Buddha but was not able to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*.
-

6. I must also express my gratitude to Ven. Meevanapalane Dhammalankara, who had been in close association with the Waharaka *Thero*. I first came across these correct interpretations when I came across one of his *desanās* on the internet on July 30, 2013.

- Ven. Meevanapalane Dhammalankara's *desanās* at: "WebLink: Sirisaddharmaya"
- However, he has also deviated from Waharaka interpretations in some cases. Also, he started a discussion on whether the Buddha was born in Sri Lanka, against the advice of Waharaka Thero.

7. **December 12, 2020:** Over the past couple of weeks, I have been following a series of *desanas* from Susima *Thero*. He is in Sri Lanka and these discourses are in Sinhala. These are excellent and provide deep insights.

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- Those who understand the Sinhala language can follow these discourses at "Lowthuru Arana ලොව්තුරු අරණ"
- I will, of course, incorporate those new insights in my posts.
- **December 15, 2020:** The contents in the above long discourses have been separated into topics at the following website (also in Sinhala.) I am not sure how well that is done. It would be nice if the authors of this website can refer to the original discourses and corresponding times there. "දහම් ආලෝකය-Dham Alokaya"

8. June 6, 2017: I received some pictures of "*dhātu*" collected after the cremation of Waharaka *Thero*'s body. Some of an *Arahant*'s bones becomes crystallized. These are called "*dhātu*" and they cannot be destroyed by fire or anything else. I selected the following two pictures out of many sent by Ven. Attidiye Sudheethadheera *Thero* and Dr. Neranga Abeysinghe.

9. By the way, here is a historical picture of the "Tooth relic" of the Buddha kept at the "*Daladā Maligāwa*" in Kandy, Sri Lanka:

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- Such *Dhāthu* of the Buddha or an Arahant are considered to be indestructible up to the end of the current "Buddha *Sāsana*," which will last roughly another 2500 years.

10. Here are two youtube videos of the funeral of the most venerable *Thero* (the speech by Mr. Chandana Siriwardhana — where he stated the possibility of *Antarā Parinibbāna* of the *Thero* — is in Sinhala language):

WebLink: youtube: අභයරතනාලංකාර හිමි ඇසුරනේ ලද දහම් පණිවිඩයන් - හළෙ බෙදේ පියුම සම්පදක - නීතිඥ චන්දන සිරිවර්ධන මහතා

Weblink: youtube: FULL VIDEO : Last rites of Waharaka himi waharaka abayarathanalankara himi

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18.2 Pure Dhamma – Sinhala Translation

January 24, 2017; more sections added December 2, 2017

1. Professor J. M. R. Sarath Bandara, who is a retired professor at the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka, has kindly taken upon the task to translate the Pure Dhamma site to Sinhala language.

- With his mastering of both Sinhala and English languages, this translation is very much superior to the word-by-word translation provided by the Google Translator plugin for WordPress.
- Therefore, I will remove Sinhala as an option in the Google Translator.

2. The pdf files for different sections at the website are given below. Only some of the sections have been translated so far, and there could be gaps in those sections as well.

- As he translates more posts and sections, the updated files will be uploaded here.

3. We have left the English titles for each section below as they appear at the website. That will make it easier to refer back to the original English posts.

- The links in the Sinhala translation to various websites — and especially videos — may not work. One can access those in the original English posts.

Much merits to Professor Sarath Bandara and his family for this meritorious deed!

Cover page – Pure Dhamma – Sinhala

Section 1- Buddha Dhamma

Section 2.1 – Key Dhamma concepts -San

Section 2.2 – Key Dhamma Concepts – Nibbāna

Section 2.3 -Key Dhamma Concepts – Anicca Dukka Anatta

Section 2.4 -Key Dhamma Concepts – Gathi Bhava and Jāti

Section 2.5 -Key Dhamma Concepts – Sorting Out Key Pāli Terms

Section 2.6 -Key Dhamma Concepts – The Five Aggregates

Section 7 – Paticca Samuppāda

Section 11.1 – Abhidhamma – Mind and Consciousness

Section 11.2 – Abhidhamma – Citta and Cetasika

Section 11.3 – Abhidhamma – Gandhabbayā (Manomaya Kāya)

Section 11.4 – Abhidhamma – Individual posts on Abhidhamma

December 2, 2017

Meditation

Kamatthana

Sutta Interpretations

Living Dhamma

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18.3 Pure Dhamma – German Website

October 21, 2017

1. Puredhamma.net, which discusses Buddha's teachings per *Tipiṭaka*, is now available in German, thanks to Mr. Tobias Große in Heilbad Heiligenstadt, Germany. Here is the link:

https://puredhamma/de

- Mr. Große has spent a lot of time studying Buddha Dhamma, and he tells me that he has read almost all posts at the puredhamma.net site and many posts more than once. From the questions that I have been getting from him over the past year, I feel that he has grasped the key concepts and is quite capable of expressing those concepts in German.
- As of today, he has translated three main sections, and will continue to add more sections until the two sites are "in sync".
- He is also willing to answer questions; there is a "Comment" bar at the bottom of each page.

2. Even though the "Google Translator" at the top right of the puredhamma.net site is a useful resource that can be used to translate the site material to many languages, it is done by a mechanical process, which basically translates word for word.

- Such a word for word translation sometimes gives incorrect interpretations, especially since key Pāli words with deep meanings are involved. Therefore, the "Google Translator" is not very reliable. I will remove German as an option for the "Google Translator" in a couple of months after enough sections are available at https://puredhamma/de.

3. Finally, it has been a pleasure to interact with Mr. Große and his family over the past year or so. His wife and children are also fully engaged and it is heartwarming to see how much they have advanced, and their enthusiasm for this meritorious project. Much merits to the whole family for their efforts!

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18.4 New / Revised Posts

There are three useful tools to find relevant posts: One is the "Search" box on the top right. Second is User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website. **The third is** Pure Dhamma – Sitemap.

New Posts:

Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammaṇa – 01/20/21 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda" subsection)

Phassa (Contact) – Contact With Pasāda Rūpa – 01/15/21 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda" subsection)

Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit – 01/06/21 (in the "Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda" subsection)

Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda – 01/06/21 (in the "Paṭicca Samuppāda" subsection)

Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka – Gandhabba Example – 12/30/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba – 12/22/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu – Not Relevant to Gandhabba – 12/16/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Antarābhava – No Connection to Gandhabba – 12/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Antarābhava and Gandhabba – 12/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Abhidhamma Pitaka – Deeper Analyses of Concepts – 12/03/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Vinaya Pitaka – More Than Disciplinary Rules – 11/26/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation – 11/19/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Tipiṭaka – The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma – 11/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Tipiṭaka – A Systematic Approach – 11/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka – Two Parts of Our World – 11/04/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Ārammaṇa Plays a Critical Role in a Sensory Even – 10/28/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Response to a Sensory Stimulus – Role of Gati/Anusaya – 10/21/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha, Nāma and Nāmagotta – 10/16/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

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Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka – 10/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Our Two Worlds – Rupa Loka and Nāma Loka – 10/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body – 10/02/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory – 9/18/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Persistent Vegetative State – Buddhist View – 9/18/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Gandhabba in a Human Body – an Analogy – 9/11/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Mind Is Not in the Brain – 9/06/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Kammic Energy Leads to Consciousness – 8/29/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Sensual Pleasures – The Hidden Suffering – 8/22/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Mind and Matter – Buddhist Analysis – 8/15/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Theories of Our World – Scientific Overview – 8/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach – 7/31/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)

Introduction – A Scientific Approach to Buddha Dhamma – 7/31/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma – A Scientific Approach" subsection)

Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part II – 7/24/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)

Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part I – 7/17/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)

Buddhahood Controversies – Introduction – 7/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)

Buddhahood Associated Controversies – 7/09/20 (in the "Buddha Dhamma" subsection)

The Way to Nibbāna – Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero – 7/6/20 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection)

Atta – Two Very Different Meanings – 7/01/20 (in the "Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa" subsection)

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – "Me and Mine" View – 6/23/20 (in the "Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa" subsection)

Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – 6/16/20 (in the "Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa" subsection)

"Me" and "Mine" – The Root Cause of Suffering – 6/09/20 (in the "Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa" subsection)

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Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections – 6/02/20 (in the "Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa" subsection)

Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa – Introduction – 5/27/20 (in the "Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa" subsection)

Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa – 5/27/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Pañca Upādānakkhandhā – Introduction – 5/19/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Memory Records – Critical Part of Five Aggregates – 5/13/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa – 5/07/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha – 5/01/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Re-written Post: Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha – 4/24/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Re-written Post: Five Aggregates – Introduction – 4/18/20 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)" subsection)

Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births – Saṃsappanīya Sutta – 04/11/20 (under "Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Kāma Assāda – A Root Cause of Suffering – 04/04/20 (under "Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Kamma and Paṭicca Samuppāda – Introduction – 3/27/20 (under "Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment) – 3/18/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Sammā Diṭṭhī – Only One Leads to the Noble Path – 3/14/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths – 3/7/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth – 2/29/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

The Framework of Buddha Dhamma 2/22/20 (under "Wider Worldview of the Buddha" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

"Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2 – 02/15/20 (in the "Historical Background" section)

"Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1 – 02/08/20 (in the "Historical Background" section)

Mental Body Versus the Physical Body – 02/02/20 (under "Worldview of the Buddha – Explanatory Material" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

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Origin of Life – One Creates One's Own Future Lives – 01/25/20 (in the subsection "Origin of Life")

Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept – 01/17/2020 (under "Worldview of the Buddha – Explanatory Material" in the "Origin of Life" subsection)

Paṭicca Samuppāda – From Mind to Matter – 01/11/20 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Two re-written posts: "Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception" and "Cloning and Gandhabba" – 01/05/20 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2019 – 01/01/2020

Essays – 2019

Essays – 2018

Essays – 2017

Essays – 2016

Essays – 2015

Essays – 2014

Revised Posts:

Please note (4/25/15): I am going to start listing the revised posts that are included with each update of the eBook.

Difference Between Dhammā and Saṅkhāra – 7/23/18

Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma – 6/28/18

Paṭṭhāna Dhamma – Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala) – 6/21/18

Infinity – How Big Is It? – 6/8/18

The 89 (121) Types of Citta – 6/8/18

31 Realms of Existence – 6/8/18

Sansāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory

What are rūpa? – Dhammā are rūpa too! – 6/3/18

Right Speech – How to Avoid Accumulating Kamma – 6/3/18

31 Realms of Existence – 6/3/18

Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs – 6/3/18

Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala – 6/3/18

What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā? – 5/22/18

Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable? – 5/22/18

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What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Samsāra) – 5/22/18

How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? – 5/22/18

Akusala-Mula Pavutti (or Pravurthi) Paṭicca Samuppada – 5/14/18

Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda – 5/14/18

Akusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda – 5/14/18

Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala – Introduction – 5/6/18

Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha – 5/6/18

Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna – 5/6/18

Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero – 5/6/18

Anussati and Anupassanā – Being Mindful and Removing Defilements – 4/28/18

Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma – 4/28/18

The Double Slit Experiment – Correlation between Mind and Matter? – 3/29/18

Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected – 3/29/18

Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment – 3/29/18

Photons Are Particles Not Waves – 3/17/18

Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi – 3/17/18

What is Intention in Kamma? – 2/28/18

Mahā Chattārisaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) – 2/28/18

Dasa Samyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process – 2/20/18

Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)? – 2/20/18

Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means – 2/20/18

Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero – 2/11/18

What are Dhammā? – A Deeper Analysis – 2/11/18

Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna – 2/11/18

Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna – 2/11/18

Bhava and Bhavaṅga – Simply Explained! – 2/11/18

The Infinity Problem in Buddhism – 2/11/18

Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations – 2/4/18

Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttā – 2/4/18

Rūpa (Material Form) – 2/4/18

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View? – 1/25/18

Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga – 1/25/18

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Sotāpanna Anugami and a Sotāpanna – 1/19/18

Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga – 1/19/18

Preservation of the Dhamma – 1/13/18

Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines – 1/7/18

Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means – 1/7/18

Gathi (Gati), Anusaya, and Āsava – 1/7/18

What is Suñyāta or Suññāta (Emptiness)? – 1/2/18

Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines – 1/2/18

The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka – 1/2/18

Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta? – 1/2/18

Revised Posts – 2017

Revised Posts – 2016

Revised Posts – 2015

Revised Posts – 2014

18.4.1 Google Translations to Other Languages

October 2, 2016

1. Couple of days ago, I installed the capability to translate the whole site into different languages. A different language can be selected in the "Google Translate" button right above this post.

- I received input from a couple of people. Based on those, it seems that translation is 60%-80% good for Chinese translation.

2. The main problem is that with "word-to-word" translations, meanings can get lost. So, please use the translations only if necessary. For example, it may able to provide translation of some words that are not familiar.

- **Therefore, it is a good idea to use the English version as much as possible. I really worry about meanings getting lost in the translation.**

3. There are other languages that can be added. I did not want to add too many at this early stage, especially until I get some feedback on the usefulness. I would appreciate feedback on the accuracy/usefulness of these translations, in the comments box below.

- If you like other languages to be added, also please comment below. Just type the language(s) you like. I think you need to add your email address too, in order to avoid spam. Comments are not published. I normally respond only if a question is asked.

18.4.2 Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines

December 12, 2017; revised December 17, 2017; January 23, 2018; January 7, 2019

A link to the Forum is provided at the lower right in the main menu.

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1. In order to post questions or answers (i.e., to participate in discussions), one will need to register first. But anyone can read existing posts without registering.

To Register:

Click on the "Forum" at the very end of the main menu or FORUM to enter the Forum.

1. Click on the "Register" button (in red) at the LOGIN box and enter a username and an email address and submit.
2. It will say that it will send you a link and then display a "WORDPRESS" screen. CLOSE that screen. Do not do anything with that screen.
3. You will get an email to that address within minutes. Open your email browser and click on the link that was sent to you.The link in that email WILL EXPIRE within a certain time, so you need to use it before it expires. (If you don't see an email within minutes, check you "Junk" folder).
4. **If you don't get an email within 5 minutes, send me an email and I can setup a temporary password for you. It is easy to do and you can then reset to anew password. This is the easiest way.**
5. It will ask to enter the username that you selected earlier and you also need to choose a password. Once you hit enter, you may get another "WORDPRESS" screen. CLOSE that screen. Do not do anything with that screen.
6. Enter the Forum and login with that username/password at the "Forum Login" box.

When first registered, one will receive an email with a link to setup your own password. One needs to use that link within 15 minutes or so (I am guessing, I don't know exactly how much time is allowed), because that link expires. Check you Junk folder if you do not see an email within minutes.

- **If it does not work within a few tries, DO NOT keep trying.** After 5 tries or so, the system will lock you out and then it becomes more difficult. Please send me an email at lal@puredhamma.net, and I can help you.

2. If one forgets the password at a later time, a new password can be generated by clicking on the red "Lost Password" link at the Login box.

- **Even an unregistered person would be able to read the posts by others on any topic. One needs to register to ask a question or to post a reply to another's question.**
- Please respect the viewpoints of others. No one knows everything (except for a Buddha), and we should help each other in uncovering the truth.

3. Mr. Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore has kindly agreed to act as a moderator. He will be able to move topics to "better matching" forums and also to open up new forums as necessary. He is doing this in addition to maintaining and updating the eBook; much merits to him and his family!

- Within a forum, anyone who is registered can open a new topic. Please find the forum that seems to match; we can add more forums if needed.
- **Any question even remotely connected to Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) is welcome. There are people of very different levels of exposure to Buddhism.**
- If you feel uncomfortable posting here initially, please send it to me at lal@puredhamma.net.
- But I encourage everyone to participate because there will be people who can benefit from information at different levels. Also, it is critical to comprehend basic concepts; otherwise it will be difficult to make progress.

4. I can set the time one has to come back and edit a given post, and it is currently set at one hour. This allows one to think about one's comment and change it, if needed. Please think carefully before making

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comments. It is not a good idea to write too many posts on the same issue. I try to write my response in a Word document and post it when I feel comfortable. Even then I may have to come back and revise.

- This is in no way to restrict discussions. We just need to try to make our points without repeating. I have seen online forums where people just go back and forth "trying to push their views" without making any progress for themselves or helping others learn.

5. **Replying to a question:** If one hits the **reply button**, one can directly respond to a comment by that specific person (i.e., one's comment will appear below that comment or that thread). Then a reader will need to scan to find the new comment (especially if there are newer threads at the bottom).

- If one just types in the **default window**, then the comment will appear at the very end of the discussion, as a new thread. Anyone will be able to see that as the latest comment, but then one needs to refer to the comment that he/she is responding to.
- You can figure this out by looking at the posts already there.

6. A discussion forum for the Pure Dhamma website is beneficial in several aspects:

- I receive many good questions via email. When I reply to that email, only that person will get the information, and in many cases it could be of interest to so many others.
- There could be "gaps" in a given section. A given section at the website starts at a base level with initial posts and move to deeper stages with subsequent posts. If one has a question about a certain post, one could open a new topic with the post name.
- I also plan to have some information access threads on topics like "Pāli Resources". I will post some key tools available at this site as well as at other sites, and users can add more information to it.
- This forum will also give an opportunity for others with different opinions to express their viewpoints (i.e., how they interpret a given *Sutta* or a verse in the *Dhammapada*, etc). **In most cases, there can be more than one explanation.**
- Sometimes, each individual may have their own interpretation even if it looks incorrect to others. No one should expect others to come to agreement with one's viewpoint. **It is up to each person to decide for him/herself.**
- Thoughtful, logical, and respectful discussions can be an important part of the learning process.

7. Following the Path is not merely following some set precepts or blindly following a "*guru*." One needs to engage in stimulating discussions with oneself first (contemplation), and also with others. It is an intellectual process.

- I hope this forum will be a "virtual community center" which will help people with different levels of exposure to Buddha Dhamma to come together and grow together.
- In my own experience, I know that when trying to answer a question posed by another person — who is looking at the issue from a totally different point of view — forces me to look at the issue from a different angle. I have learned many things over the past few years that way.

8. The Buddha was the greatest scientist to be born, and we are trying to recover those deep teachings that have been buried over many centuries. Thanks to my late Noble teacher, Waharaka Thero ("Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero"), true meanings of key concepts (eg., *anicca, anatta, viññāṇa*) have been uncovered.

- We need to maintain this momentum and make it easier for the future generations to access the pure and original teachings of the Buddha.

9. Finally, I keep the right to delete any posts that are not appropriate for the forum. I make such decisions based on the goal of this website (to teach Buddha's original teachings per Tipiṭaka), and it will be for the benefit of the general audience.

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18.4.3 How to Reply to a Forum Question

- If one just types in the **default window**, then the comment will appear at the very end of the discussion, as a new thread. Anyone will be able to see that as the latest comment, but then one needs to refer to the comment that he/she is responding to.
- If one hits the **reply button**, one can directly respond to a comment by that specific person (i.e., one's comment will appear below that comment or that thread). Then a reader will need to scan to find the new comment (especially if there are newer threads at the bottom).
- You can figure this out by looking at the postings by others that are already there.
- Once a reply a submitted, it can be revised within the next hour only. After that it will be locked and one needs to submit a new reply if needed.

18.4.4 April – July 2017

The Infinity Problem in Buddhism – 7/15/17 (in the "Dhamma and Philosophy" section).

List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots – 6/29/17 (in the "Tables and Summaries" section).

Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines – 6/22/17

Saṅkhāra and Kammā, Viññāṇa and Kamma Bīja – 6/16/17 (in the "San" section).

User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website – 6/8/17 (in "Buddha Dhamma" section).

Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation? – 6/2/17 (in "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).

Viññāṇa – What It Really Means – 5/26/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

Working of Kammā – Critical Role of Conditions – 5/21/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too! – 5/13/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabbayā, and Sotāpanna Stage – 5/6/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis – 4/29/17 – 4/29/17 (in the "Historical Background" section).

Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars – 4/29/17 (This replaces a recent post, "Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma Interpretations".

I have also combined two previous posts, "Theravada – Problems with Current Interpretations of Key Concepts" and "Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka – End of Sinhala Commentaries" to make a new post, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline" —4/29/17.

Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā? – 4/23/17 (in the "Power of the Human Mind" section)

Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma Interpretations – 4/16/17 (in the "Historical Background" section).

Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga – 4/13/17 (in the "Abhidhamma" section).

Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background – 4/8/17 (in the "Historical Background" section)

Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link – 4/2/17 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section)

18.4.5 January – March 2017

Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna – 3/24/17 (in the "Power of the Human Mind" section)

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Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta? – 3/17/17 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section)

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View? – 3/10/17 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section)

Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero – 3/9/17

Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable? – 3/4/17 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section)- Revised 3/7/17.

Attā Hi Attano Nātho – 3/4/17 (in the "Dhammapada" section).

Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means – 2/25/17 (in the new "Four Aggregates" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Vedanā – What It Really Means – 2/18/17 (in the new "What is Vedanā (Feelings)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Satara Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabbayā – 2/11/17 (in the new "Mental Body – Gandhabbaya" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Mental Body (Gandhabbayā) – Personal Accounts – 2/5/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra – 1/28/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Also, a really good Sinhala translation of many sections of the website by Professor Sarath Bandara is now available: "Pure Dhamma – Sinhala Translation."

Future Suffering – Why It Arises – 01/22/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Sexual Orientation – Effects of Kamma and Gathi (Saṅkhāra) - 1/14/17 (in the "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Nikāya in the Sutta Piṭaka – 1/7/17 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section)

Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2016 – 01/01/17

18.4.6 Essays – 2019

Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections – 12/28/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering – 12/21/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa – 12/14/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda – 12/07/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech) – 11/30/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra – 11/23/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Paṭicca Samuppāda – A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā – 11/16/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering – 11/10/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Paṭicca Samuppāda – Not "Self" or "No-Self" – 11/10/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation – 11/2/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

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Sakkāya Diṭṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma" – 10/26/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience 10/19/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā) – 10/6/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life")

Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event – 9/29/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Is There a "Self"? – 9/22/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Citta – Basis of Our Experience and Actions – 9/22/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa – 9/15/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana? – 9/08/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa – 9/02/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Buddhist Worldview – Introduction – 8/26/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 2 – 8/19/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 1 – 8/12/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism – 8/04/19 (in the subsection "Views on Life").

Views on Life – 7/28/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").

Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism? – 8/04/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").

Living Cell – How Did the First Cell Come to Existence? – 7/24/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").

Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya" – 7/19/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").

Human Life – A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell) – 7/15/19 (in the subsection "Origin of Life").

Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin – 7/10/19 (in a new subsection "Origin of Life").

Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths) – 7/6/19 (in the "Paṭicca Samuppāda" section).

Associations (Sevana)- A Root Cause of Wrong Views – 6/29/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa" section).

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views – 6/22/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa" subsection).

Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa – 6/22/19 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa – 6/14/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage and Tilakkhaṇa" subsection).

Anatta – No Refuge in This World – 6/7/19 (in the "Anattā – A Systematic Analysis" section).

Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma – 5/31/19 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection).

Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like – 5/26/19 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection).

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Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) – Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering – 5/23/19 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" subsection).

Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda –5/18/19 (in the "Paṭicca Samuppāda"section).

Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra –5/13/19 (in the "San" subsection).

Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping? –5/5/19 (in the "Myths or Realities?" subsection).

Complexity of the Mind – Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra – 4/28/19 (in the "Dhamma with Less Pāli" subsection).

Anuloma Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Sotāpanna Stage – 3/15/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" subsection).

Vitakka, Vicāra, Savitakka, Savicāra, and Avitakka, Avicāra – 3/7/19 (in the "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" subsection).

Attha Purisa Puggalā – Eight Noble Persons – 3/4/19 (in the "Seeking Nibbana" subsection).

Jhānic Experience in Detail – Sāmaññaphala Sutta (DN 2) – 3/2/19 (in the "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" subsection).

Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41) – Akuppā Cetovimutti – 2/28/19 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" subsection).

Viññāṇa and Saṅkhāra – Connection to Paṭicca Samuppāda – 2/25/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Account of Aṅgulimāla – Many Insights to Buddha Dhamma – 2/17/19 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" subsection).

Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyā – 2/11/19 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" subsection).

Sati in Ānāpānasati/Satipaṭṭhāna – Two Meanings of Sati – 2/4/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Ānāpāna and Satipaṭṭhāna – Fundamentals – 1/30/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27) – 1/24/19 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" subsection).

Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently – 1/21/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Breath Meditation Is Addictive and Harmful in the Long Run – 1/15/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Connection Between Saṅkhāra and Viññāṇa – 1/11/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Four Noble Truths – Suffering and Its Elimination – 1/6/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future – 1/1/19 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2018 – 1/1/19

18.4.7 Essays – 2018

Introduction to Citta, Vedanā, Saññā, Saṅkhāra, and Viññāṇa (OLD==Pāli to English – Serious Problems With Current Translations) – 12/25/18 (in the "Essential Buddhism" subsection).

Essential Buddhism – 12/25/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma – 12/19/18 (in the "Anattā – A Systematic Analysis" subsection).

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Types of Bodies in 31 Realms – Connection to Jhāna – 12/12/18 (in the "Anattā – A Systematic Analysis" subsection).

Anattā – A Systematic Analysis – 12/12/18 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection).

Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – There is no "Unchanging Self" – 12/5/18 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subsection).

Kāmaccandha and Icca – Being Blinded by Cravings – 11/29/18 (in the "Sorting out Some Key Pali Terms (Tanha, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)" subsection).

Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years – 11/21/18 (in the "Myths or Realities?" section).

Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma – 11/14/18 (in the "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti" subsection).

List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots – 11/10/18 (in the "Tables and Summaries" section).

Vedanā and Samphassa Jā Vedanā – More Than Just Feelings (new title)- 11/10/18 (in the "Mental Aggregates" section).

Free Will in Buddhism – Connection to Saṅkhāra – 11/3/18 (in the "Dhamma and Philosophy" section).

Difference Between Tanhā and Upādāna – 10/25/18 (in the "Gati, Bhava, and Jāti" subsection).

Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta – 10/23/18 (in the "Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta" section).

Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha – 10/20/18 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Panñakkhandha)" section).

"The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nānamoli – 10/13/18 (in the "Book Reviews" section).

Karaniya Metta Sutta – Metta Bhavana – 10/7/18 (in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).

Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires? – 9/28/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Essential Abhidhamma – The Basics – 9/23/18 New subsection in the "Abhidhamma" section.

State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vīthi – Bhavaṅga – 9/23/18 (in the "Essential Abhidhamma – The Basics" subsection).

Paññāvimutti – Arahanthood without Jhāna – 9/12/18 (in the "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" subsection).

I have re-written an old post on a key subject: "Viññāṇa (Consciousness)" – 9/10/18 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Panñakkhandha)" subsection).

The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories) – 9/1/18 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" subsection).

Do I Have "A Mind" That Is Fixed and "Mine"? – 8/30/18 (in the "Sakkāya Diṭṭhi" subsection).

Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta) – 8/23/18 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" section).

Ye Dhammā Hetuppabhavā.. and yam kiṅci samudaya dhammam.. – 8/16/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Imasmim Sati Idam Hoti – What Does It Really Mean? – 8/5/18 (in the "Paticca Samuppada" section).

Dhamma, Saṅkhāra, Sankata, Rūpa, Viññāṇa, Gati, Āsava, Anusaya – 7/22/18 (in the "Dhamma with Less Pāli" section).

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Six Root Causes – Loka Samudaya (Arising of Suffering) and Loka Nirodhaya (Nibbāna) – – 7/19/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Sotāpatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna – 7/8/18 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section).

Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma - 2 – 6/27/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).

Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā on Key Concepts – 6/20/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).

Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma – 6/20/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).

Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya – 6/11/18 (in the "Seeking Nibbāna" section).

Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikāya 57) – Kammakkhaya – 6/11/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).

Paṭhama Mettā Sutta – 6/7/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).

Ānantariya Kamma – Connection to Gandhabba – 6/2/18 (in the "Living Dhamma" section and Mental Body – Gandhabba subsection).

Na Cetanākaraṇīya Sutta – 5/21/18 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section).

Sammā Diṭṭhi – Realization, Not Memorization – 5/13/18 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" subsection).

Manopubbangamā dhammā.. – 5/5/18 (in the "Dhammapada" subsection).

Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma – 4/27/18 (in the "Dhamma Concepts" subsection).

Anussati and Anupassanā – Being Mindful and Removing Defilements – 4/16/18 (in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" subsection).

Buddha Dhamma for an Inquiring Mind – Part I – 4/12/18 (in the "Dhamma with Less Pāli" subsection).

"Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time – 4/1/18 (in the "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths" – 3/29/18 (in the "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness? – 3/20/18 (in the "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics – 3/20/18 (in the "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment – 3/16/18 (in the new "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation" subsection).

Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma – Introduction – 3/13/18 (in the new "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma" section).

What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle? – 3/13/18 (in the new "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation" subsection).

Photons Are Particles Not Waves – 3/13/18 (in the new "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation" subsection).

Cloning and Gandhabba – 3/5/2018 (in the "Dhamma and Science" section).

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"Discourse 5 – Tilakkhaṇa and Micchā Diṭṭhi" added to Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses – 3/2/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section). This is the last one in this series.

"Discourse 4 – Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – What is "a Person"?" added to Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses – 2/27/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).

"Discourse 3 – Distorted Perceptions or Saññā Vipallāsa" added to Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses – 2/19/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).

Nirodha Samāpatti, Phala Samāpatti, Jhāna, and Jhāna Samāpatti – 2/13/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

"Discourse 2 – Icca, Nicca, Anicca" added to Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses – 2/10/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).

"Discourse 1 – Nicca, Sukjha, Atta" in the Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses – 2/3/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).

Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses – 2/3/2018 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section).

Citta, Mano, Viññāṇa – Stages of a Thought – 1/24/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Bhava and Bhavaṅga – Simply Explained! 1/19/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Does Bodily Pain Arise Only Due to Kamma Vipāka? 1/12/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Anidassana Viññāṇa – What It Really Means – 1/6/2018 (in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2017 – 1/1/2018

18.4.8 Essays – 2017

Bhūta and Yathābhūta – What Do They Really Mean – 12/28/2017 (in the "Rūpa Aggregate" subsection of "Living Dhamma" section).

12/17/2017: Puredhamma Discussion Forum is now open: "Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines."

Kamma Viññāṇa and Nāmarūpa Paricceda Ñāṇa – 12/12/2017 (in the "Nāmarūpa Formation" subsection of "Living Dhamma" section).

Tipitaka Commentaries – Helpful or Misleading? – 12/6/2017 (in the "Historical Background" section).

Pure Dhamma – Sinhala Translation – 12/2/2017 (More sections added by Prof. Sarath Bandara).

Kamma Viññāṇa – Link Between Mind and Matter – 11/30/2017 (in the "Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa" subsection of "Living Dhamma" section).

Root of All Suffering – Ten Immoral Actions – 11/14/2017 (in the new "Dhamma with Less Pāli" subsection of "Living Dhamma" section).

Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha – 11/9/2017 (in the "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana" subsection of "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna").

Difference Between Dhammā and Saṅkhāra – 11/5/2017 (This is an old post in the section "Key Dhamma Concepts." I basically re-wrote the post. This is a much better version).

Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana – Introduction – 11/1/2017 (in the NEW "Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissarana" subsection of "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna").

Pure Dhamma – German Website – 10/21/2017

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Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa – 10/17/2017 (in the "Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles" subsection).

Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala – Introduction – 10/12/17 (in the new subsection "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Mundane versus Supramundane Jhāna – 10/12/17 (in the new subsection "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala" of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Ascendance to Nibbāna via Jhāna (dhyāna) – 10/4/17 (in the "Transition to Noble Eightfold Path" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations – 9/30/17 (in the "Mental Body – Gandhabba" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka – 9/16/17 (in the "Mental Body – Gandhabba" subsection of the "Living Dhamma" section).

Sīla, Samādhi, Paññā to Paññā, Sīla, Samādhi – 9/2/17 (in the "Transition to Noble Eightfold Path" subsection).

Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things – 8/20/17 (in the "Anicca – True Meaning" subsection).

Dasa Samyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process – 8/6/17 (in the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).

The Infinity Problem in Buddhism – 7/15/17 (in the "Dhamma and Philosophy" section).

List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots – 6/29/17 (in the "Tables and Summaries" section).

Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines – 6/22/17

Saṅkhāra and Kammā, Viññāṇa and Kamma Bīja – 6/16/17 (in the "San" section).

User's Guide to Pure Dhamma Website – 6/8/17 (in "Buddha Dhamma" section).

Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation? – 6/2/17 (in "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section).

Viññāṇa – What It Really Means – 5/26/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

Working of Kammā – Critical Role of Conditions – 5/21/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

What are rūpa? – Dhamma are rūpa too! – 5/13/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabbayā, and Sotāpanna Stage – 5/6/17 (in "Living Dhamma" section).

Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis – 4/29/17 – 4/29/17 (in the "Historical Background" section).

Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars – 4/29/17 (This replaces a recent post, "Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma Interpretations".

I have also combined two previous posts, "Theravada – Problems with Current Interpretations of Key Concepts" and "Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka – End of Sinhala Commentaries" to make a new post, "Incorrect Theravāda Interpretations – Historical Timeline" —4/29/17.

Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā? – 4/23/17 (in the "Power of the Human Mind" section)

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Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma Interpretations – 4/16/17 (in the "Historical Background" section).

Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga – 4/13/17 (in the "Abhidhamma" section).

Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background – 4/8/17 (in the "Historical Background" section)

Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link – 4/2/17 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section)

Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna – 3/24/17 (in the "Power of the Human Mind" section)

Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta? – 3/17/17 (in the "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" section)

Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View? – 3/10/17 (in the "Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna" section)

Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero – 3/9/17

Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable? – 3/4/17 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section)- Revised 3/7/17.

Attā Hi Attano Nātho – 3/4/17 (in the "Dhammapada" section).

Saṅkhāra – What It Really Means – 2/25/17 (in the new "Four Aggregates" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Vedanā – What It Really Means – 2/18/17 (in the new "What is Vedanā (Feelings)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Satara Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabbayā – 2/11/17 (in the new "Mental Body – Gandhabbaya" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Mental Body (Gandhabbayā) – Personal Accounts – 2/5/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Vipallāsa (Diṭṭhi, Saññā, Citta) Affect Saṅkhāra – 1/28/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section).

Also, a really good Sinhala translation of many sections of the website by Professor Sarath Bandara is now available: "Pure Dhamma – Sinhala Translation."

Future Suffering – Why It Arises – 01/22/17 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Sexual Orientation – Effects of Kamma and Gathi (Saṅkhāra) - 1/14/17 (in the "Living Dhamma – Fundamentals" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Nikāya in the Sutta Piṭaka – 1/7/17 (in the "Sutta Interpretations" section)

Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2016 – 01/01/17

April – July 2017

January – March 2017

18.4.9 Essays – 2016

December 2016

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November 2016

October 2016

September 2016

August 2016

July 2016

June 2016

May 2016

April 2016

March 2016

February 2016

January 2016

18.4.9.1 January 2016

Tiparivattaya and Twelve Types of Ñāṇa (Knowledge) – 1/29/16 (Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta in the Sutta Interpretations section)

Majjima Patipada – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World – 1/22/16 (Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta in the Sutta Interpretations section). Revised 1/23/16.

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction – 1/16/16 (in the Sutta Interpretations section).

Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation – 1/7/16. There will be no new essay this weekend.

Pancaupadanakkhandha – It is All Mental – 1/1/16 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Panñakkhandha)" section.

18.4.9.2 February 2016

Nibbatti Lakkhana in Udayavaya Ñāṇa – 2/26/16 (under the Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna)

Hidden World of the Gandhabbayā: Netherworld (Paralowa) – 2/18/16 (in Manomaya Kāya section)

Uadayavaya Ñāṇa – Introduction – 2/12/16 (under the Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna)

Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages – 2/4/16 (Dhamma Cakka Pavattana sutta in the Sutta Interpretations section)

18.4.9.3 March 2016

Getting to Samādhi via Formal Meditation Sessions – 3/25/16 (in Meditation section)

Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa – 3/19/16 (under the Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna; new subsection on Udayavaya Ñāṇa)

How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha – 3/11/16 (Under Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava (Bad Outcomes), Nissarana (Relinquish))

Craving for Pornography – How to Reduce the Tendency – 3/4/16 (Under Discussion of Comments)

18.4.9.4 April 2016

4/29/2016 New Section: Myths or Realities?

Two posts: Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojawa – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude

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and Paramita and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?

Brain – Interface between Mind and Body – 4/22/16 (in the Abhidhamma section. Don't be discouraged even if you don't have any exposure to Abhidhamma; I am trying to make Abhidhamma easy to grasp. No need to memorize anything)

What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis – 4/15/16 (in the Abhidhamma section)

Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment – 4/8/16 (in "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subection under "Key Dhamma Concepts")

Why are Tilakkhaṇa not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment? – 4/1/16 (in "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta" subection under "Key Dhamma Concepts")

Getting to Samādhi via Formal Meditation Sessions – 3/25/16 (in Meditation section)

Āhāra (Food) in Udayavaya Ñāṇa – 3/19/16 (under the Sotāpanna Stage of Nibbāna; new subsection on Udayavaya Ñāṇa)

How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha – 3/11/16 (Under Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava (Bad Outcomes), Nissarana (Relinquish))

Craving for Pornography – How to Reduce the Tendency – 3/4/16 (Under Discussion of Comments)

18.4.9.5 May 2016

Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha – 5/28/16 (This is a re-write of a previous short post).

Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gathi – 5/28/16

5/20/2016 New Subsection: The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma, which includes two old posts and a new post: 31 Realms Associated with the Earth. New post in Tables and Summaries section: 31 Realms of Existence

Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial – 5/14/16 (in Buddha Dhamma section)

Indriya and Āyatana – Big Difference – 5/7/16 (in the Key Dhamma Concepts section)

18.4.9.6 June 2016

Possible Effects in Meditation – Kundalini Awakening – 6/25/16 (In the section on Bhāvanā (Meditation))

Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous? – 6/17/16 (In the section on Myths or Realities)

Gandhabbayā Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body – 6/11/16 (In the subsection on the Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma)

Gandhabbayā – Only in Human and Animal Realms – 6/4/16 (In the subsection on the Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma)

18.4.9.7 July 2016

Antarabhava and Gandhabbayā – 7/29/16 (In the section Myths or Realities?)

Udayavaya Ñāṇa – Importance of the Cittaja Kaya – 7/22/16 (In the subsection on the Udayavaya Ñāṇa in the Sotāpanna stage of Nobbana)

New section: Abhidhamma via Science (Changed to Inconsistencies with Science on 06Mar2018) and a new post: Vision (Cakkhu Viññāṇa) is Not Just Seeing – 7/15/16

Nibbāna in the Big Picture – 7/8/16 (In the subsection on the Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma)

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Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paṭicca Samuppāda – 7/2/16 (In the section Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (Taṇhā, Lobha, Dosa, Moha, etc)

18.4.9.8 August 2016

Started a new section: Living Dhamma. The subsection "New Approach to Meditation" was deleted and those posts are now in this section. New post in this section: What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika – 8/26/16

Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth (Nirāmisa Sukha to Nibbāna Suva – The Key Step) – 8/19/16

New subsection in the "Bhāvanā (Maditation)" section : Living Dhamma and a new post in it: Peace of Mind to Nibbāna – The Key Step – 8/12/16

Also, Pāli Glossary replaced by two posts with over 400 Pāli words:

Pāli Glossary – (A-K) and Pāli Glossary – (L-Z) – 8/12/16

and, updated version of Popup Pāli Glossary with Pronunciation – 8/12/16

Living Dhamma – Introduction – 8/5/16 (In the section Bhāvanā (Meditation))

18.4.9.9 September 2016

Noble Eightfold Path – Role of Sobhana Cetasika – 9/30/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? – 9/22/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life – 9/10/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Two new posts:

Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World – 9/2/16 (in the "Nibbana" subsection)

Suffering in This Life – Role of Mental Impurities – 9/2/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

18.4.9.10 October 2016

Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda – 10/28/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Started a new **subsection**: Paṭṭhāna Dhammā in the Paṭicca Sumuppada section. New post in this section: Paṭṭhāna Dhamma – Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala) – 10/22/16

September 30, 2016: I just installed Google Translator at top right of the website. I have setup only a few languages for now. I would appreciate feedback on the quality of the translations. Also, if you need a language that is not there, please let me know and I can add. You can use the "Comments" box below to provide input.

Micchā Diṭṭhi – Connection to Hethu Phala (Cause and Effect) – 10/18/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Getting to Samādhi – 10/7/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

18.4.9.11 November 2016

Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day – 11/30/16 (in Sutta Interpretations section).

Asevana and Annamanna Paccaya – 11/20/16 (in Paṭṭhāna Dhammā subsection in the Paṭicca Sumuppada section).

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Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra – 11/10/16 (in the "Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms" sub section of the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section)

18.4.9.12 December 2016

Saññā – What It Really Means – 12/31/16 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Our Mental Body – Gandhabbayā – 12/26/16 (in the "What is Saññā (Perception)?" subsection in the "Living Dhamma" section)

Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II – 12/7/16 (in the "Living Dhamma" section)

18.4.10 Essays – 2015

December 2015

November 2015

October 2015

September 2015

August 2015

July 2015

June 2015

May 2015

April 2015

March 2015

February 2015

January 2015

18.4.10.1 December 2015

Panñakkhandha or Five Aggregates – A Misinterpreted Concept – 12/25/15 (in the "The Five Aggregates (Panñakkhandha)" section.

Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist? – 12/18/15 (in the "Role of the Brain in Human Consciousness" section).

Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa – 12/11/15 (in the Paṭicca Samuppāda section).

13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage – 12/5/15 in the Bhāvanā (Meditation) section

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18.4.1 0.2 November 2015

The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka – 11/27/15 (in the Abhidhamma section)

Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Ja Vedanā – 11/19/15 (in Paṭicca Samuppāda Section)

12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage – 11/13/15 (in the Meditation section).

How Are Paticca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated? – 11/6/15 (in the Paṭicca Samuppāda section).

18.4.1 0.3 October 2015

Do Things Just Happen? – The Hidden Causes – 10/30/15 (in the Moral Living and Fundamentals section).

"Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis – Do We Always Act with Avijjā? – 10/23/15 (in the Comments/Reviews section).

Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion? – 10/21/15 (in the Dhamma and Philosophy section).

Āsvada (Mind-Made Pleasures), Ādeenava (Bad Outcomes), Nissarana (Relinquish) – 10/16/15 (New subsection with the following two posts under it)

Āsvada, Ādeenava, Nissarana – Introduction -10/16/15

What is "Kāma"? It is not Sex – 10/16/15

How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – 10/8/15 (I revised the original post with this title and made two posts; most of the new material is in this first post and is better to be read first)

How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – II – 10/8/15

Logical Proof that Impermanence is Incorrect Translation of Anicca – 10/8/15

I have also added audio files to "Pāli Glossary" – 10/6/15

Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)? – 10/2/15

18.4.1 0.4 September 2015

Would Nibbāna be Possible if Impermanence is the Cause of Suffering? – 9/25/15

Anicca vata Sankhara… – 9/17/15

What is Intention in Kamma? – 9/11/15 (in a new section on "Discussion of Comments" under "Comments/Reviews").

Nirāmisa Sukha – In a Chart – 9/4/15

Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha – 9/4/15

18.4.1 0.5 August 2015

What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna? – 8/28/15

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Cetasika – Connection to Gathi – 8/20/15

Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya – 8/13/15

Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs – 8/6/15

18.4.10.6 July 2015

10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava – 7/30/15 (This is a major revision of a previous post with a different title).

Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala – 7/27/15

Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving – 7/16/15

Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control – 7/9/15

Gati and Bhava – Many Varieties – 7/3/15

18.4.10.7 June 2015

Namagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Thalaya (Mind Plane) – 6/26/15

Arogya Parama Labha – 6/19/15

Key to Sotāpanna Stage – Diṭṭhi and Vicikicchā – 6/13/15

Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi Is Key – 6/6/15

What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma? – 6/1/15

18.4.10.8 May 2015

How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – 5/24/15

Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttā – 5/15/15

How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? – 5/9/15

Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency – 5/3/15

18.4.10.9 April 2015

Bhava paccayā Jati….Jara, Marana,… -4/29/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Phassa paccayā Vedana….to Bhava – 4/24/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Difference between Phassa and Samphassa – 4/18/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Namarupa paccayā Salāyatana – 4/11/15 (under "Paticca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) – 4/6/15

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Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments? – 4/1/15

18.4.1 0.10 March 2015

Viññāṇa paccayā Namarupa – 3/28/15 (under "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 2 – 3/24/15 (under "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 1 – 3/20/15 (under "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Avijjā paccayā Saṅkhāra – 3/16/15 (under "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Introduction -2 – The Three Characteristics of Nature 3/12/15 (under "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English").

Introduction – What is Suffering? 3/8/15 – new sub section on "Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English" where I will use minimum Pāli words.

3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious 3/4/15

18.4.1 0.11 February 2015

What is "Kaya" in Kayanupassana?– 2/26/15.

Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita) 2/18/15

Are you not getting expected results from meditation? 2/15/15

Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Raga, Patigha, Avijjā 2/13/15

Prerequisites for the Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā 2/12/15

Kayanupassana – The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba) 2/9/15

First Noble Truth – A Simple Explanation of One Aspect 2/6/15

"Spark" by John Ratey 2/5/15

Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure 2/4/15 – I have revised the other two older posts on the Satipattha sutta in order to insert this post in the beginning.

Kayanupassana – The Foundation (Iriyapathapabba) 2/1/15

18.4.1 0.12 January 2015

Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis 1/28/15

Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction – 1/22/15

Sutta – Introduction – Starting a new section on Suttā – 1/20/15

Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism 1/17/15

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Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM) 1/15/15

11. How to Select and "Grow" Meditation Procedures for Magga Phala – Meditation Section (1/12/15)

Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala (1/8/15)

If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything? (1/7/15)

"The Language of God", by Francis Collins – Book Review (1/3/15)

18.4.11 Essays – 2014

December 2014

November 2014

October 2014

September 2014

August 2014

July 2014

June 2014

18.4.1 December 2014

1.1

Saṅkhāra – Life is a Bundle of Saṅkhāra (12/28/14)

Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction (12/24/14)

1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction (12/20/14)

2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms (12/20/14)

Three Kinds of Diṭṭhi, Eightfold Paths, and Samādhi (12/18/14)

What does Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) say about Birth Control? (12/14/14)

Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises (12/12/14) – Abhidhamma

Manomaya Kāya – Introduction (12/12/14). I am starting a new subsection in the "Key Dhamma Concepts" section on Manomaya Kāya, and have added two previous posts from other sections to here as well. This section is a prerequisite for the Abhidhamma material, but this material may help clarify other issues as well.

"Waking Up" by Sam Harris (12/9/14) – I am starting a new section on "Book Reviews". I have moved a post that I did last month on "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt from a different section to this section.

The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How the Root Causes are Removed (12/5/14)

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18.4.1 November 2014
1.2

What Does "Paccaya" Mean in Paticca Samuppāda? – Effect not Guaranteed (11/21/14)

Memory, Brain, Mind, Nama Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka (11/19/14)

Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis (11/16/14)

Sadhu – Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind) (11/12/14)

Cuti-Patisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description (11/9/14) – Technical but informative!

Sotāpanna Magga and Phala – How to Distinguish (11/7/14)

Vinaya – The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium (11/6/14)

18.4.1 October 2014
1.3

Najajja Vasalo Hoti……(10/28/14)

Why Does the World Exist? (10/28/14)

Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga (10/25/14)

Appamado Amata Padam…. (10/23/14)

Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts (10/19/14)

Difference Between Giving up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless (10/15/14)

Patisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi (10/12/14)

How Character (Gathi) Leads to Bhava and Jathi (10/12/14)

A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala) (10/7/14)

Buddhist Chanting – Introduction (10/4/14)

The Double Slit Experiment – Correlation between Mind and Matter? (10/2/14)

18.4.1 September 2014
1.4

Namaskaraya – What does it Really Mean? (9/29/14)

Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power (9/26/14)

Tiratana Vandana – Supreme Characteristics (9/25/14)

Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text) (9/25/14)

Panca Indriya and Panca Bala – Five Faculties and Five Powers (9/24/14)

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Namaskaraya – Homage to the Buddha and The Five Precepts – Panca Sīla (9/24/14) – new section on Buddhist Chanting

Sabba Papassa Akaranan…… (9/22/14) – new section on Dhammapada

What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness (9/17/14)

What Does Buddha Dhamma Say about Creator, Satan, Angels, and Demons? (9/16/14)

Ultimate Realities – Table (9/12/14)

First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering (9/11/14)

Kāma Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā (9/9/14)

Lobha, Raga and Kamaccanda, Kamaraga (9/9/14)

Vipassana (Vidassana) Bhāvanā – Insight Meditation (9/7/14)

Ariya Metta Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation) (9/6/14)

18.4.1 1.5

August 2014

Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna (8/31/14)

How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View (8/31/14)

Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi) (8/31/14)

37 Factors of Enlightenment (8/30/14)

Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca! (8/29/14)

Ghost in the Machine – A Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya? (8/24/14)

Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gathi) (8/23/14)

The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them (8/18/14)

Truine Brain – How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits (8/15/14)

Implications of the Rebirth Process in Daily Life and in Society (8/14/14)

What is in a Thought? Why Gathi are so Important? (8/12/14)

Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words? (8/9/14)

Is Suffering the Same as the First Noble Truth on Suffering? (8/8/14)

"What is a Thought?" (8/7/14)

Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta (8/6/14)

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18.4.1 1.6 July 2014

What is Ānāpāna? (7/31/14)

Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra (7/30/14)

Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How Does it Happen? (7/29/14)

Abhidhamma – Introduction (7/25/14)

Ten Moral Actions (Dasa Kusala) and Ten Meritorious Actions (Puñña Kriya) (7/21/14)

The Incessant Distress ("Pilana") – Key to Dukkha Sacca (7/18/14)

Anantara and Samanantara Paccaya (7/15/14)

Dhamma and Philosophy – Introduction (7/3/14)

Philosophy of the Mind (7/3/14)

18.4.1 1.7 June 2014

Myths about Meditation (6/26/14)

Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage (6/23/14)

Dhamma and Philosophy (6/21/14)

I did not document to postings by date before 6/21/14.

Postings started in January 2014.

18.4.12 Revised Posts April – July 2017

What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra) – 6/30/17

Tables and Summaries – 6/30/17

Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka – 6/23/17

Welcome! – 6/17/17

Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero – 6/17/17

Key Dhamma Concepts – 6/17/17

Historical Background – Introduction – 6/2/17

Pāli Glossary – (A-K) – 6/2/17

Pāli Glossary – (L-Z) – 6/2/17

Viññāṇa – What It Really Means – 5/27/17

Complexity of Life and the Way to Seek "Good Rebirths" – 5/22/17

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Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein – 5/14/17

What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna? – 5/14/17

Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars – 5/7/17

How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm – 5/7/17

Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty) – 5/7/17

Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma – 4/30/17

Sutta – Introduction – 4/24/17

Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra – 4/24/17

Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World – 4/24/17

Answers to Criticism of Pure Dhamma In – 4/24/17

Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations – 4/17/17

Historical Timelines of Buddha Dhamma and Sri Lanka – End of Sinhala Commentaries – 4/8/17

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1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction -5/15/15

How to Taste Nibbāna -5/15/15

Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations -5/15/15

The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas -5/15/15

How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached? -5/15/15

Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta -5/15/15

The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How Root Causes are Removed -5/15/15

Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala) -5/9/15

10.Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga -5/9/15

Infinity – How Big Is It? -5/9/15

Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma -5/9/15

Abhidhamma – Introduction -5/9/15

The 89 (121) Types of Citta -5/9/15

Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire -5/9/15

Welcome! -5/4/15

Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna? -5/4/15

What is Buddha Dhamma? -5/4/15

Pāli Glossary -5/4/15

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18.4.1 6.9 April 2015 Revisions

Vinaya – The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium –4/30/15

What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World? – 4/30/15

Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like – 4/30/15

Transfer of Merits (Pattidana) – How Does it Happen? – 4/25/15

Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings – – 4/25/15

Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand? – – 4/25/15

18.4.17 Revised Posts – 2014

Evidence for Rebirth (9/30/14)

Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada) 9/6/14

Introduction to Buddhist Meditation (8/26/14)

What is Avijjā (Ignorance)? (8/26/14)

Neuroscience Says There is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation! (8/25/14)

The 89 Types of Citta (8/3/14)

Preservation of the Dhamma (8/2/14)

How do we Decide Which View is Wrong View (Diṭṭhi)? (7/28/14)

Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka (7/20/14)

The Five Aggregates (Pañnakkhandha) (7/10/14)

Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apayagami Citta (7/8/14)

What is "San"? Meaning of Sansāra (or Saṃsāra)(7/8/14)

Kilesa (Defilements) , Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views) (7/8/14)

Foundation of Dhamma (6/30/14)

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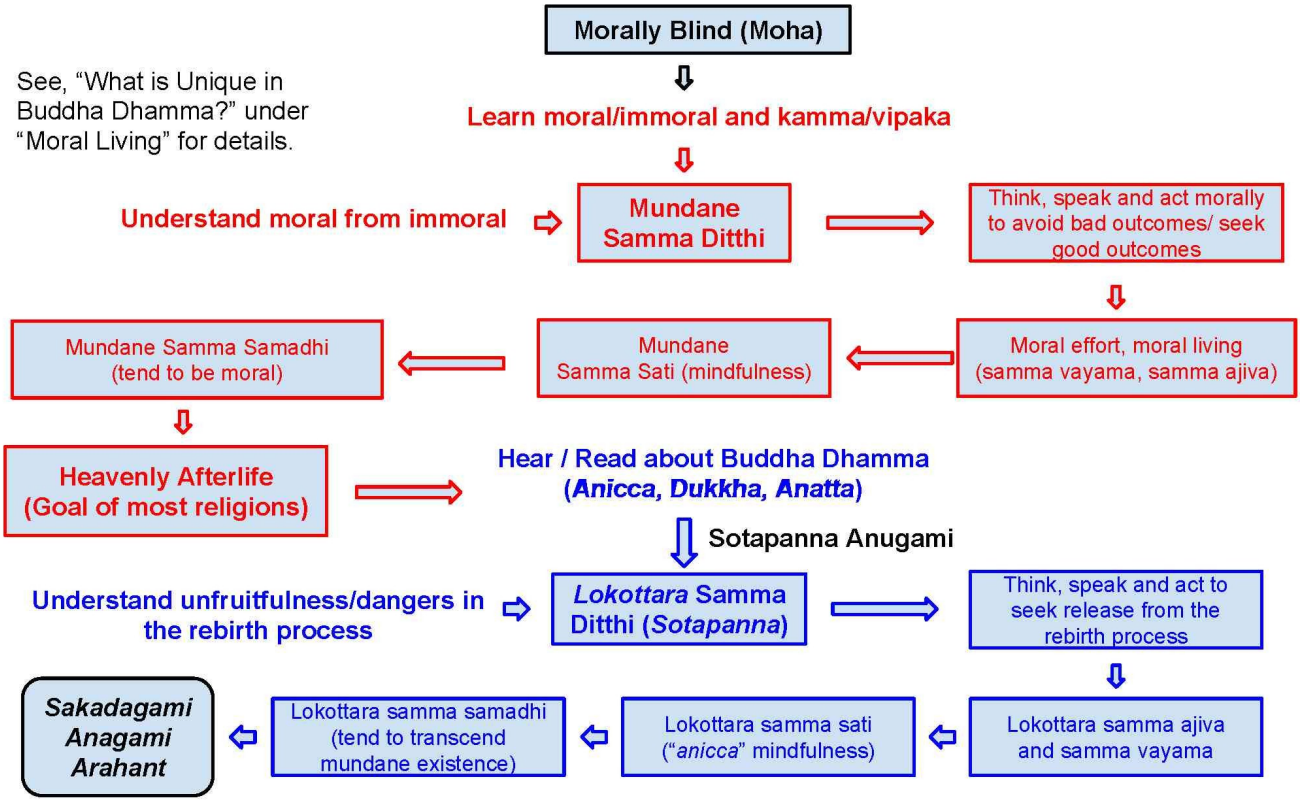
18.5 Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart

I have made a single page chart that shows the uniqueness of the Buddha's message, and also outlines the Path that he suggested clearly.

The pdf file can be saved or printed for reference:

WebLink: PDF File: Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart



Discussion of the chart is at:

What is Unique in Buddha Dhamma?

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18.6 Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format

For those who may like to read the posts in epub book format, please download it at the below website:

WebLink: Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format

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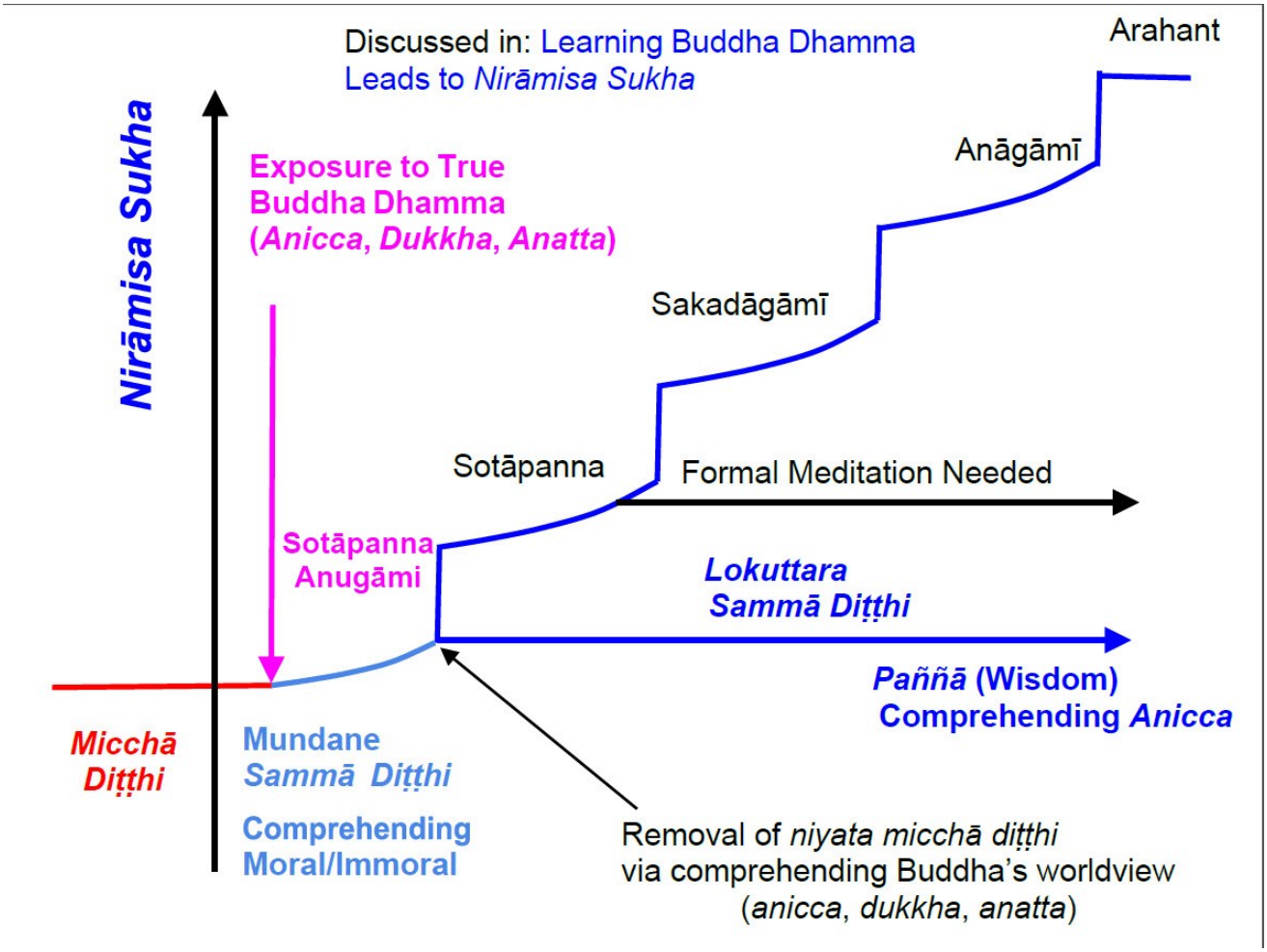
18.7 Nirāmisa Sukha – In a Chart

There are several posts at the site on "*nirāmisa sukha*." It is NOT a feeling (*vedanā*) in the sense of a sense pleasure; it does not belong in the *vedanā cetasika*. It is a "sense of relief" when one starts realizing the "burdens" associated with sense pleasures.

- The closest analogy (if one can be given) is the feeling one gets when one is relieved of an headache that one had since birth.

I have made a single page chart that shows how the *nirāmisa sukha* starts as one starts when one first hears the true message of the Buddha and starts comprehending it, and becomes a *Sotāpanna Anugami.* Then it makes permanent stepwise jumps at the four stages of *Nibbāna* culminating in the *Arahanthood.*



The pdf file can be saved or printed for reference:

WebLink: PDF File: Nirāmisa Sukha – In a Chart

Discussion of the chart is at:

Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha

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18.8 Popup Pali Glossary with Pronunciation

February 20, 2020: Updated #5 URL Link for Windows and Mobile iPhone/iPad. Added at #5 and #7 – Plain Dictionary for Mobile Android. (by Seng Kiat Ng)

August 12, 2016: Mr. Seng Kiat Ng added the new words in the two new posts "Pāli Glossary – (A-K)" and "Pāli Glossary – (L-Z)" to the pop-up dictionary, so that there are now a total of 414 Pāli words. Please download the two new files in #3 below and delete the old files, if you have already installed the GoldenDict dictionary.

- Installation instructions are given below for those who have not installed the pop-up GoldenDict dictionary, but would like to do so.

January 7, 2016

This post was written by Mr. Seng Kiat Ng. Much merits to him and his family for this meritorious work. This is a very useful feature that can be used with any other site as well (by downloading other dictionaries; see below).

- Please remember that once you download the files as he instructed, you will be able to highlight a Pāli word (178 words as of today) in any of the posts at the site and a popup screen will display the English meaning. You also be able to hear the Pāli pronunciation if clicked on the audio button.
- The old Pāli Glossary (with the same 178 words) is still there in case anyone wants to peruse there; the audio files have been removed since they take too long to download.

1. We will be using the GoldenDict online dictionary platform. First, one needs to install it on one's computer and then download the two Puredhamma Pāli dictionary files to a folder on one's computer.

- Other online or downloadable (free) dictionaries can also be used as described below.

2. Goto http://goldendict.org/download.php and choose the version suitable for you. I chose the first option to download the Windows version.

- Download the .exe file and double click to run it and install it.
- Mine was installed in the C:\Program Files (X86)\GoldenDict directory. There should a "GoldenDict.exe" file there. This is the "clickable icon" that will open the application. It does not automatically create this "clickable icon" on the desktop, so right click on that and make a copy on the desktop for convenience.
- Now the GoldenDict application can be opened by double clicking that link on the desktop.

3. Next download the two files (one text, one audio) for the Pāli dictionary from Puredhamma.net to a folder in your computer (could be the same "GoldenDict" folder above).

- Pure-Dhamma-Pāli-English Glossary [399 words] 25Feb2020.mdx **(Text) Updated 25Feb2020**
- Pure-Dhamma-Pāli-English Glossary [399 words] 25Feb2020.mdd **(Audio) Updated 25Feb2020**

You may want to close any other screens (other than the one with the "Download" button) that pop up with advertisements. Wait until the "Download" button becomes "clickable".

4. Now open the GoldenDict as instructed in #2 above.

- Go to "Edit" and choose "Dictionaries" and then choose the **folder** that you put the above two Pāli Glossary files.
- Now, right next to the "search button" on GoldenDict, there is the "scan popup" option selection button indicated by a "pen like" symbol. Click on it to enable scan popups.

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- Now, open any page on Puredhamma.net and select a Pāli word. **If you are running Windows Explorer**, just placing the cursor on the word will make the dictionary popup (if that word is one of the 414 words that are so far in the Pāli dictionary). Try "anicca" in a post to test because that word is there.
- **If you have Google Chrome**, you need to select the word (highlight) and hit CTRL+C+C (hold CTRL button and hit C twice) for it to popup.
- There is a "speaker" symbol there in the popup and you can click on it to play back the audio file (pronunciation).
- In order for the popup dictionary to work, GoldenDict must be opened at the same time.

5. Here is a complete list of options to download the GoldenDict platform:

- Windows **GoldenDict-1.5.0-RC-517**
- Mac OS X **GoldenDict Early Access Builds for Mac OS X**
- Linux **GoldenDict Eng-Rus-En v1.1**

Other Dictionary:

- Mobile Android **Plain Dictionary** **BlueDict**
- Mobile iPhone/iPad **MDict (Windows, Android, IOS, Tools, Dictionary files)**

6. You can use the GoldenDict platform to access other online or downloadable dictionaries (to be used either with this site or any other site). Some can be chosen at the "Edit" menu. Go to "Edit" and choose "Dictionaries" and on the second raw of that screen there are some online dictionaries that you can choose from.

- More information at the GoldenDict.org site.
- If you have two or more dictionaries loaded, then the popup will display translations provided by all of them (if that word is in them).

7. Other than GoldenDict, the following two platforms also could be used.

- Plain Dictionary **(Android – Free, unlimited Dictionary with no advertisement)**
- BlueDict **(Android – Free; limited to 10 Dictionaries and with advertisement)**
- MDict **(Windows/IPhone/Ipad/Windows Mobile/Android – Free with limitations)**

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18.9 Reflections on 2019

January 1, 2020

1. Puredhamma.net completed a full six years online. There are over 600 posts at the site. It may look challenging to navigate through.

- It may be difficult to get an idea about the layout of the website, especially for those who are using a mobile phone or a tablet. I recommend reviewing the "Pure Dhamma – Sitemap."
- I just went through the whole site and collected all the posts under specific sections and subsections.

2. I very much want to highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn. rather it is our own defiled *gati* (habits/character) making us do immoral things.
- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed.
- But to get there, one needs **some self-control** to stay away from such extremes initially. **Learning pure Dhamma is the only way to break through that first barrier.** Once the *Sotapanna* stage is attained, one will never go back.

3. In his very first discourse to the five ascetics, the Buddha explained that there is nothing in this world that is worth to be taken as "mine." The First Noble Truth is not about the suffering that we experience in this life. In fact, some people may not even experience that much suffering in this life until the end.

- Rather, what the Buddha said is that we create CAUSES to bring about FUTURE SUFFERING if we ATTACH to worldly pleasures. We are not any different than a fish biting into a tasty bait, say, a worm. That fish does not see the hook hidden in the "delicious worm." It will be subjected to much suffering once it bites the worm, and the hook attaches to its mouth.
- The difficulty in our case is that the deeds we do to get those sensory pleasures may not show their CONSEQUENCES in this life. That is why it is useless to follow Buddha Dhamma if one does not believe in rebirth or *kamma/vipāka*.
- As long as we CRAVE for sensual pleasures (that is different from just experiencing them,) we WILL be born with bodies that are subjected to diseases, decay, and eventual death. See, "Is It Necessary for a Buddhist to Eliminate Sensual Desires?"

4. I had an experience that really "opened my eyes" early in 2019. A brain tumor about 2-3 cm in diameter was found in the frontal lobe of my brain. Within 5 weeks they were able to operate and remove the tumor. Luckily, it was non-cancerous.

- That experience was a reminder of how fickle this life is. I was lucky to be able to survive with just losing my sense of smell. If it was not found, the tumor could have grown more and damaged my vision too.
- We all should work towards *Nibbāna* as if we have only a short time to live. In fact, that was the last advice of the Buddha before his *Parinibbāna*: '*vayadhammā saṅkhārā,* ***appamādena*** *sampādethā'"ti.*

5. I discussed this key point in a recent post, "Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering." I highly recommend reading the new series of posts on "Origin of Life" and, in particular, the subsection there "Paticca Samuppāda – Not 'Self' or 'No-Self'"

- However, those of you who are not familiar with the fundamentals of Buddha dhamma (Buddhism), I recommend first reviewing the "Pure Dhamma – Sitemap" and reading on the earlier sections there, or any sections of interest.
- First, one needs to get an idea of what Buddha Dhamma is.

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6. I am appreciative of many kind comments on the usefulness of the site, and about personal achievements. That gives me confidence that there are people who can see the value of Pure Dhamma and can make genuine progress.

- Special thanks to Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in an eBook format and for updating it every week as I write new posts and update old posts. He has done that for a few years now. He is also helping manage the discussion forum. The link to the eBook at, "Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format."
- Tobias Große in Heilbad Heiligenstadt, Germany, has now translated many pages of pure dhamma to German. Here is the link: https://puredhamma/de
- Puredhamma.net is now available in Korean, thanks to Mr. Ja-nyun Kim and his son who is the manager (DHK) of the Puredhamma Study Group Cafe (https://cafe.naver.com/puredhamma). The link to the website is https://puredhamma.kr
- There are few others who are working on translations to their own languages.
- There are also several other disciples of the Waharaka *Thero* who are working diligently to deliver the true teachings of the Buddha in the Sinhala (and English) languages; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thēro." We have also discussed others at the discussion forum.
- Christian Schoenrock has organized a group in Eastern Europe. He also has a forum discussing Pure Dhamma in English that is open to everyone: https://discordapp.com/invite/g6UWq4b
- Many others have contributed by pointing out errors in some posts leading to improvements. My goal is to have 100% inter-consistency as well as consistency with the *Tipitaka*. My thanks all of them.

7. I am happy about the status of the discussion forum at puredhamma.net. It completed the second full year on December 17th: "Forum."

- Even though only a limited number of people are posting there, the quality of discussions is good. I encourage questions and take each question seriously. Most people have not been exposed to key concepts, and are not aware of them due to no fault on their own.
- There have been few issues with the submission of comments within the last month or so. I am using a software package dedicated to Word Press websites, and they are working on the issue. If anyone has a problem in submitting a question/comment, please send me an email: lal@puredhamma.net.

Happy New Year!

May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha) be with you always!

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18.10 Reflections on 2018

January 1, 2019

1. Puredhamma.net completed full five years online. There are well over 500 posts at the site. It is getting a bit complex to browse through.

- I am thinking about splitting it to three sites based on the complexity of the material. May be something like: Beginner, Intermediate, and Advanced.
- Even though there are many posts, I have not been able to adequately cover certain sections, especially *Abhidhamma*.

2. On the other hand, last year was an eye-opener for me, in that there is a need to explain basic concepts in Buddha Dhamma. I participated in a well-known Buddhist discussion forum, and only during the past three months or so that I realized that most people there do not have a basic understanding of the key concepts of Buddha Dhamma.

- Deep *suttā* are discussed there without having an understanding of key concepts like the five aggregates: *rūpa, vedanā, saññā, saṅkhāra, viññāṇa.*
- Since only a limited number of people make comments there, I am not certain how bad this problem really is.

3. I am seriously thinking about having a "sub-site" where introductory concepts in Buddha Dhamma are explained.

- That includes *dasa akusala*, Four Noble Truths, Noble Eightfold Path, and an introduction to *Paṭicca Samuppāda*.
- By the way, if you are new to puredhamma.net, please read the "Moral Living and Fundamentals" and the first subsections of the "Living Dhamma" section.
- It is absolutely necessary to learn the basics before getting into advanced concepts.

4. I am happy about the status of the discussion forum at puredhamma.net. It completed the first full year on December 17th: "Forum."

- Even though only a limited number of people are posting there, the quality of discussions is good. I encourage questions, and take each question seriously. Most people have not been exposed to key concepts, and are not aware of them due to no fault on their own.
- I am glad to see that at least a limited number of people are making significant progress due to those discussions. It is hard to explain everything in a post. Therefore, the forum is a good way to bring up points that I missed, or not paid enough attention to.
- My sincere thanks to all who are contributing to the discussions by proving their own input.

5. I am appreciative of many kind comments on the usefulness of the site, and about personal achievements; that gives me confidence that there are people who can see the value of Pure Dhamma and can make genuine progress.

- Special thanks to Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in an eBook format and for updating it every week as I write new posts and update old posts. He is also helping manage the discussion forum.
- Tobias Große in Heilbad Heiligenstadt, Germany, has now translated many pages of puredhamma to German. Here is the link: https://puredhamma/de
- I understand that there is a Korean translation too. The person who is doing the work has written to me, but seems to want to stay anonymous.

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- Christian Schoenrock has organized a group in Eastern Europe. He also has a forum discussing Pure Dhamma in English that is open to everyone: https://discordapp.com/invite/g6UWq4b
- Many others have contributed by pointing out errors in some posts leading to improvements. My goal is to have 100% inter-consistency as well as consistency with the *Tipiṭaka*. My thanks all of them.

Happy New Year!

May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha) be with you always!

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18.11 Reflections on 2017

January 1, 2018

1. Pure Dhamma discussion forum was launched on December 17. I had wanted to do that for a while, and I am glad to see that there are several good discussions started already. I hope more readers will take part, not only to ask questions but also to answer questions by others.

- Over the past few years, I have learned a lot by trying to answer questions put forth by others. Such questions force me to look at a given issue from a different point-of-view.
- Now more people can benefit in two ways: One can get answers from multiple people (different people look at the same issue from different angles), and everyone can benefit from the discussions.

2. I want to start working a new project that I have been wanting to do for a while. It is to illustrate the real connection between quantum mechanics and Buddha Dhamma. Some people have tried to do that highlighting "quantum weirdness", but in fact there is no weirdness in quantum mechanics.

- So, I hope the discussion forum will grow and I can only drop by once in a while.
- Forum guidelines and how to register: "Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines."
- One does not need to register to read questions and comments by others.

3. Puredhamma.net is now available in German language, thanks to Mr. Tobias Große in Heilbad Heiligenstadt, Germany. Here is the link:

https://puredhamma/de

- Professor J. M. R. Sarath Bandara has added more sections to the Sinhala translation of the Puredhamma website recently: Pure Dhamma – Sinhala Translation

4. I have personally made significant progress. Even though I am not certain that I have been released from the *kāma loka*, it seems I am almost there.

- However, I do not worry about specific attainments. I believe that if I pursue the Path, the fruits will appear naturally, just like a tree will grow and bear fruit if it is taken care of by providing water, sunlight, and nutrients.

5. I need to make a comment about the *jhānā*, since there are some misconceptions. If one cultivates *jhāna*, the fourth *Ariya jhāna* can be attained only by an *Anāgāmī*. It is fairly easy to verify if one has attained the *Anāgāmī* stage (no cravings left for any sensual pleasures including sex, food, music, etc).

- When one attains the *Anāgāmī* stage, *Sammā Samādhi* is complete; hence if one has cultivated *jhāna*, one would attain the fourth *Ariya jhāna*.
- One finally attains the *Arahant* stage by completing *Sammā Ñāṇa* and *Sammā Vimutti*: "*atthāngehi samannāgato Sekhā, dasāngehi samannāgato Arahant",* i.e., there are ten steps to the *Arahant* stage.
- These are discussed in detail at: "Samādhi, Jhāna (Dhyāna), Magga Phala."

6. A related issue is that one does not lose "*kāma guna*" associated with the human *bhava* (i.e., any sense pleasure like the ability to taste the sweetness of sugar) even when attaining the *Arahant* stage. One just loses any craving for them. One has seen the fruitlessness and dangers in craving for them.

- Therefore, one with any type of *magga phala* will still taste delicious food as such, or good music as pleasant, or feel the comfort in an air-conditioned room. These are "*kāma guna*" associated with the human *bhava,* and are removed only when an *Arahant* attains *Parinibbāna*, i.e., at the physical death of the body.
- This is explained in "Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmaccandha".

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7. Buddha's true message is contrary to the message embodied in all other religions and philosophies/world views. The goal is not to merely live a moral life, but also to see the dangers in "maintaining status quo" by just living a good, moral life: **It is imperative to get out of the rebirth process in order to prevent unimaginable types of suffering in future lives.**

- It is true that a "normal human mind" sees this as a pessimistic message. Stopping the rebirth process seems very drastic and disconcerting.
- Therefore, it is not even advisable to focus on that in the beginning. It is better to try to understand basic concepts first, as discussed in the first subsections in the "Living Dhamma" section (and the "Bhāvanā (Meditation)" section), and feel the increasing levels of *nirāmisa sukha* as one makes progress.
- When one advances to higher subsections of the "Living Dhamma" section, one will be reading advanced concepts. In the end, one would realize that the key message of the Buddha is actually the best message that one could receive and is more valuable than anything in this world.
- The unconventional message of the Buddha is "a world view that has never been known to the world" or "*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*." That is what I try to explain at this website in a systematic way.

8. If even a single person can attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, that would be worthwhile my time writing for even ten years. That means stopping an uncountable number of births in the *apāyā* for that person.

- But I know that number is higher even for a given year, based on emails that I receive. That will keep me going for as long as I can write. And there is so much to write! Even if I write for ten more years, there will still be more to write.
- Of course, I or anyone else cannot verify whether another has attained the *Sotāpanna* stage or any other *magga phala*. But even if one has become a *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*, he/she is an *Ariya* and is bound to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage in the immediate future. *Sotāpanna Anugāmi*s are included in "*Attha purisa puggalā*" or the "Eight types of Noble Persons".

9. I am appreciative of many kind comments on the usefulness of the site, and about personal achievements; that gives me confidence that there are people who can see the value of pure Dhamma and can make genuine progress.

- My thanks also to those who made comments/suggestions/questions that have led to improvements of many web pages. Special thanks to Mr. Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in an eBook format and for updating it every weekend as I write new posts and update old posts.
- Many others also pointed out many errors in posts which have led to improvements. My goal is to have 100% inter-consistency as well as consistency with the *Tipiṭaka*.
- I also want to illustrate that there is no need to consult late commentaries like Visuddhimagga; that can only lead to confusion. I have shown many inconsistencies in them; see, "Historical Background." There are three original commentaries included with the *Tipiṭaka* and those are sufficient.

9. Finally, I always highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from the society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed. But of course to get to that point, one needs to gradually reduce attachment to **excess** sense pleasures , and to stay away from bad friends and bad environments (in order to see for oneself how much "peace of mind" can be realized).
- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn; rather it is our own defiled minds making us do immoral things (defilements can vary from hate and excess greed to just being ignorant of the true nature of the world).
- All we need to do is to get rid of our bad *gati* (or *gathi*; I note that I have used both spellings over the years) and cultivate good *gati*. This is the key to *Nibbāna*. During that process, one will start feeling the

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"cooling down", and then start comprehending *anicca, dukkha, anatta,* which leads to the *Sotāpanna* stage. Therefore, it is a step-by-step process.

Happy New Year!

May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha) be with you always!

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18.12 Reflections on 2016

January 1, 2017; revised (#7) January 6, 2016

1. Buddha's true message is contrary to the message embodied in all other religions and philosophies/world views. The goal is not to just live a moral life, but also to see the dangers in "maintaining status quo" by just living a good, moral life. It is imperative to get out of the rebirth process in order to prevent unimaginable types of suffering in future lives.

- This unconventional message of the Buddha is "a world view that has never been known to the world" or "*pubbe ananussutesu dhammesu*."
- However, it is not possible for a "normal human mind" — no matter how brilliant — to comprehend the fact that this apparently pessimistic message of the Buddha is actually the best message that one could receive and is more valuable than anything in this world.

2. I know this by own experience and that is why I am willing to state this straightforwardly, even though it may scare off some, who have been erroneously led to believe that Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) is not that different from other religions or world views that confine a life's goal to just to live a moral life.

- It is definitely true that one MUST live a moral life. If one lives an immoral life, one's mind will be too contaminated to grasp that critical message of the Buddha.

3. Expressed in a different way: One needs to live a moral life and follow the mundane Eightfold Path first to get rid of the worst defilements (cobwebs that cover the mind) so that one could grasp this unique message.

- So, after three years of writing, and contemplating how to guide someone through the easiest path to grasp that key message of the Buddha that goes against our traditional beliefs, I have started a new section — "Living Dhamma" — that can hopefully make this process easier.
- One starts at a place even without having to accept any key foundational concepts like *kamma* and *kamma vipāka* or the validity of the rebirth process.
- One does not need to believe in anything except one's own experience. Through the improvements in one's sense of well-being, one's mind will become clear and will be able to grasp the key aspects of Buddha Dhamma.

4. My goal is to make this section section the centerpiece of the website. Anyone — regardless of one's familiarity with Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) — should start at the very beginning, because it is imperative to grasp the very basics. I have had enough correspondences with many readers over these three years to see that many have not fully grasped the basics; that could leave out key pieces in the big picture.

- It could be a big mistake to assume that one knows the basics and thus skip them.
- It is also a mistake to try to contemplate on concepts like *anicca, dukkha, anatta* or *sunyata* without grasping the essential fact that one needs to start experiencing the "peace of mind" (*nirāmisa sukha*) by staying away from those thoughts, speech, and actions that can defile and make a mind stressful and not susceptible to grasping "a world view that has never been known to the world".
- The goal should be to "capture the essence" and not to try to memorize everything. Bits and pieces of the jigsaw puzzle will start falling into place, leading to joyful "Aha! moments".

5. The website is completing three full years in existence, and I am glad that there an increased interest among countries all over the world despite the fact that pure Dhamma is unconventional.

- When one starts seeing and experiencing the "true Dhamma", it will become a joyful experience and one will be compelled to dig deeper and find more.

6. This is why I am appreciative of many kind comments on the usefulness of the site; that gives me confidence that there are people who can see the value of pure Dhamma.

- My thanks also to those who made comments/suggestions/questions that have led to improvements of many web pages. Special thanks to Mr. Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in

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an eBook format and for updating it every weekend as I write new posts and update some old posts. He and many others also pointed out many errors in posts which led to improvements.

- There are readers from many countries and for the year 2016, the top 20 countries are: United States, Singapore, New Zealand, Great Britain, Sri Lanka, Japan, China, Australia, India, Sweden, Hong Kong, Canada, Germany, Bulgaria, Thailand, France, Malaysia, Russian Federation, Indonesia, South Africa.
- A few more statistics from Google Analytics on user experience: Sessions = 50,688; page views = 720,269; Pages / Session = 14.21; Bounce Rate = 1.83%; % New Users = 54.41%. And in December, 8.3% spent over an hour at a time at the site according to the web host.
- Pure Dhamma seems to have no national boundaries, as it should be. It describes the true nature of our world.

7. Another related comment from some is their anxiety of why it is taking too long for them to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, and how can one know for sure whether one is even making progress.

- This is a very important question. The Buddha was asked the same question. His answer was: "Do not worry about those things day in and day out. Just concentrate on learning Dhamma and keep living by that Dhamma".
- His gave a simile: "How does a good farmer go about making sure that he gets a good harvest? He prepares the field, uses good seeds, and once they germinate he makes sure to keep the weeds out and provide necessary nutrients. He does not waste time worrying about the harvest".
- The best way to gauge one's progress is to look back and see whether one has made improvements in controlling one's anger and greed by being mindful of one's thoughts and actions.

8. I would like to share a personal experience that illustrates the "*anicca* nature" of this world. I eat healthy and exercise regularly (yoga and cardio), and have been able to avoid even a minor ailment since 2009. But two weeks ago, a herniated disk (which was first diagnosed in 2008) started giving me physical pain on my left arm/shoulder without any obvious physical cause.

- By the way, I can also confirm that it is impossible to get into *jhānā* when one is under such physical pain. Therefore, there is no relief from this obvious *kamma vipāka*.

This is a good example of the *anicca* nature: unexpected problems can arise even if you take necessary precautions. I must hasten to point out two facts:

- I am not saying that this happened without a cause. It is obviously a strong *kamma vipāka* that was hard to avoid despite taking precautions (eating well/exercise) or in the *Abhidhamma* language, not making bad conditions (*samanantara paccayā*) for such *kamma vipāka* to bear fruit.
- If I had not been engaging in a good exercise program or had not paid attention to what I eat, I am sure I would not have been able to go 7 years without a significant health problem.

But with my productivity plunging (it is almost impossible to concentrate with such acute pain), it has brought me back to reality.

9. Finally, I very much want to highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from the society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- Even if one is not be able to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage in this life, the effort will not go to waste: it will make it easier in the future. As the Buddha advised, just follow the Path if it seems to make sense; results will follow.
- But to get there, one needs **some self-control** to stay away from such extremes initially. **Learning pure Dhamma is the only way to break through that first barrier.** Once the *Sotāpanna* stage is attained, one will never, ever go back. (if one becomes a *Sotāpanna magga anugami,* one will never go back in this human *bhava*, which could be many more human births).
- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed.

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- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn; rather it is our own defiled minds (defilements can vary from hate and excess greed to just being ignorant of the true nature of the world) making us do immoral things.

Happy New Year!

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18.13 Reflections on 2015

January 1, 2016

I started the website sometime in early January of 2014. I am pleasantly surprised to see a marked increase in audience in 2015 compared to 2014. Actually, the increase in time spent at the site (indicated by the bandwidth and pages) has increased much more than the number of visits. That is what I really like: those who "really get it" spend more time learning pure Dhamma.

1. First of all, my heartfelt thanks for the many kind comments on the usefulness of the site, and also making comments/suggestions/questions that have led to improvements of many web pages. Special thanks to Mr. Seng Kiat Ng from Singapore for putting together all the posts in an eBook format and for updating it every weekend as I write new posts and update some old posts; he has also pointed out many errors in posts which led to improvements.

- Many others have pointed out such errors and suggested improvements to the site, and I am grateful to all.
- There are readers from over 50 countries and for the month of December, 2015, the top 20 countries are: United States, Singapore, New Zealand, Great Britain, Sri Lanka, India, Australia, Malaysia, Bulgaria, Ecuador, Netherlands, China, Canada, France, Indonesia, Thailand, Austria, Brazil, Hong Kong, and Russian Federation. Pure Dhamma seems to have no national boundaries, as it should be. It describes the true nature of our world.
- In early December, 2015, I upgraded the hosting platform to have a virtual private server and it also seems to have helped speed up the page loading.
- If you encounter problems accessing the site, avoid the www in the address line: It should just be: https://puredhamma.net. Normally, typing just "puredhamma.net" should direct to https://puredhamma.net. Or, one could Google search "puredhamma" and the link will come out on the top.
- I also upgraded to a more secure "https" from "http" just to assure that the content will not be tampered with. I encourage sharing or using anything that is on the site. Anyone is "free to copy" any of the content. Reference to the site is a courtesy, but not required.

2. The most common feedback I get is on the usefulness of the site. I appreciate those comments.

- When I started the site, some of my friends warned me that "pure Dhamma" is too difficult to understand, and I may turn off people. But my goal is to present the true message of the Buddha as much as possible. Not everyone may be able to understand it initially, but for those who can, it will be a life-changing experience as it has been for me.

3. Another related comment from some is their anxiety of why it is taking too long for them to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage, and how can one know for sure whether one is even making progress.

- This is a very important question. The Buddha was asked the same question. His answer was: "Do not worry about those things day in and day out. Just concentrate on learning Dhamma and on contemplating the *anicca* nature of this world. The rest will follow".
- His gave a simile: How does a good a farmer go about making sure that he gets a good harvest? He prepares the field, uses good seeds, and once they germinate he makes sure to keep the weeds out and provide necessary nutrients. He does not waste time worrying about the harvest".

4. In the same way, one just needs to learn pure Dhamma and live by it. One needs to understand what *Nibbāna* or *Nivana* is, in a step-by-step process. Initially, one does not need to worry about stopping the rebirth process (this is true even up to the *Sotāpanna* stage). One should first focus on "quenching the fires that burn inside": One should experience the "peace of mind" that is palpable when one gradually loses extreme greed, hate, and ignorance (not knowing the true nature of this world).

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- "*Ragakkhayo Nibbanan, dosakkhayo Nibbanan, Mohakkhayo Nibbanan*" ("Cooling down is attained with getting rid of greed, hate, and ignorance") is valid from this initial "cooling down" all the way to the attainment of the *Arahant* stage. Just concentrate on getting rid of the strongest immoral acts via the body, speech, and the mind first.
- Thus the best way to gauge the progress is to see how much greed, hate, and ignorance has been lost over a given time.
- Here, "getting rid of ignorance" is an important aspect, which can come ONLY via learning Dhamma, i.e., only via learning the true nature of this world.

5. When one follows this basic process, one WILL start feeling the resulting cooling down. One will realize that one becomes more thoughtful and tolerant of others, even when they do inappropriate things.

- And with time, one will see that others also seem to act less harshly. It is hard to believe but one's mindset CAN affect how others treat oneself. It is a feedback loop that may not be noticeable initially, but will become apparent with time.

6. Then one day, one will realize that one does not have the *gathi* even remotely resembling of those in the four *apāyā*: no extreme hate suitable for a hell being, no extreme greed suitable for a *preta* (hungry ghost), no "animal *gathi*," and one does not have the mindset to rely on others (*asura*). Then one realizes that one is a *Sotāpanna*.

- When one understands that the consequences of extreme immoral acts can be much more harsh in the long-term compared to any short-lived satisfaction, then one's mind will automatically reject such thoughts. Comprehending the *anicca* nature will do the same.

7. I very much want to highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from the society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn; rather it is our own defiled minds (defilements can vary from vile to just being ignorant of the true nature of the world) making us do immoral things.
- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed.
- But to get there, one needs **some self-control** to stay away from such extremes initially. **Learning pure Dhamma is the only way to break through that first barrier.** Once the *Sotāpanna* stage is attained, one will never, ever go back. (if one becomes a *Sotāpanna magga anugami,* one will never go back in this life).
- Even if one is not be able to attain the *Sotāpanna* stage in this life, the effort will not go to waste: it will make it easier in the future. As the Buddha advised, just follow the Path if it seems to make sense; results will follow.

Happy New Year! May the Blessings of the Triple Gem (Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha) be with you always!

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18.14 Reflections on 2014

January 1, 2015

I started the website sometime in early January of 2014. Since there is no discussion forum at the site, I thought of making a summary on the 52 comments (excluding follow-up correspondence) that I received over the year (I did respond to all individual comments).

1. First of all, my heartfelt thanks for the many kind comments on the usefulness of the site.

2. Some people (mainly those I know personally) "complained" that once they start reading, they "got absorbed" in the material and they could not get to their "daily tasks". This could be a concern for some others as well. The easiest solution is to set an alarm.

- I assure everyone that once one gets a "foothold" one will become more responsible for their families, not the other way around. As one begins to understand the true message of the Buddha, one will start allocating one's time wisely, taking time away from "entertainment" rather than from those tasks that are one's responsibilities.
- As some of you may have already noticed, one becomes more thoughtful and considerate, when one starts truly understanding the message of the Buddha. One realizes that we all are in the same boat, trudging along in this tedious rebirth process, and one feels true compassion for others. One will not shy away from one's responsibilities to anyone let alone to one's family.
- If you do get absorbed in the material, it is not to my credit. From experience, I know that pure Dhamma is much more satisfying and fulfilling than any sense pleasure (even before the *jhānā*). Learning Dhamma is learning about nature in a way that had not been possible before the Buddha! And there is no other task that is more important than one's own "long-term" future.

3. There were several people who made suggestions for new posts. Such suggestions are always welcome. If I have not responded to a couple of requests that is because of a reason. I do not want to "jump ahead" until the background material is presented. Please do not shy away from making suggestions.

4. Another important comment was that, "in the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta*, didn't the Buddha recommend the "breathing meditation" contrary to what I described as *ānāpāna*?". If one is reading the *sutta* as commonly translated these days, that is indeed what the translations say. But we need to examine the Pāli text of the *sutta* to get the correct interpretation. I plan to write a series of posts on the *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* carefully going through the Pāli text.

- And we need to sort out the types of meditation recommended by the Buddha from those that have been practiced by *Hindu yogis* and are described in the *Visuddhimagga*. I think this is a "mental block" for even *Theravāda* Buddhists. Unless one sits down and stay like a statue, it does not count as "meditation" for many people.
- Those days, Buddha's primary recommendation was to listen to Dhamma discourses. Many people attained *magga phala* just by listening to such discourses. The *Satipaṭṭhāna sutta* was delivered in the later years for *bhikkhus* who needed systematic guidance.
- If one pays attention, one can get to *samādhi* while listening (and also while reading) Dhamma concepts. I highly recommend reading posts at this site at a quiet time, and see whether it makes you more calm. It will help in getting to *jhānā* in the longer term.
- Whether listening or reading, one should fully concentrate on the subject, and may even want to stop reading and think about the material when a new concept is discussed. Then the mind focuses on that point and automatically gets to *samādhi*. This is the key to removing defilements from the mind (which are the biggest chunk that in turn trigger other defilements). When one focuses on a "worldly thing" such as breath or a *kasina* object, that just gets the mind to *samādhi*, without doing any cleansing.

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5. One does not even need to do any formal meditation initially. If one can spend some "quality time" (quite times where one can think as one reads) a few times a week, that would be more than enough. As with anything with the mind, the mind will ask for more as needed (this is the *chanda* and *citta* part in the *Satara Iddhipāda* of *chanda, citta, viriya, vīmaṃsā*). And when the mind asks for it, that is the best time to start getting absorbed in the material, making the effort (*viriya*) and critically examining the key concepts (*vīmaṃsā*).

- One can get all the way to the *Sotāpanna* stage by just comprehending the main message that the Buddha was trying to convey: In the long run, it is unprofitable to strive for material things in this world. That there is a happiness of better quality when one loses craving for sense pleasures.
- **But that cannot be achieved by "forcefully giving up sense pleasures", doing "breath meditation", or just by following the five precepts.** Rather, by understanding the deep message of the Buddha about the "real nature of this world", one's mind gradually realizes the futility of seeking sense pleasures as one gradually comprehends *anicca, dukkha, anatta*. Dhamma will be the guide.

6. I very much want to highlight the fact that Buddha Dhamma is not about hiding in a remote place and shying away from the society or subjecting oneself to harsh living.

- It is not those enticing or seducing things that make us do immoral things and make our minds stressed in turn; rather it is our own defiled minds (defilements can vary from vile to just being ignorant of the true nature of the world) making us do immoral things.
- One with a purified mind can live in the most seductive place and yet not be perturbed.
- But to get there, one needs **some self-control** to stay away from such extremes initially. **Learning pure Dhamma is the only way to break through that first barrier.** Once the *Sotāpanna* stage is attained, one will never go back.

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18.15 List of Pāli words with diacritical mark

Pāli characters with diacritical mark

Ā	Ī	Ū	Ṅ	Ṁ	Ñ	Ṭ	Ḍ	Ṇ	Ḷ	Ṃ
ā	ī	ū	ṅ	ṁ	ñ	ṭ	ḍ	ṇ	ḷ	ṃ

Ā ā Ī ī Ū ū Ṅ ṅ Ṁ ṁ Ñ ñ Ṭ ṭ Ḍ ḍ Ṇ ṇ Ḷ ḷ Ṃ ṃ

The Pāli word "xxxx" is in between two "|"s — i.e. "|xxxx|" to prevent replacement when "Find and Replace" is carried out.

Pāli word	Pāli word with Diacritical Mark	
|abhijja|	abhijjā [abhijjhā]	Abhijjā [Abhijjhā]
|abhinna|	abhiññā	Abhiññā
|adinava|	ādīnava	Ādīnava
|adinnadana|	adinnādāna	Adinnādāna
|ahara|	āhāra	Āhāra
|anagami|	anāgāmī	Anāgāmī
|anapana|	ānāpāna	Ānāpāna
|anapanasati|	ānāpānasati	Ānāpānasati
|apaya|	apāya	Apāya
|apo|	āpo	Āpo
|arupa|	arūpa	Arūpa
|asava|	āsava	Āsava
|asavakkhaya|	āsavakkhaya	Āsavakkhaya
|avijja|	avijjā	Avijjā
|ayatana|	āyatana	Āyatana
|bhavana|	bhāvanā	Bhāvanā
|bhuta|	bhūta	Bhūta
|ditthi|	diṭṭhi	Diṭṭhi
|jati|	jāti	Jāti

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|jhana|	jhāna	Jhāna
|kamesu miccacara|	kāmesu micchācāra	Kāmesu micchācāra
|maha|	mahā	Mahā
|mula|	mūla	Mūla
|musavada|	musāvāda	Musāvāda
|nana|	ñāṇa	Ñāṇa
|nibbana|	nibbāna	Nibbāna
|nikaya|	nikāya	Nikāya
|niramisa|	nirāmisa	Nirāmisa
|pali|	pāli	Pāli
|panatipata|	pāṇātipātā	Pāṇātipātā
|panna|	paññā	Paññā
|parusavaca|	parusāvācā [pharusāvācā]	Parusāvācā [Pharusāvācā]
|patisambhida|	patisambhidā	Patisambhidā
|patisandhi|	paṭisandhi	Paṭisandhi
|pisunavaca|	pisuṇāvācā	Pisuṇāvācā
|piti|	pīti	Pīti
|punna|	puñña	Puñña
|raga|	rāga	Rāga
|ragakkhaya|	rāgakkhaya	Rāgakkhaya
|rupa|	rūpa	Rūpa
|saddha|	saddhā	Saddhā
|sakadagami|	sakadāgāmī	Sakadāgāmī
|salayatana|	saḷāyatana	Saḷāyatana
|samadhi|	samādhi	Samādhi
|samma|	sammā	Sammā

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|sampappalapa|	sampappalāpa	Sampappalāpa
|samsara|	saṃsāra	Saṃsāra
|samuppada|	samuppāda	Samuppāda
|sankhara|	saṅkhāra	Saṅkhāra
|sankhata|	saṅkhata	Saṅkhata
|sanna|	saññā	Saññā
|satipatthana|	satipaṭṭhāna	Satipaṭṭhāna
|sotapanna|	sotāpanna	Sotāpanna
| suddhaṭṭhaka| (Sinhala) |suddhatthaka| (Pali)	suddhāshtaka suddhaṭṭhaka	Suddhāshtaka Suddhaṭṭhaka
|tanha|	taṇhā	Taṇhā
|theravada|	theravāda	Theravāda
|upadana|	upādāna	Upādāna
|vacī|	vacī	Vacī
|vayo|	vāyo	Vāyo
|vedana|	vedanā	Vedanā
|vicikiccha|	vicikicchā	Vicikicchā
|vinnana|	viññāṇa	Viññāṇa
|vipāka|	vipāka	Vipāka
|vyapada|	vyāpāda	Vyāpāda
|tipitaka|	tipiṭaka	Tipiṭaka
|paticca|	paṭicca	Paṭicca
|sankhata|	saṅkhata	Saṅkhata
|vithi|	vīthi	Vīthi
|tilakkhana|	tilakkhaṇa	Tilakkhaṇa
|vipāka|	vipāka	Vipāka

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18.16 Mars Curiosity Photos Suggest Life May Have Existed on Red Planet

"A careful study of images taken by the NASA rover Curiosity has revealed intriguing similarities between ancient sedimentary rocks on Mars and structures shaped by microbes on Earth. The findings suggest, but do not prove, that life may have existed earlier on the Red Planet":

WebLink: NBCNEWS: Mars Curiosity Photos Suggest Life May Have Existed on Red Planet

Here is the pdf of the paper just published that proposed the hypothesis:

WebLink: LIBERTPUB: Life on Mars Hypothesis-Noffke-Astrobilogy-2015

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18.17 Recent Publications on Benefits of Meditation

There have been an accelerated activity in studying the benefits of meditation on the brain and on physical health in general. Here are some very recent publications:

- Scientific American November 2014 (volume 311, Number 5) cover story is "Mind of the Meditator", by M. Ricard et al. : WebLink: PDF File: Ricard-Mind of the Meditator- Scientific American – November 2014
- A paper that just came out online in early November (in the journal *Cancer*) reports that the WebLink: WIKI: Telomeres – the protein caps at the end of our chromosomes that determine how quickly a cell ages – stayed the same length in cancer survivors who meditated or took part in support groups over a three-month period: WebLink: Carlson-Mindfulness based Cancer recovery-2014

I have discussed the effects of changing habits on the brain (which is more related to insight meditation): see, "Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits." Insight meditation can be expected to have much more significant changes in the brain as well as in physical health. But such studies have not been conducted yet. Selected references on research studies (2011-2012) and books related to meditation can be found in that post; there have been many more publications since then.

I was surprised to come across the following article in the prestigious journal "Science" which, using real time input from 5000 people all over the world, confirmed what the Buddha said 2500 years ago: that a wandering mind is an unhappy mind; see, WebLink: PDF File: A wandering mind is an unhappy mind-Science-Killingsworth-2010.

Much merits to Neranga Abeyasinghe and his family for sending me the second publication.

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18.18 Laniakea: Our home supercluster

Superclusters – regions of space that are densely packed with galaxies – are the biggest structures in the Universe. But scientists have struggled to define exactly where one supercluster ends and another begins. Now, a team based in Hawaii has come up with a new technique that maps the Universe according to the flow of galaxies across space. Redrawing the boundaries of the cosmic map, they redefine our home supercluster and name it Laniakea, which means 'immeasurable heaven' in Hawaiian (**from Nature Video**)

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Laniakea: Our home supercluster

- It amazing to see how unfathomably vast our "world" is, even though this is only a small part of even our universe. However, imagine this together with uncountable worlds teeming with life, that we are not aware of! This is why the Buddha said not to spend time exploring the details of this "world". There is no end to it, either spacewise or timewise.
- But we need to keep in mind that only human minds can even comprehend such things. If we are to be born an animal or worse this kind of thinking is not possible, and we will get trapped in such worlds for unimaginably long times. Thus what we need to do is to take advantage of the brief time we have in this life to comprehend the true nature of 'this world", i.e., *anicca*, *dukkha*, *anatta*, and to become free of it.

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18.19 Think Outside the Box!

1. Here is an interesting presentation on the question of what motivates people. Embedded in this presentation is the fact that without self-motivation coming from self-satisfaction, it is hard to examine things from different perspectives. It works the other way too: new insights in turn provide motivation:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Dan Pink: The puzzle of motivation

- One of my goals has been to help others to achieve the same exhilarating experience that I have had learning and practising pure Dhamma. It cannot be matched by any other experience.

2. Many people do things just because others do, and follow the "standard practices". In following Buddha Dhamma too, many just do what their parents or other "established authorities" do. It may be a good idea to pause and re-examine some deeply-embedded ideas. Each person may have his/her own set of "beliefs".

- Some think it is enough to say some precepts and may be chant or listen to chantings to follow the Path.
- Others think it is silly to do those exact same things. And what needs to be done is to learn *Abhidhamma* at the deepest level.
- I think there is a value in each, if done properly. And what needs to be given priority in one's practice should be in line with one's own preferences, but the horizons need to be expanded to look into other aspects once-in-a-while and see whether there is something to be gained from those too. Our perspectives change as we make progress.

3. Yet, no matter what one does, real progress cannot be even STARTED without understanding the main message of the Buddha: the true nature of this world, i.e., *anicca, dukkha, anatta.*

- It makes a huge difference between the interpretation of *anicca* as "impermanence" or "not being able to maintain to one's satisfaction". Same with *anatta* as "no-self" or "one ends up truly helpless trying to seek happiness in this rebirth process".
- See, "Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations" and the follow-up posts.

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18.20 There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!

January 20, 2016: A new study on household bugs added (below the video)

1. Before the simple microscope was invented in the late 1500's, people could see only those animals visible to the naked eye. Life seemed to explode when Van Leeuwenhoek reported the discovery of micro-organisms in 1676; he first reported numerous "microscopic creatures" in a glass of water.

With the new scientific instruments we can "see" even more minute lifeforms:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth

2. A new study reveals that there are numerous species of bugs — not counting the actual number – that live in a house (which has only a few humans):

WebLink: EUREKALERT.ORG: First study of arthropods in US homes finds huge biodiversity

The pdf file of the publication: WebLink: PDF File: Bertone-Arthropods of the great indoors-peerj-2016

3. The number of people on this Earth is insignificantly small compared to the number of other beings (seen and unseen), or even just the animals. As the above video shows, there are a huge number of living beings even on a human body; imagine how many would be on the body of an unclean animal. This is why the Buddha said it is extremely difficult to get a human birth; see, "How the Buddha Described the Chance of Rebirth in the Human Realm."

4. It must be noted that Buddha's disciples (and probably other *Hindu yogis*) were able to "see" such microscopic creatures with their *abhiññā* powers. There is a story in the *Tipiṭaka* about a *bhikkhu* with *abhiññā* powers (but not yet attained *Arahanthood*) once focused his powers to a glass of water that he was about to drink and saw a multitude of tiny creatures. He kept trying to filter them out and was getting distressed. The Buddha saw this and told the *bhikkhu* that it is not possible to live in this world without hurting other beings, but that does not count as an immoral act since the intention is not to hurt.

- For example, if we have a wound on the head, we have to apply medication and get it healed; otherwise one may even die from that. Yet, numerous tiny creatures on the wound die when we apply the medication. There is nothing we can do to avoid it unless we are willing to risk our own life.
- But the point is that this single human life is much more "worthy" than all those creatures multiplied many times over; see, "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma."
- This is an important point because many people get stressed over even cleaning their house for the fear of killing insects. But if we do not keep the house clean, those insects will multiply and make the problem even bigger. One always need to look at things with a deeper understanding. The best thing to do is to keep the house clean so that insects are not attracted in the first place.
- It is important to clarify these concepts, because it is difficult to attain any kind of calmness (*samādhi*) in the mind if one's mind is agitated by such things as "Am I sitting on some unseen tiny insects and killing them?". As long as our intent is not directed to willfully taking another life with hatred, there will not be any negative consequences.

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18.21 News Article on Robin Williams and Buddhist Meditation

I have not read the books written by the author of this following news article, so I cannot comment on his books. But I thought this sad news about Robin Williams illustrates the concept of *anicca* (that one cannot maintain anything to one's satisfaction in this world and that there is hidden suffering). He had more than enough money and fame, but apparently he was depressed in the latter years.

- Having a peaceful mind cannot be matched by any amount of money or fame; see, "First Noble Truth – A Simple Explanation of One Aspect."
- According to the Buddha, the suffering is proportional to the craving. Getting old is more stressful for those who have enjoyed beauty, fame, power, etc. But the inevitability of old age and dying is common to us all.

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Aging Stars of the Golden Age

- Buddhist meditation is primarily on understanding the true nature of the world and that hidden suffering may come out unexpectedly; that understanding itself makes one have a peaceful mind; see, "1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation."
- When depression or old age hits, the mind gets weak. Thus one should preferably start when the mind is sound and healthy.
- Suicide can only make things worse in the "long term" in the rebirth process. It is never too late to start at any stage. Human life is rare and should not be wasted at any stage.

Article: Meditation Isn't Enough: A Buddhist Perspective on Suicide

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18.22 World Historical Timeline

It will be convenient to have a timeline of the major world events that I can refer to in my posts. Please let me know any errors that you may see. My goal is to provide a consistent and accurate timeline.

Note: I used c. to denote *circa* or about

I have added descriptive links to some events, and will try to add more links in the future.

Date	Event
Before 10k BCE	WebLink: WIKI: Last Ice Age
3.1k BCE	First king of Egypt, King Menes
2.5k BCE	WebLink: WIKI: Mohenjo Daro civilization in India
2.1k - 1.6k BCE	WebLink: WIKI: The Xia Dynasty of China
Before 1.7k BCE	Abraham came to Jerusalem from Ur (Old Testament)
1.4k BCE	City of Troy, kingdom of Crete, and other Greek cities
1.4k - 0.9k BCE	Olmec civilization in Mexico
776 BCE	First Olympiad
558-530 BCE	Cyrus ruled North India
Until 536 BCE	Daries I, II, III ruled North India; until Chandagupta, Persian and Greek kings ruled North India
563-483 BCE	**Buddha Gotama**
470-399 BCE	Philosopher Socrates
538 BCE	Old Testament was written
424-348 BCE	Plato: First Western philosopher whose writings survived intact
384 - 322 BCE	Aristotle: student of Plato and teacher of Alexander the Great
c. 333 BCE	Emperor Alexander's Empire peaks
323 - 325 BCE	Alexander the Great in India
268-231 BCE	**Emperor Asoka ruled North India**
307-276 BCE	King Devanampiyatissa in Sri Lanka
247 BCE	Ven. Mahinda in Anuradhapura, Sri Lanka
41 BCE	Beginning of the Roman Empire

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Date	Event
29 BCE	Tipiṭaka written down in Sri Lanka
6–4 BC to 30–33 AD	**Jesus of Nazareth or Jesus Christ**
31 BCE	Augustus becomes the first Roman Emperor and ruled until 14 CE
c. 150-250 CE	WebLink: WIKI: Life of Nagarjuna; considered to be the founder of Mahayana Buddhism
After 200 CE	Roman empire starts to decline
4th century CE	Buddhism introduced to Korea
380 CE	Christianity became the official religion in Roman empire
5th century CE	Burma adopts Theravāda Buddhism
412-434 CE	Buddhaghosa arrives in Sri Lanka and writes Visuddhimagga
552 CE	Buddhism enters Japan from Korea
589 CE	First Chinese commentaries written
586 CE	Beginning of the Dark Ages in Europe with the decay of the Roman empire
6th century CE	First diffusion of Buddhism in Tibet
570-632 CE	**Prophet Muhammad**
622 CE - (1258-1492) CE	WebLink: WIKI: Islamic Golden Age
618-907 CE	Chinese T'ang dynasty; golden age of Buddhism in China
1215 CE	King John signs the Magna Carta granting rights to English citizens
1280	WebLink: WIKI: Eyeglasses invented in Italy
c. 1420 - c. 1600	Renaissance in Europe starting in Florence, Italy
1450	Gutenberg in Germany invents the printing press
1492	Modern Age begins with the arrival of Columbus in America
1564–1642	Galileo Galilei
1596–1650	Rene Descartes
1610	Galelio announces observation of mountains on the Moon and the existence of four planets.

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Date	Event
1642	Adding machine invented by Blaise Pascal
1643–1727	Isaac Newton
c. 1650 - c. 1800	WebLink: WIKI: European "Enlightenment"
1662	Fermat's Principle of Least Time
1678	Huygens' wave theory
1687	Newton published Principia Mathematica
1688	English revolution
1698	Steam engine invented by Thomas Savery
1749–1827	P.S. de Laplace
1774	Priestly isolates oxygen
1776	America declares independence from England
1789	French revolution period
1791	Steamboat invented by John Fitch
1798	Vaccination invented by Edward Jenner
1804	Locomotive invented by Richard Trevithick
1809–1882	Charles Darwin
1816	Huygens–Fresnel principle explaining light interference
1821	Faraday demonstrates the principle of the electric motor
1822	Charles Babbage designs his first mechanical computer
1826	Photography invented by Joseph Nicephore Niepce
1834	Refrigerator invented by Jacob Perkins
1835	Morse code invented by Samuel Morse
1837	American Samuel Morse invented telegraph
1842	Anaesthesia invented by Crawford Long
1843	Typewriter invented by Charles Thurber

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Date	Event
1846	Rotary printing press invented by Richard M. Hoe
1859	Charles Darwin publishes The Origin of Species
1868	Poisson explained Young's double slit experiment with Huygens–Fresnel principle
1869	Mendeleev produces the Periodic Table
1873	Maxwell states the laws of electro-magnetic radiation
1877	Phonograph invented by Thomas Alva Edison;Microphone invented by Emile Berliner
1878	Edison invents the incandescent lamp
1883	First skyscraper built in Chicago (ten stories)
1888	Hertz produces radio waves
1893	Wireless communication invented by Nikola Tesla
1895	Diesel engine invented by Rudolf Diesel
1898	Remote control invented by Nikola Tesla
1900	Planck develops quantum theory
1901	Vacuum cleaner invented by Hubert Booth
1903	Powered airplane invented by Wilbur Wright and Orville Wright
1905	Einstein proved that photon is a particle
1905	Einstein's Theory of Relativity
1907	Color photography invented by Auguste and Louis Lumiere
1908	Henry Ford mass-produces the Model T
1919	London to Paris air service begins
1923	Sound film invented by Lee DeForest
1923	Edwin Hubble discovers the first galaxy other than Milky Way
1928	Antibiotics, penicillin invented by Alexander Fleming
1937	Jet engine invented by Frank Whittle and Hans von Ohain
1937	Alan Turing develops the concept of a theoretical computing machine

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Date	Event
1945	The atomic bomb
1951	Nuclear power reactor invented by Walter Zinn
1957	Sputnik I and Sputnik II: Sputnik I and Sputnik II are launched by the Russians
1958	The first integrated circuit, or silicon chip, is produced by the US Jack Kilby & Robert Noyce
1960	Laser invented by Theodore Harold Maiman
1961	Uri Gagarin is the first man in space
1965	The Big Bang theory confirmed by Penzias and Wilson
1969	Neil Armstrong sets foot on the moon
1971	E-mail invented by Ray Tomlinson
1971	Floppy Disk invented by David Noble with IBM
1973	Ethernet invented by Bob Metcalfe and David Boggs
1973	Personal computer invented by Xerox PARC
1983	Camcorder invented by Sony
1990	World Wide Web invented by Tim Berners-Lee
2001	WebLink: WIKI: World center attack
2001	Digital satellite radio
2003	WebLink: WIKI: Completion of the Human Genome Project
2008	WebLink: NASA: Discovery of ice on Mars
2014	First comet landing
2014	WebLink: NASA completes a successful test flight of Orion spacecraft for future trips to Mars
2014	WebLink: INTERNETLIVESTATS: Number of websites on the internet reached 1 billion

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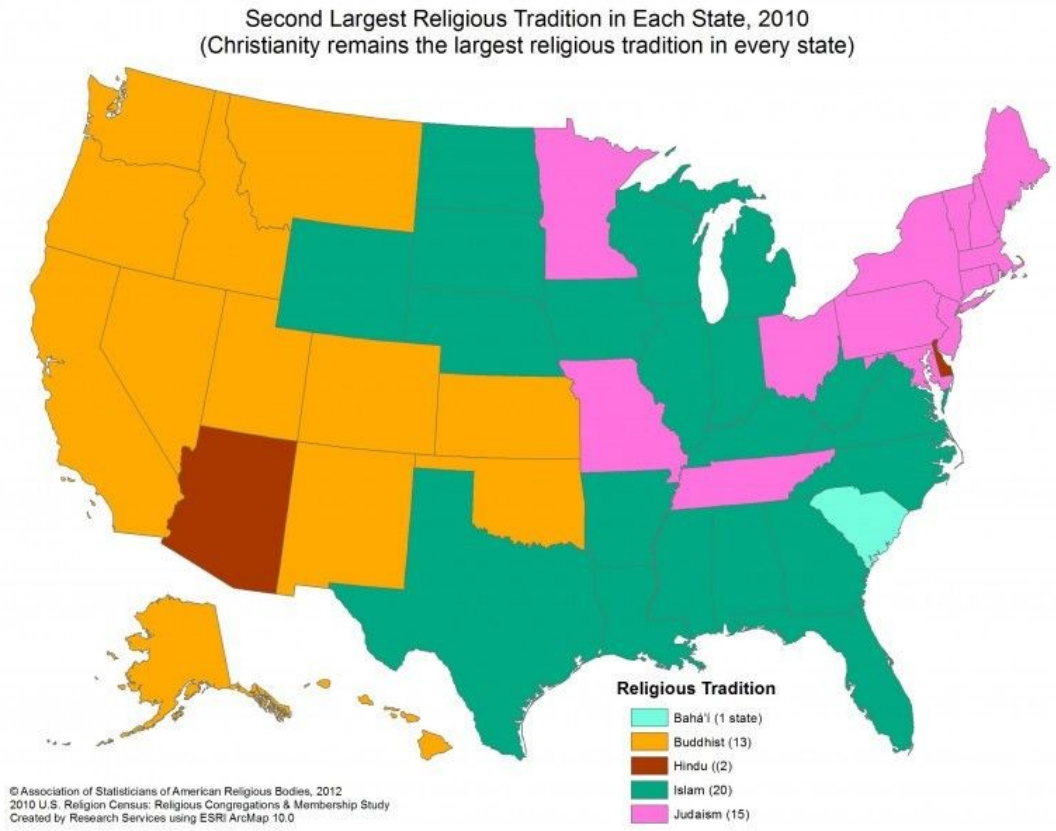
18.23 Second Largest Religion by State in the US

The second largest religion by state in the United States (2012):



WebLink: BOINGBOING: Christianity is the top Religion

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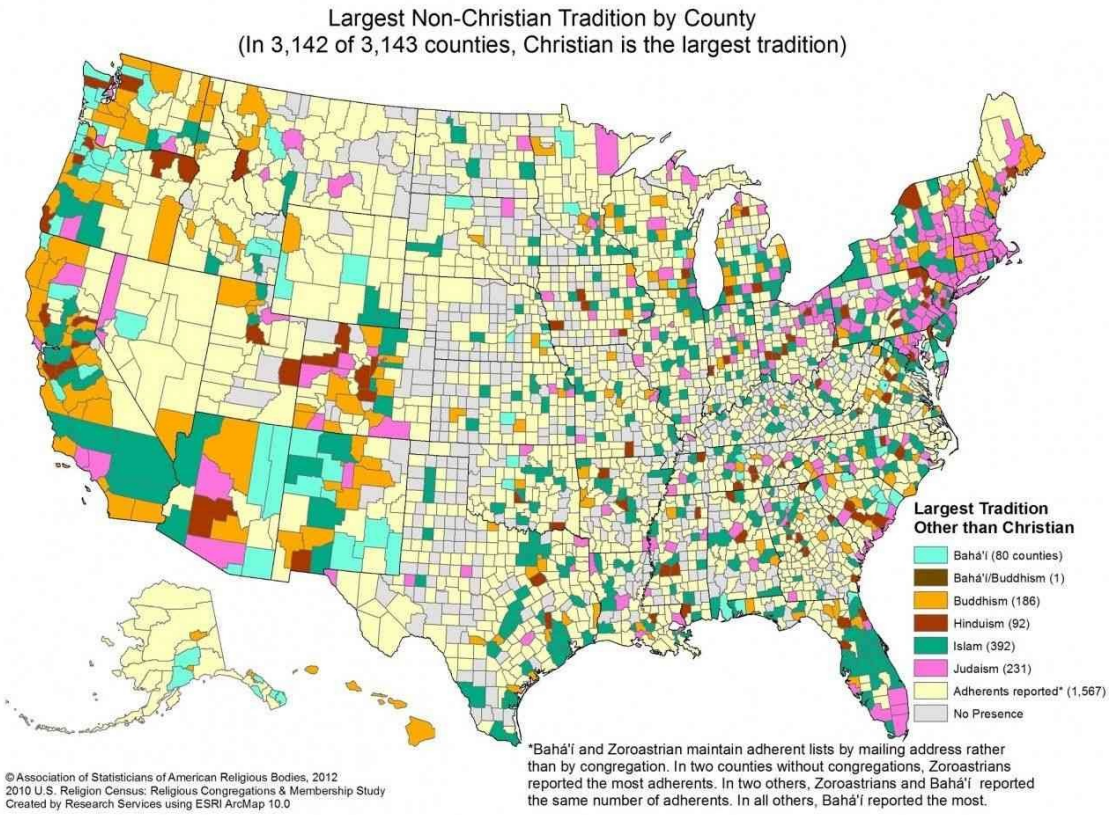

However, Buddha Dhamma is not a religion, in the sense of providing a set of guidelines to live by. It is about the natural laws of nature. Any person of any religious faith (or no faith in any religion, i.e., atheist) can follow Dhamma and benefit. All religions are about leading a good moral life, but Buddha Dhamma describes a much more comprehensive "world view" where this life of 100 years is just a blip.

If one becomes convinced of the truth of the Buddha's world view, i.e., that this life is not the only we had or we will have, and that there are consequences to one's actions, and the only way to get relief from inevitable suffering at least at the old age and death is to purify one's mind, then the person is a Buddhist. It is all in one's mind. No one else is tracking one's progress, and no one else can purify one's own mind.

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18.24 Introduction to "Rebirth by Francis Story" – Ian Stevenson

The following are the scanned pages from the book, "Rebirth-as Doctrine and Experience" by Francis Story. The first scan is an inside cover page, and the rest are the Introduction pages by Ian Stevenson. Dr. Stevenson mentions that he is a Buddhist on page 3. The whole introduction is insightful.

WebLink: PDF File: Introduction-Stevenson

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18.25 Thirty One Planes of Existence

Here is a video from Carl Sagan to get an idea how vast our "detectable universe" is:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Carl Sagan "100 Billion Galaxies each W/100 Billion Stars"

The "world view" of the Buddha is not merely about the living beings on this planet. Our Solar system is one of an infinite number of "world systems" (planetary systems). In EACH planetary system with life (scientists have not found even one yet; but they are out there!), there are 31 "planes of existence". As we find out below, we can "see" only two of these realms: our human realm and the animal realm. Thus our "world" is much more complex than even the present-day science believes. As some of you may already know, science cannot account for 95% of the mass of the universe, which they label "dark energy" and "dark matter". This is why I say that the Buddha transcended "this world". He was able to "see" the whole of existence: see "Godel's Incompleteness Theorem" under "Dhamma and Science".

Now, it is not easy to describe the 31 planes of existence in a short essay. Therefore, I will use a visual to simplify things a bit.

Imagine a sphere with 31 shells, with a small sphere in the middle. Thus the total volume of the big sphere is completely filled by the center sphere and surrounding shells. The 31 sections represent the 31 planes of existence. I emphasize that this is just a visual. The reality is different. For example, animal and human realms co-exist in reality. Also, both time and space are infinite in reality.

1. The innermost sphere represent the Niraya (hell) where there is non-stop suffering; next is the animal realm. Going outward there are two more realms where suffering is higher than at the human realm (the fifth shell). The sixth through eleventh shells represent the realms of the devas (wrongly translated as gods by many), beings who enjoy higher level of mundane happiness and no suffering. These innermost 11 shells represent the kamaloka, where all five physical sense faculties are present.

2. The next 16 shells represent realms where only two physical sense faculties (eye and ear) are active. These beings have very fine (less dense) bodies. These are called rūpa lokas.

3. The last 4 shells represent the arūpa lokas, where beings have ultra fine bodies and only the mind faculty; no physical senses.

4. In rūpa and arūpa lokas, the beings are in jhānic states. These states can be attained by humans and thus a humans can "temporarily live" in those lokas by attaining jhānā. The 16 realms in the rūpa loka correspond to the four lower jhānā, and the 4 realms in the arūpa loka correspond to the higher four jhānā.

5. Any living being (including each of us) has been in all realms in this beginning-less saṃsāra. We have been in the niraya (hell) and we have been at the highest (except on arūpa loka which can be accessed only by Anāgāmīs or Non-Returners). One time the Buddha pointed to a bunch of ants on the ground and told bhikkhus that each of those ants had lived in a Brahma loka. The saṃsāra is that long; there is no discernible beginning.

6. Above the human realm, there is no suffering (except at death, which is inevitable). However, unless one has achieved at least the Stream Entry (Sotāpanna) stage, even a being at the highest level can fall to any lower level, and thus will end up in the niraya (hell) at some point; once there one will spend a long agonizing time there and eventually come out. Each of us have done this many times over. I will explain the cause of births in different realms in terms of "kamma seeds" in upcoming posts.

7. So, each living being just moves from one realm to another, but spends most time in the four lower worlds, mainly because once fallen there it is hard to come out. This "sansaric wandering" is the critical point to think about and comprehend.

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8. As one moves away from the center the level of suffering decreases, and level of mundane pleasure increases up to the 11th realm. After that in the rūpa and arūpa lokas it is mainly the jhānic pleasures, not the sense pleasures.

9. The human realm is the only one from which one can attain Nibbāna. Nibbāna, in this model, corresponds to getting out of all 31 shells, out of the big sphere; no more rebirth in any of the 31 realms. Nibbāna is where the permanent sukha or nirāmisa sukha, is. When one attains Nibbāna or Arahanthood, he/she looks just like any other human, but has no attachments to any worldly things. He still has some kamma vipāka to pay off from the kamma seed that he was born with. When that kammic power is used up, he dies and is not reborn because there are no kamma seeds left to start a new birth. He/she is in *Parinibbāna* with *nirāmisa sukha*.

10. Can we taste Nibbānic "pleasure"?. Yes. We can taste it in increments, even below the Stream Entry stage. This is nirāmisa sukha, the "pleasure of giving up worldly things". This nirāmisa sukha has "quantum jumps" at the four stages of Nibbāna: Stream Entry, Once-Returner, Non-Returner, Arahant. Thus when one is on the Path, one can experience nirāmisa sukha at varying degrees, all the way to Nibbānic bliss, during this very lifetime.

11. All these 31 realms are located in our solar system (Chakrawata), and are associated with the Earth. There are a great number of such Chakrawata (planetary systems) in existence at all times with living beings. These are in clusters of small (galaxies?), medium (universes?), and large (multiverse?) "world systems". But none is permanent. They come into being and eventually perish. Within the past 100 years or so, scientists have confirmed the existence of billions of planetary systems within galaxies in our universe, and are now exploring the possibility of the existence of multiple universes (multiverse).

The other big factor to take into account is that we have been born in almost all of these realms in our sansāric journey that has no traceable beginning. All of us have been bouncing around "inside the sphere" (mainly in the inner ones) from a beginning that is not even discernible to a Buddha.

Next, "Sansāric Time Scale", ……..

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18.26 Curiosity Rover finds Crater probably was once a Giant Martian Lake

According to Buddha Dhamma we are alone in the universe. These preliminary results from the NASA Curiosity Rover may not hold up in the end as evidence that life existed on Mars. But there will many more to come, especially if technology is developed to explore distant stars.

WebLink: YOUTUBE: Curiosity rover finds crater it is exploring was once a giant Martian LAKE

Here is a report that came out today, Dec 9, 2014, which has another video by NASA:

WebLink: DAILYMAIL: Curiosity rover finds crater it is exploring was once a giant Martian LAKE

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18.27 Did Not Get a Response to Your Comment?

July 18, 2016

I reply to each and every question that comes through "Comments" under each post.

Several of my replies bounced back within the past few weeks, including one today because the email address of the sender was not typed correctly. Please make sure that you type your email address correctly.

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18.28 Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory

October 16, 2015

When we discuss the *Aggañña Sutta*, that describes how the Earth and life originated it will become very clear that the basis of current theories on "human evolution" is completely wrong. However, they are consistent with Buddha Dhamma in the sense that species will exist only when conditions for their existence prevail.

- The current scientific theory is that human originated in Africa and then migrated to other parts of the world, starting about 50,000 years ago. Recent evidence just published in the prestigious journal Nature provides evidence of the existence of humans like us in China some 80,000 to 100,000 years ago. Below is the news article from CNN. I will add the paper from Nature when it becomes available:

WebLink: CNN: Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory

- In this context, I must also point out that there are other archeological evidence for the existence of humans in Sri Lanka and India dating back to 30,000 years and earlier:

WebLink: WIKI: Balangoda Man

****

December 18, 2015

The following post says, "..We're quickly learning that Europe and Africa may not provide the best model for us to use to interpret the fossil record of East Asia. For example, Denisova Cave is as far east as we've found the Neanderthals, and they don't seem to have occupied Siberia permanently. This is unlike Europe, where they lived until about 40,000 years ago. And so far, no Neanderthals have been found in China or anywhere further South of Denisova Cave.

The fact is that we've really only scratched the surface in East Asia.."
Read more at: WebLink: PHYS.ORG: Bone suggests 'Red Deer Cave people' a mysterious species of human

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XIX Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma

March 13, 2018

This section will discuss two issues:

1. **A new interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM) based on non-locality is presented based on Feynman's ideas.** Concepts like wave-particle duality, observer effect, are not needed. Furthermore, complex interpretations like the "Many-Worlds interpretation" are avoided. All existing experimental data will be shown to be consistent with this interpretation.
2. **A deeper understanding of how *kamma* automatically lead to corresponding *kamma vipāka* in Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma), becomes clear with this interpretation.**

- Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma – Introduction
- Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness
  - Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?
  - The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics
- Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation
  - What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?
  - Photons Are Particles Not Waves
  - Basis of the Proposed Interpretation – Feynman's Technique in QED
    - Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment
    - Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"
    - "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time

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19.1 Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma – Introduction

March 13, 2018; revised January 9, 2019; November 15, 2019

Introduction

1. This section will discuss two issues:

a. **A new interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM) based on non-locality will be presented, where wave-particle duality is shown to be an incorrect and unnecessary assumption.** All existing experimental data are shown to be inter-consistent with this interpretation.

b. **A deeper understanding of how *kamma* automatically lead to corresponding *kamma vipāka* in Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma), can be realized with this interpretation.**

Relevant Work of Richard Feynman

2. I started working on this project to provide a new interpretation of quantum mechanics based on some new and exciting experimental observations within the past 20 years or so. My goal is to provide a simple explanation with only a few mathematical equations. This work is an extension of the work of the late physicist Richard Feynman.

- To understand this material, one needs to have at least a high-school level physics background. Only those who have some background QM can follow the material here.
- **I would NOT recommend anyone to start learning QM to follow this section.** It is better to spend that time to learn Buddha Dhamma. But of course, anyone may be able to get a general idea. Just read the first several posts and see.
- At the end of this project, I believe that a deep connection to Buddha Dhamma can be made, especially regarding how *kamma vipāka* materialize naturally due to one's *kamma*.

Going "Against the Grain" of Scientific Consus

3. When I started working on this project over two years ago, I had conversations with Professor Gayanath Fernando and we tried to get a paper published on the proposed interpretation of QM. However, we were unable to convince the reviewers, and the paper did not get published. I am attaching the pdf of the last version here: "WebLink: PDF file download: A Self Consistent Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics Based on Nonlocality."

- But it got rejected from several journals, because physicists refuse to believe that the "light speed barrier" can be broken: Einstein's relativity theory says nothing can propagate faster than light.
- Our point is that nothing actually "travels" between the two "connected electrons". They are intrinsically connected.
- However, it is ironic that non-locality of Nature was firmly established in 2015, as we discussed in the above paper.

Fundamental Ideas

4. Let me try to give the gist of the mechanism: Two electrons can be created simultaneously with two opposing spins (say A with spin up and B with spin down). Then they can be sent to opposite ends even across the universe, and they remain "entangled".

- What does it mean by saying the A and B remain "entangled" even when separated by great distances? That means if the spin of particle A flips, then the spin of B will flip AT THE SAME TIME. It is as if they can interact with each other across the universe instantaneously.

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- The basic idea is that the two electrons will stay "connected" no matter how far they are apart. This idea is called "non-locality".
- More information on the basic idea at: "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected."

Kammic Influences Have No Space Limitations

5. **I want to develop this idea to show that *kammic* energy has instantaneous influence across the universe. If inert particles have this "connectedness" in Nature, it is natural to extend it to the mental realm.**

- The bridge is the *kammic* energy (also called *viññāṇa*). We create these energies in our minds with *javana citta*. That is a deep subject matter in *Abhidhamma*; see, "Nāma & Rūpa to Nāmarūpa."

6. In this section, I will also discuss the implications of this new interpretation of QM for Buddha Dhamma and try to provide some key ideas. A key issue that keeps coming up in the discussion forum is what intention in *kamma* is, and how the Nature "knows" what the connection of the person committing the *kamma* to the person affected by that *kamma*.

- For example, consider person X who was adopted and brought up by foster parents soon after birth, and is not even aware that he was adopted. Suppose X kills his biological father later on, of course, without knowing that it was his father. It is still an *anantariya kamma*. Since it is the Nature that automatically manages *kamma/kamma vipāka*, how would the Nature know the connection between those two people?

Confirmation From Recent Experiments In QM

7. That is the crucial question on which we may get some clues from QM. Non-locality is a key feature of the proposed interpretation of QM. I will explain what is meant by non-locality in future posts (see also, "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected"). Non-locality of Nature automatically enforces *kamma/kamma vipāka*.

- Of course, the Buddha had not mentioned what this mechanism is, because, at that time, it was not possible to explain concepts like quantum entanglement.
- Furthermore, it is not necessary to know such details. But since we are at a point to be able to make this connection, it is better to do so. That could help build confidence in Buddha Dhamma.

8. I plan to write several posts in this section laying out the basic ideas and welcome comments from knowledgeable readers who are familiar with concepts in quantum mechanics. I have opened a new forum entitled "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation" at the discussion forum to discuss each post that is published.

- Anyone will be able to read these posts and also the posts at the discussion forum. However, one needs to register at the discussion forum to ask questions or make comments. Forum registration instructions at, "WebLink: General Information and Updates."
- Now, let us discuss briefly the key idea briefly behind the proposed connection of *kamma vipāka* to QM.

Intention in *Kamma* – Connection to Quantum Mechanics

1. Two key steps are relevant in evaluating how to assess a *kamma vipāka*:

i. **Which of the *dasa akusala* is the intention?** For example, it could be taking a life, stealing, harsh speech, etc. Who is affected is not involved in this step. The "*cetana*" in "*cetana ham bhikkhave*

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kamman vadami," is just which *dasa akusala* (and associated *cetasika*) are in one's mind when one is committing that *kamma*. That is all.

ii. Then the **strength of the *kammā vipāka* is based on the "level of consciousness" or "moral qualities" of the living beings affected** by that *kammā*. For example, killing a human will bring stronger *kamma vipāka* than killing an animal. In the same way, giving to an *Arahant* will be much more worthy than giving to an average human.

That is the best way to analyze any given situation.

2. In another example, in a recent discourse on *Tilakkhaṇa*, I discussed the case of a person killing a bunch of people with a bomb; see Discourse 2 in "Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses."

- His intention (*cetanā*) was to kill. Thus the *dasa akusala* involved is "*pānatipāta*," that of taking a life.
- Now to the second step. That person may not even know who was killed. By some coincidence, if the bomb killed a parent of the killer, then he would have done a *ānantariya pāpa kammā*. If an *Arahant* was killed, the same. If a *Sotāpanna* was killed, then it would not be a *ānantariya kammā*, but still equivalent to killing thousands of normal humans.
- So, it is important to understand that "*cetanā*" is which of *dasa akusala* are in one's mind when a *kamma* is committed. It could be more than one. In the case of the bomber, there is *micchā diṭṭhi*, and likely greed also, in addition to "*pānātipātā*."
- One can analyze various situations with the above two steps.

3. We know that there are five *ānantariya kammā*. Those are so grave that one will be subjected to their *vipāka*in the very next life in the *niraya* (lowest realm.) They are, killing one's mother, killing one's father, killing an *Arahant*, and injuring a Buddha, and causing schism in the *Saṅgha* (which really means trying to propagate a wrong version of the Buddha Dhamma).

- Since killing an average human is not a *ānantariya kammā*, it is clear that the "strength of the *kammā*" depends on who got killed.
- *Kamma vipāka* for committing any other offense is similar. Hurting an *Arahant* would be millionfold grave compared to hurting an average human. Thus, logically, beating an *Anāgāmi*, a *Sakadāgāmi*, a *Sotāpanna* would have corresponding levels of consequences.
- The "value of a life" depends on the "mental status" of that life-form. Any life is not the same. This is not possible to compare the value of the life of an animal with that of a human. Even among animals there are huge variations, and we can easily see that a gorilla or a dog is "more sentient" than a worm.
- However, we must keep in mind that we all had been born a lowly worm. So even though we need to keep in mind that there is a variation, we should never take the life of ANY sentient being intentionally (unnecessarily).

4. Regarding the issue of "how would one know" the status of the living person who is affected by one's actions, that does not matter. The "Nature" would know.

- This point of "we are all inter-connected" is now proven by quantum mechanics: "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected."
- That is a key factor in understanding *kammā/vipāka*. The proposed interpretation of QM can show this at an even deeper level.

5. The above discussion is a part of the post, "What is Intention in Kamma?." You may want to read that get more information.

- Another relevant post is, "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?."

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6. We will start discussing QM with the next post. These days there is so much confusion about whether a photon is a particle or a wave, i.e., "wave-particle duality" in QM. I will address the issue of wave-particle duality in the next few posts.

- We will define what is meant by a wave and what is meant by a particle. Furthermore, many people confuse a "wave function" as a "wave." A wave function is a mathematical concept that can REPRESENT the motion of a particle; it is not a wave.
- We will discuss the fact that a photon is a particle and not a wave. It does not have dual Nature (particle and wave Nature) either, even though a wave function can represent it.

As I always say, one needs to know (or define) such fundamental entities before tackling more in-depth issues. Otherwise, we will get bogged down in re-defining what is meant by a particular word in the middle of a discussion.

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19.2 Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness

March 20, 2018

Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?

The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics

19.2.1 Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?

March 20, 2018

1. Quantum mechanics (QM) has some features (quantum entanglement, Heisenberg uncertainty principle, etc), **that makes it appear "mysterious"** compared to classical physics where the predictions are intuitive and transparently deterministic.

- The "hard problem in consciousness" (discussed in philosophy) is also mysterious, just like quantum phenomena: **the question of how consciousness can arise in a brain made of inert matter.**
- When quantum mechanics was emerging in the early 1900's, many people started tying the two together, and speculating that the new found quantum theory would be able to explain how consciousness arises in the brain.

2. There have been several such QM based theories proposed to explain consciousness.

- There have been several popular books published recently that emphasize the possible role of QM in generating human consciousness (Walker, 2000; Penrose et. al.2011; Rosenblum and Kuttner, 2011; Stapp, H. 2011).
- Recent scientific activity in this area of research can be found in the review paper: "WebLink: PDF File: Neural correlates of consciousness- Koch et al- 2016."
- Another proposed approach, for example, is based on consciousness originatng in microtubules in neurons: "WebLink: PDF File: Consciousness in the universe – Hameroff and Penrose-2014."

3. Other than such activities in science, a hot topic in current philosophy is "how consciousness arises in a material brain". Most philosophers are physicalists, and believe in the "causal closure of the physical domain", i.e., all phenomena can be explained with a physical (matter) basis. For a collection of discussions with a number of philosophers, see, (Blackmore, 2005).

- As David Chalmers pointed out in 1994 at the first Tucson conference on consciousness: "The hard problem…is the question of how physical processes in the brain give rise to subjective experience" (Chalmers, 1995).
- The problem in philosophy (and in science) then is to figure out how the "subjective" consciousness arises from "objective" matter. **This is an impossible task.**

4. This key bottleneck was also emphasized by Thomas Nagel (Nagel, 1974) even earlier in his famous essay, "WebLink: PDF File: What Is It Like to Be a Bat- Nagel- 1974". As he pointed out at the end of the essay, "…it seems unlikely that any physical theory of mind can be contemplated until more thought has been given to the general problem of subjective and objective. Otherwise we cannot even pose the mind-body problem without sidestepping it" .

- The difference between "subjective" and "objective" is becoming clear with the neuroscience research done especially in the past decade, and we will discuss those new developments below. Subjectivity plays an important role in cognition (consciousness), and the question is how that can arise from an "objective" material base.

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Subjective versus Objective: Difference between Mind and Matter

1. In order to clearly state the issue that we intend to address, we need to first clarify the distinction between "objective" and "subjective".

- **Objective simply means one's own personal opinions and biases do not come into play.** It is easy to be objective about physical properties of matter: We all agree what the length, weight, density, color, etc of a given object is. We have developed standard procedures for measuring them. Therefore, no matter who makes the measurement, the same answer will result.
- Thus we all agree (unless one is color blind) that a certain rose is red; that is also objective.

2. **Then, what is subjective? Those are personal opinions that can vary from person to person.**

- For example, if you ask the opinion about politician X from many people, some will love him, some will hate him, and others will be somewhere in between.
- Same is true about politics in general, religions, foods, smells, books, movies, etc. All those are subjective.
- In Buddha Dhamma, those subjective opinions arise because different people have different "*gati*"; see, "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Asavas)".

3. Therefore, it is clear that while objective assessments are much easier to assess compared to subjective. By definition, we all cannot agree on something subjective. That is because we place different values on things, and have different opinions based on our value systems.

- But, one would think that it should be easy for science to figure out how objective assessments are made in our brains. But even that is more complex than we would think.

4. For example, neuroscience is not yet able to explain how our brains even discern a rose as "red", i.e., how inert neurons can give rise to an "experience" even if it is objective. Explaining subjective experiences is much harder.

- This root problem even in handling such basic aspects of "qualia" has been pointed out by several philosophers and scientists over the years; see, for example, Noe and Thompson (2004), Bitbol (2008), Miller (2014), Aru and Bachmann (2015), and references therein.
- As these authors point out, currently efforts are focused on investigating just *neural correlates* of consciousness; but finding *neural constitution* of consciousness (how consciousness arises), appears impossible (and it is!).
- It is impossible because consciousness is not in the physical body. It is in the mental body (*gandhabba*); see, "Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?."

5. To emphasize; Even though the color of a rose is an objective property, we still do not know how that is identified in the brain. **Still, the real subjective experience entails not only in identifying a rose as red, but also forming a feeling about that rose. And that is the really critical problem.**

- Therefore, "the actual problem of consciousness" is much more complex because the *feeling* that arises upon seeing a red-color object can be different for different people; some like red clothes to wear, for example, and some don't. **Thus it is those *feelings and perceptions* that arise due to a sensory experience that are truly subjective.**
- Until recently, neuroscience had not been able to even recognize the existence of mental attributes such as emotions, feelings, and perceptions. The availability of precision neuro-imaging methods has enabled an explosion of activity in those areas basically within the past decade; see, for example (Lindquist and Barrett, 2012; Bird and Viding, 2014; Klasen et al., 2014; Lamm and Majdandzic, 2015). However, these studies are able to point out only *neural correlates* (not *neural constitution*) of these mental qualities.

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6. Therefore, even if we solve the "hard problem" associated with discerning basic aspects of "qualia" (such as experiencing "redness of a rose"), that will still not solve the problem of the "subjective experience". *For that the neurons in each person's brain must have its own set of some special "characteristics" to provide the "subjective experience".* Yet, neurons are neurons. How can person X's neurons be different from those of person Y?

- Thus the difference between mind and matter is much deeper than just "qualia" (redness of a rose); it is those complex, very personal, feelings (happiness, sadness, greediness, hatefulness, jealousy, etc.). Because of that, our follow-up actions also become very personalized. Mind is much more complex than matter.
- The problem in trying to explain the mind phenomena with inert neurons in the brain has its root in trying to explain complex "subjective mental phenomena" with an ontologically different "objective" material base (neurons).
- The Buddha has explained that those feelings arise not in the physical body, but in the mental body (*gandhabba*).; see, "Mental Body – Gandhabba."

7. We have a thriving science and technology field because we deal objectively (and thus rationally) with inert matter in such cases. Thus we can lay out an experiment in detail and then carry it out anywhere by any team of competent scientists who design and carry out experiments objectively, and they will get the same result (within experimental uncertainties) which they all can agree on.

- Science and technology would not be able to flourish if such experiments did not produce consistent and repeatable results.

8. In any case, we are focusing on even a narrower aspect in this paper, i.e., the role of quantum mechanics.

- It is pointed out that there is no evidence for even a correlation between the mind and quantum phenomena, let alone a causal connection.
- Results of QM experiments do not depend on the "subjectivity" of the person conducting those experiments, simply because truly subjective decisions are not involved in such experiments.

9. Subjective decisions are very personalized, like voting liberal versus conservative, buying versus selling a given stock, liking versus disliking a given food, and zillions of such decisions that are truly subjective.

- **Quantum mechanical experiments do not involve any such subjective decisions, and the same result is obtained regardless of who does the experiment. Backbone of QM, as with any area in science, is the reproducibility of experimental results, and QM measurements are reproducible.**
- This is the key to realizing that quantum phenomena have nothing to do with the mind.

Both Classical and Quantum Phenomena Are Objective and Deterministic

1. Transparently "deterministic" classical physics (Newtonian mechanics) did not come even close to explaining the "subjective" consciousness. But the emergence of QM with its "unusual aspects" immediately led many to infer that it may be able to explain the equally "mysterious" consciousness.

- Since the 1920s attempts were made to rationalize the "unusual" nature of QM and ideas emerged from the physics community itself that conscious observations could affect the outcomes of an experiment (e.g., the "observer effect"); see "The 'Observer Effect' in Quantum Mechanics". Recently, such ideas have been adopted to explain the origin of consciousness itself.
- We will summarize the existing experimental results in future posts to show that there is no evidence to suggest that quantum mechanical phenomena are even related to consciousness, let alone be able to explain consciousness.

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2. It is true that quantum phenomena have characteristics that are very different from classical phenomena (described by Newtonian mechanics); **but both quantum and classical phenomena are objective.** There is no evidence of quantum phenomena having anything to do with the subjective consciousness of a human.

- The use of the phrase "non-deterministic" (or "indeterminacy") for quantum phenomena is a misleading one. It gives the impression that results of QM experiments cannot be pre-determined. That is false.
- Even though many "classical experiments" have just one outcome, that is not true in all cases. For example, in chaos theory, one can calculate only probabilities.
- Similarly, in QM experiments one can calculate only probabilities, but those predictions are ALWAYS consistent with experimental measurements. **Therefore, it is misleading to label QM phenomena as "non-deterministic".**

3. All QM experiments conducted up to date are totally objective in nature, and subjective consciousness does not play any role in these experiments. A given QM experiment may give different results based on the conditions under which the measurements are made; but if those conditions are fixed, then the results are the same regardless of who does the experiment or where it is done.

- There is no "intrinsic subjectivity" in those experiments, other than the possibility of a range of outcomes (with known probability) due to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle.
- If the same experiment is conducted under the same conditions, the same result is obtained regardless of who does the experiment; no connection to consciousness of the observer.
- We will continue this discussion in the next post, "The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics." Later on, we will discuss different types of QM experiments, including the famous double-slit experiment.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation."

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19.2.2 The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics

March 20, 2018

1. The "observer effect" — sometimes called the "measurement problem"– in quantum mechanics is defined as the problem of how (or *whether*) wave function collapse occurs. But the whole point is that there is no need for a "wave function collapse", as we explain in this post.

- Let us start with what is meant by "wave function collapse". It is always good start with the basics.
- Please make sure to read the previous post, "Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?", including the section there on "Subjective versus Objective: Difference between Mind and Matter".

2. The wave function in quantum mechanics evolves deterministically according to the Schrodinger equation as a linear superposition of different states. But actual measurements always find the physical system in a definite state. Therefore, it seems that at the time of the measurements all those multiple states should collapse to just one (the observed).

- Since an observer is needed to make a measurement (and thus "cause a collapse"), it is called the "observer effect".

3. Even if such an "observer effect" exists, just the mere decision to make a measurement does not make such a measurement "subjective" in the sense we defined the term subjective in the post, "Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?".

- There is no "measurement problem" in the sense that the "personal" mind state of an observer does not play a role; **anyone can initiate a measurement and get the same result. Furthermore, terminating a given experiment can also be achieved at random by a computer program and a conscious observer is not needed.**

4. This controversy over an "observer effect" arises in the first place because of the assumption that the wave function is "ontic", i.e., it has all the correct information about the particle in it.

- But this assumption has been rejected not only by Einstein but many others including Bell: "..Either the wavefunction, as given by the Schrodinger equation is not everything, or it is not right." (Bell, 1987, p. 201).

5. **Furthermore, this requirement to "collapse the wave function" or the involvement of an "observer" is absent in Bohmian mechanics**, a version of quantum theory discovered by Louis de Broglie in 1927 and rediscovered by David Bohm in 1952 (Bohm, 1952).

- In Bohmian mechanics a system of particles is described in part by its wave function, evolving, as usual, according to Schrodinger's equation. But this description is completed by the specification of the actual

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positions of the particles by a "pilot wave" or a "guiding wave". In Bohmian mechanics, particle trajectories can be traced in real time without the need for a "wave function collapse".

6. A key experiment that actually led to the concept of an "observer effect" is the famous "double-slit experiment".

- However, recent double-slit experiments (Kocsis et al., 2011; Schleich, et al., 2013b), where individual trajectories of particles were monitored and any possibility of a "mind effect" or "observer effect" was ruled out.
- The results of those recent experiments were shown to be consistent with the trajectories of individual particles calculated with Bohmian mechanics.

7. All possible paths are naturally described by Bohmian mechanics. Each one can be assigned a probability and experimental outcomes have been verified to be in agreement with those probabilities.

- **So, the measurements are deterministic, in the sense that when a series of measurements is made, the outcome is compatible with the predictions.** Those measurements are objective.
- A detailed description of Bohmian mechanics can be found in (Durr, Goldstein, and Zanghi, 1992).

8. Physicists have been slow to use Bohmian mechanics because it involves more work (solving the pilot wave equation), but there has been a renewed interest in recent years.

- We have done a literature survey on the Science Citation Index and found that interest in Bohmian mechanics seems to have accelerated starting around the turn of the century. The total number of publications from 1992-1999 were 52. From 2000-2005, 2006-2011, and 2012-2017 had 134, 174, and 200 papers published respectively. Thus, even though it took time to gain traction, Bohmian mechanics seems to be attracting attention now.

9. Furthermore, a series of recent papers have illustrated the beautiful connection between classical mechanics and quantum mechanics; see, for example, (Field, 2011; Taylor, 2003, Hanc et. al., 2003), which was originally pointed out by Feynman (Feynman, 1948).

- **These and other papers show how the "sum over all possible paths" by Feynman in quantum mechanics (Feynman, 1948) converges to the "path of least action" in classical mechanics at the limit h (Planck's constant) approaching zero.** Thus classical mechanics is just a limiting case of quantum mechanics.

10. Other papers have described how the Schrodinger's equation can be derived from classical mechanics; see, (de Gosson and Hiley, 2011; Field, 2011; Schleich et al., 2013a).

- The so-called "quantum weirdness" arises due to the effects of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle, which becomes non-negligible when h is non-negligible in the microscopic realm.

11. **Therefore, there is no connection to human consciousness in QM experiments.** Quantum mechanical experiments always provide consistent results that are not subject to or even related to the "conscious state" of the observer.

- The need for a "personal" or subjective conscious mind is not even needed; a computer can randomly to decide when to initiate/terminate a measurement and get the same result.

Quantum Phenomena May Be "Weird" but Nothing to Do with Mind

Quantum phenomena, just like some phenomena in relativity, seem "unusual" to us, since they were uncovered only since 1900, and are not of common occurrence. But they all involve the behavior of inert matter at small scale (quantum phenomena), and speeds approaching the speed of light (relativity). This

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unusual behavior has nothing to do with the human consciousness; that is how Nature works in the microscopic realm.

1. There are two issues that need to be separated out:

(i). Do quantum phenomena display characteristics that are very different from phenomena displayed by classical (Newtonian) systems?

(ii). Do quantum phenomena provide any evidence that they are related to mental phenomena (i.e., are they affected by the particular state of mind of the experimenter?).

2. The answer to (i) above is unequivocally "yes". The experiments that we discuss below all display characteristics that are alien to the phenomena displayed by Newtonian or classical systems.

- **However, QM is not alone in that respect.** The two theories of relativity also are applicable to phenomena that are not compatible with classical phenomena: time dilation and length contraction are obvious examples.

3. In both relativity and QM, **the mental state of the observer** is NOT involved in any such "alien phenomena".

- For example, relativity predicts that if a person takes off in a rocket, travels at speeds close to speed the light for an extended time, and comes back, he will find that those on Earth have aged much more than him. This is called time dilation.
- However, if two people travel at similar speeds for a certain time and come back, the time dilation experienced by both will be the same.
- In the same way, if any of those "weird" QM experiments are conducted by two different people, they will get the same result.

4. In both cases of QM and relativity, the results are "weird" by classical standards, but there is no involvement of the "consciousness of the observer"; and this apparent "weirdness" in QM goes away smoothly as the Plank's constant (h) becomes negligibly small (and in relativity as the speed is reduced).

- There is no "mind effect" or "observer effect" in the sense of the subjectivity of the observer affecting the results of either type of experiment; **there are no subjective decisions to be made during an experiment.**
- By definition, unless an experimenter is truly objective, the results of any experiment cannot be reproduced.

5. In other words, all quantum phenomena, as well as those explained by relativity, are objective just like classical phenomena.

- **On the other hand, mind phenomena CAN BE subjective.** As discussed earlier, when describing physical properties of matter, two people can be objective, i.e., they report the same length, weight, etc for the object. But their PERCEPTION of a given person X, or a given food or music, etc , could be very different. Those are subjective.
- For example, two people with opposing political views (A and B) may encounter a politician C on the street who has views compatible with those of A. Person A will be happy to meet C and may go up to C, shake his hands and talk to him enthusiastically. On the other hand, Person B will automatically have irritable thoughts about C and is likely to avoid C.
- What properties of neurons in A and B could lead to such huge difference in feelings and intentions (consciousness) upon seeing the same person?
- Such subjective mental states do not play a role in carrying out experiments, whether quantum or classical. But they do play critical roles in making decisions in everyday life.

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6. Therefore, those two issues need to be handled separately. Quantum phenomena have characteristics that are very different from classical phenomena; but both quantum and classical phenomena are objective. There is no evidence of quantum phenomena having anything to do with the subjective consciousness of a human.

- The crucial distinction that we need to realize here is that the phrase "non-deterministic" as applied to such QM experiments is not correct. Some measurements may not provide the exact location of a particle, for example. There could be many possible locations for that particle, but they all can be predicted with associated probabilities accurately.
- There is no "intrinsic subjectivity" in those experiments, other than the indeterminacy depicted by the Heisenberg uncertainty principle. If the same experiment is conducted under the same conditions, the same result is obtained regardless of who does the experiment; no connection to consciousness.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation."

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19.3 Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation

March 13, 2018; revised December 8, 2020

1. A new interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM) based on nonlocality and realism is presented, where wave-particle duality is shown to be an incorrect and unnecessary assumption.

- In our proposed interpretation, appropriate wave functions are established instantaneously across space per nonlocality.
- Nonlocality of Nature is hard for many to accept, but it is valid in three key experiments conducted in 2015.
- All existing experimental data, including those, are shown to be inter-consistent with this interpretation.

2. I will systematically expand the arguments given in the above paper (in #3 below) in a series of posts on the website. The following are the posts published so far. It would be helpful to read these posts first since they provide key ideas.

What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?

Photons Are Particles, Not Waves

Basis of the Proposed Interpretation – Feynman's Technique in QED

- Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment
- Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"
- "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time

It may be a good idea to read the following posts as well:

- Will Quantum Mechanics Be Able to Explain Consciousness?
- The Observer Effect in Quantum Mechanics

3. When I started working on this project over two years ago, I had conversations with Professor Gayanath Fernando. We tried to get a paper published on the proposed interpretation of QM.

- However, we were unable to convince the reviewers, and the paper did not get published. The pdf of a recent version can be downloaded here: "WebLink: PDF File: A Self Consistent Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics Based on Nonlocality."
- The reviewers' main objection of the reviewers seemed to be the nonlocality argument, and some were reluctant to reject the "wave-particle duality." I will be discussing those and other issues in detail in this section.
- However, it is ironic that the non-locality of Nature was firmly established in 2015, as we discussed in the above paper.

4. I plan to write a series of posts in this section and welcome comments from knowledgeable readers who are familiar with concepts in quantum mechanics. I have opened a new forum entitled, "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation" at the discussion forum in order to discuss each post that is published.

- Anyone will be able to read these posts and also the posts at the discussion forum. However, one needs to register at the forum to ask questions or make comments. Forum registration instructions can be found at, "WebLink: General Information and Updates."
- Now, let us discuss briefly the key idea briefly behind the proposed connection of *kamma vipāka* to QM.

- Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment

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- Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"
- "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time

19.3.1 What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?

March 13, 2018; revised April 18, 2020 (added video in #7)

1. Waves involve the transport of energy without transport of matter. When you drop a pebble onto a water reservoir, you can see the ripples move out. There is no displacement of water from one place to another, but the disturbance moves out.

- Therefore, a ***wave*** can be described as a disturbance that travels through a medium, transporting energy from one location (its source) to another location without transporting matter.
- On the other hand, a **particle** can move and therefore transfer matter. The most important characteristic of a particle is that its position is localized at any given time, and it is detected as a single detection event or a "single-click".
- Those are the ways waves and particles were expected to behave before the advent of quantum mechanics. But starting around the year 1900, our ideas about waves and particles became somewhat confusing, due to many drastic changes that took place for many years.

2. The fundamental concepts in quantum mechanics (QM) were worked out between roughly from 1900 to 1930. A good description of the evolution of QM within this period and beyond is given in the book "Einstein, Bohr and the Quantum Dilemma" by Andrew Whitaker (second edition, 2006).

- That book describes how the keywords like waves, particles, and wave functions related to QM evolved. Some of the old — and unnecessary — concepts like "wave-particle duality" linger on because of the impressions made at that time.
- Experiments carried out within the past 20-30 years (some key experiments within the past few years), show that such lingering ideas on "wave-particle duality" are really an obstruction to grasping the reality revealed by QM.

3. For a long time, it was thought that light is a wave, specifically an electromagnetic wave. That idea still lingers on.

- Light consists of particles (photons.) That was firmly established only in 1986. We will discuss the next post.
- **The most distinguishing characteristic of a particle is that its detection is recorded as a single event ("a click") at the detector.**

4. However, the motion of a particle — including a photon — can be represented by a wave function, which is a mathematical function, not a wave. **A wave function is extremely useful for calculating experimental results, but it is not something that is physically real.**

- It is easier to see the differences among the terms waves, particles, and wave functions by looking at what happens when waves and particles go through two adjoining slits.

5. When normal particles that we are familiar with go through two slits and fall on a screen to make their imprints, we will see two "line images" as shown on the left in the figure below. On the other hand, a wave (like a water wave) will give rise to "fringes" as shown on the right.

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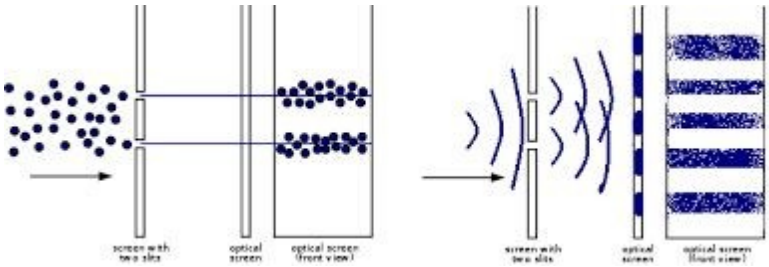

- In normal life we will see particles (say marbles) going through two large slits leading to those marbles hitting the screen as shown on the left
- With a water wave going through two slits we will see ripples giving rise to water wave crests as shown on the right.

Those are the scenarios with normal particles and normal waves.

6. If quantum particles (like electrons or photons) are going through two slits where slit opening are LARGE (say a cm or more), then we will again see the "normal particle pattern" shown on the LEFT.

- **However, if quantum particles (like electrons or photons) are going through two slits where slit opening are SMALL (say less than a mm), then we will see the "wave pattern" shown on the RIGHT.** If the aperture dimensions are of the order of h/p (where h = Planck's constant and p is the momentum of the particle), then such diffuse wave patterns can be expected.
- In such cases, those experimental results can be CALCULATED by using wave functions to represent the motion of such particles.
- However, a particle is never spread out. A given particle will always be detected at a certain point within that diffraction pattern. One needs to repeat the experiment with a single particle many times to get that diffraction pattern.

We will discuss this in detail in upcoming posts, together with the following related issues.

Light is a Wave or a Particle?

1. In the early days, Newton's concept of light consisting of particles prevailed for a long time. But Newton's corpuscular theory of light was abandoned around 1850 because it could not explain interference and diffraction phenomena, and Young and Fresnel showed that the wave picture could explain those experimental results.

- However, a wave needs a medium to support it. A water wave propagates in water, and a sound wave can propagate in a solid or a liquid, and needs at least air to propagate. Still, light can travel in a vacuum, and therefore the existence of a yet unknown "aether" was proposed as the all-pervading medium through which light could propagate.
- The "aether theory" itself ran into several objections, and finally was abandoned after the famous Michelson–Morley experiment performed in 1887, which conclusively proved the absence of an aether.

2. Now we know that light doesn't need a medium through which to travel. Furthermore, the speed of light is constant and is independent of the movement of the source or detector or the direction in which it travels, as shown by the theory of relativity of Einstein (discovered in 1905).

- Therefore, light is not a wave. This was confirmed without any doubt by an experiment conducted with single photons in 1986, which we will discuss in the next post. I just wanted to present the background in this post.

Matter as Waves?

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1. While the debate was going on about whether light is a wave or a particle between 1850 to early 1900's, and even up to 1986 to some extent, another related development came with the early studies in quantum mechanics beginning around 1900.

- The issue was whether solid particles can be treated as waves.

2. After Planck, Einstein, Compton, and others established that light behaved as particles (photons), Bohr in 1913 came up with an idea to quantize the energy levels of a hydrogen atom. He was able to explain why discrete lines in the spectra of hydrogen.

- The reason why Bohr's idea worked was clarified by a yet another ground-breaking hypothesis put forth by de Broglie in 1924. He proposed that just like photons can be represented by a wave (specifically with electromagnetic wave equations of Maxwell), the motion of electrons can be represented by a "wave". At that time it was not fully clear what this "wave" would be. Now, we know that it is a wave function.

3. Light had been considered to be a wave for a long time, as we discussed above. But the idea that electrons with no-zero rest mass could be represented by waves was an unanticipated one.

- Then in 1927, Davisson and Germer produced clear diffraction patterns for electron scattering from a nickel lattice, just like a diffraction pattern due to light. This led to the speculation that maybe particles sometime behave as waves.
- That is how the idea of "wave-particle duality" evolved in the confusing period of 1900 to about 1930. Even though an accepted "quantum theory" had been established by around 1930, the idea of "wave-particle duality" lingers to the present.
- Nowadays, those diffraction patterns seen with electrons can be explained via the wave functions that represent the motion of electrons. However, a given electron can be found only at one location at a given time.

Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle

1. To make things even more complicated, in 1927 Heisenberg came up with his famous uncertainty principle. This principle says that the uncertainty of the position of a particle (σ_x) multiplied by the uncertainty of the particle's momentum (σ_p) must be larger than what is known as the Planck's constant, □:

$$\sigma_x \cdot \sigma_p \geq \square$$

- Planck's constant is extremely small; it has a value of about 10^{-34} Js.
- For any particle that we can see with our eyes, any uncertainty in particle's position will be much smaller than the size of the particle. Therefore, we don't notice this in our normal lives.

2. However, when it comes to microscopic particles like electrons, the uncertainty in position is normally very large. If you have seen a pictorial representation of the orbit of an electron in a hydrogen atom, it is shown as an area; the electron could be anywhere within that area.

The following picture shows some examples of such electron orbitals. An electron could be anywhere within a given orbital at a given time.

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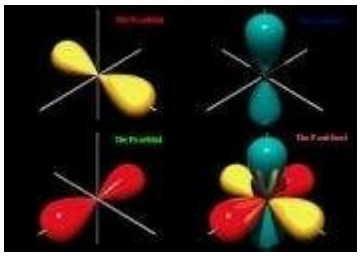

- Therefore, the key point to remember is that the uncertainty in the position and the momentum (or velocity) of a particle become significant only for small particles like electrons and photons.

3. We can make the following statements about the location of such a "quantum particle" at a given time.

- The significance of this uncertainty is that we cannot say precisely where such a small particle to be found. We can only say that it should be located within a certain region and calculate the probability for it to be found at a given point within that region.
- But that does not mean "the particle is spread out in that volume". At any given time, the particle is located at only one point. It is just that we cannot say precisely at which point due to the uncertainty principle.

I hope you can see the difference. Some people make the grave mistake of saying a quantum particle is "spread over space" just like a wave. That is grave mistake, and is a key reason why people have a hard time understanding quantum mechanics.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation."

19.3.2 Photons Are Particles Not Waves

March 13, 2018

Summary: Photons are ALWAYS particles. They travel as particles and are detected as particles. But the position of a photon during travel cannot be pinned down to a point (due to the Heisenberg uncertainty principle; see, "What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?"). Only POSSIBLE LOCATIONS of the photon at any time (and the probability of detection at each location) are provided by the wave function that represents the photon. The difference between a wave and a wave function was discussed in the previous post.

1. I must warn that this post could be too advanced for many people. However, this is the sort of "deepest level" that we will go to in this section, and if one can at least comprehend the basic idea, then one should be able the follow the future posts. The basic idea that I am trying to express is that light consists of particles, which are called photons.

- What is meant by a "wave" in wave-particle duality is vague and different people seem to interpret the term differently. Therefore, it is helpful to resolve what is meant by a "wave" in "wave-particle" duality. Is it a "real wave" like a water wave or is it a mathematical function?
- As we show below, it has been confirmed that photons are particles, and the word "wave" SHOULD NOT be used to describe light. But, the motion of a photon can be REPRESENTED by a wave function, a mathematical representation.

2. For example, a statement that is made frequently is, "..the position of a single particle is spread out over space..." **This is a misleading statement, and never should be used.** *A particle always occupies a localized position*; what is spread out is the wave function, indicating possible positions for the particle to be at a given time. See the summary statement above.

- A particle, whether it is an electron or a photon, is detected at a detector as a single detection event. When light — reduced to low intensity — is detected at a detector, those photons are registered as "single clicks".

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- **Therefore, we should give up the notion of light as a "wave".** Light consists of photons and each photon may be represented by a wave function, which is a mathematical concept. This lingering and false idea of a "wave" is the main obstacle to have a unified theory of QM.

3. Newton believed that light consisted of particles. Newton's corpuscular theory of light prevailed until around 1850 when it was abandoned because it could not explain the interference and diffraction effects of light. Since then light was regarded as a wave for a while.

- But starting around 1900 that wave picture could not account for many new experimental observations including the photoelectric effect, black-body radiation, and Compton scattering. Einstein proposed that light is quantized to explain the photoelectric effect (Einstein, 1905) — for which he received the Nobel Prize in physics in 1921 — and those quanta were given the name photon; they are the original "quanta" of quantum mechanics.
- A photon was a particle with momentum was confirmed experimentally by Compton (Compton, 1923), for which he received the Nobel Prize in 1927.
- The photon concept has led to momentous advances in experimental and theoretical physics such as lasers, Bose–Einstein condensation, and quantum field theory.

4. Then, in 1948 Feynman illustrated that it is not necessary to consider photons as waves at all in quantum electrodynamics (Feynman, 1948; Feynman, 1949; Feynman, 1985).

- While the first two references above are technical papers, third one is a book written in very simple terms. I would recommend those who are interested to read the book . I am only going to summarize what is in the book.
- That book was based on a series of 4 lectures. These are simple lectures delivered to non-physicists, and could be useful especially if one does not have access to the book:

  WebLink: YOUTUBE: QED: Photons — Corpuscles of Light — Richard Feynman (1/4)

5. However, there was a persistent view up to 1986 that light could not be particles, and that many effects such as the photoelectric effect can be explained without the concept of a photon (Lamb and Scully, 1968; Crisp and Jaynes, 1969; Mandel, 1976).

- The final confirmation of a photon as a particle had to wait until single photon sources were developed, and in 1986 Granger, Roger, and Aspect confirmed in their anticorrelation experiments that photons are indeed particles. We discuss this experiment below.

Proof That Photons Are Particles

The figure below shows the experimental configuration used by Granger, Roger, and Aspect to verify that photons are indeed particles (Granger, Roger, and Aspect, 1986).

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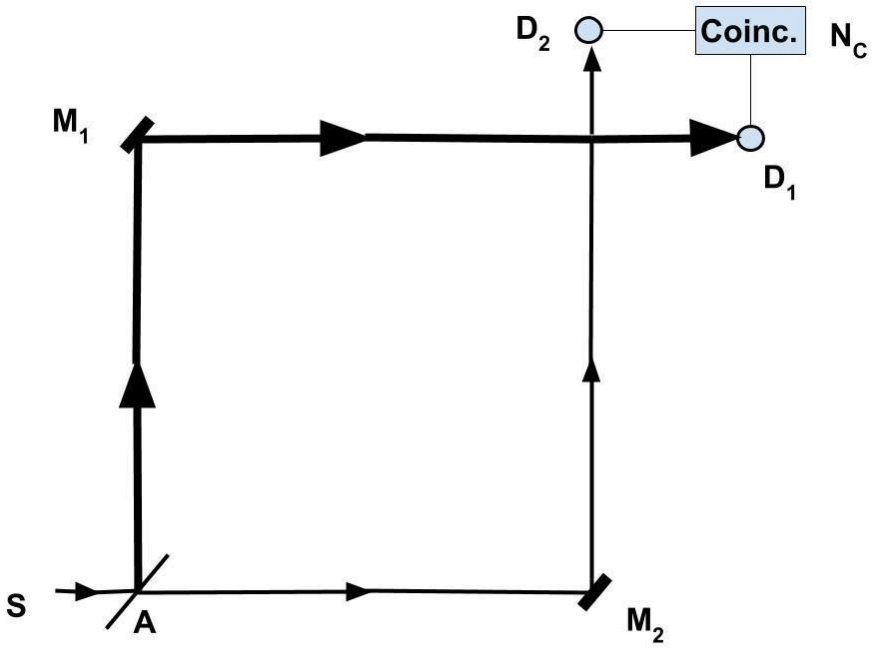

1. Single photons generated at S are sent through a beam splitter and signal via each leg is detected at D_1 and D_2 . In this experiment, **one photon at a time** is incident on the beam splitter A.

- If a photon is a particle, then it can be either reflected at A and go towards mirror M1, which then will be detected at detector D1, OR, it could go through A, reflected by mirror M2, and detected at detector D2. **Then a detection would register only at D1 or D2.**
- However, if the photon is a wave, it could partially propagate through each arm and be detected at **both D_1 and D_2 simultaneously**. That would count as a "coincidence count (N_C)".
- If a photon sometimes acts like a wave, there should be some coincidence counts.

2. The experiments confirmed that a given photon always takes one path at a time (Granger, Roger, and Aspect, 1986).

- This experiment conclusively proved that a photon travels **either** via the path A M_1 D_1 **or** the path A M_2 D_2.
- If photons had the "wave nature", there would have been at least some coincidence counts.

3. With this experimental confirmation (together with all other evidence discussed above), a photon is now categorized as an elementary particle. A photon at any wavelength is detected as a particle.

- In Feynman's Quantum Electrodynamics (QED), a photon is successfully treated as a particle which takes into account "all possible paths" via path integrals.
- In our proposed theory, a photon is a particle and its motion is governed by a mathematical wave function that is set up instantaneously across space taking into account the details of the experimental arrangement; interference and diffraction effects are explained by this wave function.

4. Newton's corpuscular theory of light was abandoned around 1850 because it could not explain interference and diffraction phenomena.

- However, when Feynman introduced his new approach to quantum mechanics in 1948, he proposed that, "..The probability that a particle will be found to have a path x(t) lying somewhere within a region of space time is the square of a sum of contributions, one from each path in the region. The contribution

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from a single path is postulated to be an exponential whose (imaginary) phase is the classical action (in units of □) for the path in question.." (Feynman, 1948, p. 367).

- Then he applied that concept to describe the propagation of photons as well as electrons in his formulation of quantum electrodynamics (QED); see (Feynman, 1949). The basic idea of photon propagation using "all possible paths available" has been explained by Feynman in his introductory book (Feynman, 1985) on QED.

5. Feynman has explained his theory of QED with simple diagrams without using any equations in his book (Feynman, 1985). I will use one of his diagrams to illustrate the basic concept in the next post.

- However, his technique was completely ad hoc; there was no rationale behind it. As he explained (p. 10 of Feynman, 1985): "..what I am telling you is, while I am describing to you *how* Nature works, you won't understand why Nature works that way. But you see, nobody understands that. I can't explain why Nature behaves in this particular way".
- With new experimental results published since that time, now we can understand the rationale behind his technique. That is what we will be discussing in the first series of posts, and is also in the unpublished paper: "WebLink: Docx File: A Self-Consistent Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics Based on Nonlocality."

6. Of course, many phenomena involving light can be explained with light treated as an electromagnetic (EM) wave, just like the motion of large particles can be treated with Newtonian mechanics.

- But when analyzing quantum phenomena, the EM theory does not work for light and the Newtonian mechanics does not work for microscopic particles. This is quite apparent in QED, which deals with interactions of light with electrons.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation."

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19.3.3 Basis of the Proposed Interpretation – Feynman's Technique in QED

March 29, 2018

Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment

Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"

"Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation".

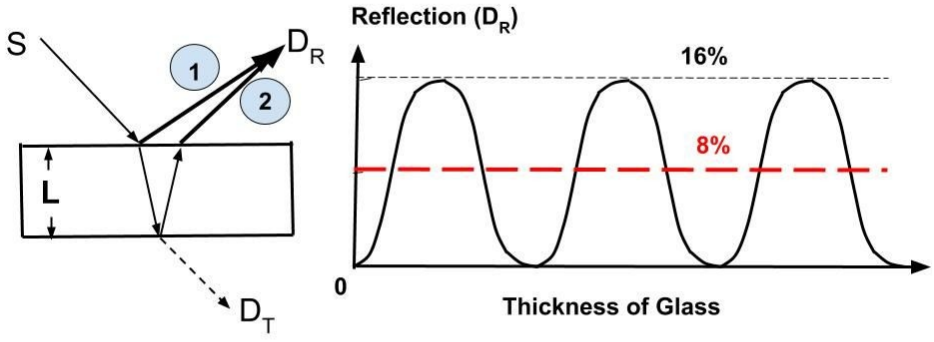
19.3.3.1 Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment

March 16, 2018; revised March 25, 2018

1. Feynman's glass plate experiment that he discussed in pages 17 – 35 in his book (see the References below) is discussed in order to lay the foundation for our new interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM).

This is a key post that lays the foundation for the "nonlocality" argument. Even before I explain in detail what "nonlocality" is, I want to illustrate the simple fundamental idea behind it.

- **This idea is:** Even before a particle takes off, Nature evaluates all possible paths that particle could take, and come up "with a plan" for its motion. This happens AUTOMATICALLY and some "unconventional paths" could result only in the case of microscopic particles like electrons and photons.
- This is why quantum mechanics appear to reveal "strange phenomena". But when particles increase in size, this "unusual behavior" goes away naturally.
- This simple idea that the physicist Richard Feynman came up is best illustrated with a simple experiment that is discussed in his book (see the References below). That experimental setup and the key result is shown in the figure below.



Experiments show signal at D_R to vary from 0% to 16% as the thickness of glass plate varied.

One would expect constant reflection at about 8%.

2. **There are two "special features" in this experiment (it could be easier to print the post and read):**

i. **The two surfaces of the glass slab are well-polished and are parallel to each other with high accuracy.**

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ii. The light is monochromatic, which means it has a well-defined wavelength.

3. Light from the source (S) is incident on a glass plate. Part of the light is reflected as indicated by the arrow labelled #1, and the rest is transmitted through the glass and incident on the second surface where a part of it is reflected and goes back up as indicated by the arrow #2. Rest of light emerges from the other side of the glass plate indicated by the dotted arrow. Two more things to be noted:

- **What is plotted on the right side of the figure is the light signal in the reflected beams #1 and #2.**
- **Variable on the X-axis of that figure is the thickness of the glass plate (L).**

4. The first thing one would expect is to have a fraction of light (about 8%) to be reflected via path #1. In fact, that is what one WILL observe with normal light (with all wavelengths in the visible region).

- However, as we can see in the experimental data to the right in the figure, that reflected signal varies from 0% to 16% as the thickness of the glass plate in increased for light with a well-defined wavelength (like from a laser).
- It is interesting to see that the reflected signal is zero (very low) at some thicknesses of the glass plate. **This is a KEY feature that cannot be explained without our interpretation of QM.** If anyone can, please post at the discussion forum. Feynman explicitly said that he could not, on p. 10 of his book.

5. Normally, one would expect the light reflected from the front surface (#1) *to be at a constant level* since photons are particles, *i.e., a photon hitting the first surface would have no idea whether another interface existed below or not.* Again, this is the key to the puzzle.

- For an analogy, we can consider the following case. Imagine a wire fence with holes a bit larger than a ball that we throw at it. Some balls (those that align with the holes) will go through those holes and others will bounce back. Would it make any difference to the number of balls that bounce back if we install another fence a little bit beyond the first fence? Would it matter how far apart the fences are? Of course not.
- That is a reasonable analogy that shows how amazing the above observations — seen with the glass plate and the particles of light (photons) — are.
- But such effects are seen only in the microscopic realm, as we will discuss later.

6. The following is how Feynman devised a "rule" that turned out to be able to account for those observations in the figure above.

- For a photon to get to the detector D_R, there are two paths available via the glass plate (#1 and #2), as shown in the figure. **Feynman's key assumption was that wave functions are established instantaneously via both those paths, and the vector sum of them would determine the possible path for a photon. These are not real waves, but just mathematical functions.**
- In quantum electrodynamics (QED), this procedure of "summing up all possible paths" is given the fancy name, "path integrals".
- When the path difference between those two paths is equal to the wavelength of the light, those two contributions are cancelled out (there is a phase shift of 180° for the two paths in addition). That is why one sees zero intensity at plate thicknesses that are multiples of even number of half the wavelength.
- On the other hand, when the path difference between those two paths is equal to the half of the wavelength of the light, those two contributions add together. That is why one sees large intensity at plate thicknesses that are odd multiples of half the wavelength.
- Those are just technical details. Don't worry about them if you are "non-technical".

7. **As long as one uses monochromatic light (and glass with no defects), one could in principle make the width of the plate arbitrarily large and those oscillations in the signal in the above figure**

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persist. Thus as long as those two possible paths are available (without any defects in the glass plate), **the resultant wave function will enforce "no reflection" at the front surface regardless of how thick the glass plate is.**

- On p. 21 of his book (Feynman, 1985), Feynman says, "..Today, with lasers (which produce a very pure, monochromatic light), we can see this cycle still going strong after more than 100,000,000 repetitions — **which corresponds to glass that is more than 50 meters thick.**." This is an amazing observation!

8. Therefore, QM wave functions — which take into account the phases and amplitudes of all possible paths — *are established instantaneously*. This is a consequence of the nonlocality of nature that we will discuss in detail in upcoming posts.

- In the case of the above figure, there are two possible paths for a given photon — indicated by the arrows #1 and #2 — leading to D_R as shown in the figure. It is important to note that the path of a given photon leaving the source (S) is predetermined from the start.
- Thus the question does not arise as to how the photon coming to the first surface "knows" that there is a second surface below it. There is no causality problem here, *since the QM wave function is established at the very beginning* because of the nonlocality of nature; if any changes are made to the experimental setup, the wave function will adjust *instantaneously*. **Nonlocality means exactly that: physical proximity is not needed for this mechanism to work.**

9. Now we will discuss a critical implication of Feynman's "a particle exploring all possible paths" or "path integral" approach, **that even Feynman did not realize**.

- **What happens when we increase the thickness of the (defect-free) glass plate to a value that is greater than the distance from the glass plate to the detector D_R?**
- Now, a photon reflecting off of the front surface would have had time to reach the detector before another photon going through the glass plate even reaches the lower glass-air surface, and start coming back to the detector D_R via #2 path.
- You need to take time and think about this. That is why it could be better to print the post and read. I don't think the reviewers of our paper even realized this key point; see, bullet #3 of "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma – Introduction."

10. Therefore, in the absence of wave functions establishing instantaneously across both possible paths (and thus undergoing destructive interference), there CANNOT be a zero signal at the detector DR, for ANY thickness of the glass plate **if that thickness (L) is greater than the distance from the glass plate to the detector DR**.

- This is the second aspect of the key observation that cannot be explained without our proposed interpretation of QM.
- Again, please make comments at the discussion forum, if anyone can explain this observation in another way.

11. With the above observation, this experiment also confirms that photons are not waves, which we established in the post, "Photons Are Particles Not Waves." In principle, two waves coming off of the front and back surfaces of the glass plate COULD destructively interfere to yield the zero intensities at those plate thicknesses.

- However, in this particular case (thickness of the glass plate larger than the distance from the glass plate to the detector D_R), the "light wave" from the front surface would have arrived at the detector and be gone, by the time "light wave" from the back surface of the glass surface arrives at the detector.

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- Therefore, destructive interference at the detector cannot take place **in the case of real waves propagating at the speed of light**. What undergoes destructive interference are the **mathematical wave functions** representing a photon.
- This is why it is important to distinguish between waves and wave functions; see, "What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?."

12. Therefore, the zero intensity observed at some plate thicknesses is not due to the destructive interference of waves. Instead it is due to the combined contributions from those two paths (two wave functions).

- If the two wave functions destructively interfere, **then not even a single photon will be directed via either of those paths, and all incident photons will go through the glass slab.**
- If the two wave functions interfere constructively, then maximum possible number of photons will be directed via those paths, and maximum possible signal (16%) will be observed at D_R; rest of the photons will go through the glass slab.

13. Therefore, it is very important to understand the difference between waves and wave functions. Light cannot be really called electromagnetic waves, even though the term is used even today. We have established that in the post, "Photons Are Particles Not Waves." I am proceeding slowly to establish a solid foundation, so that questions like this do not arise later on.

- Feynman's method says that even before a particle starts moving, **wave functions** for "all possible paths" for that particle are established instantaneously. The particle will then move along a path that results from the "summation over all those paths".
- These wave functions are vectors (i.e., they have a magnitude and a direction). Therefore, vector addition must be used in "summing up all possible paths". For those who are "non-technical" such details can be skipped; just get the idea.
- This vector addition using a simple method with arrows is described by Professor Feynman in his book and also in a series of four public lectures (see the References below).

14. To summarize the above discussion in another way, let me quote from Feynman's book (p.36):

- **"This strange phenomenon of partial reflection by two surfaces can be explained for intense light by a theory of waves, but the wave theory cannot explain how the detector makes equally loud clicks as the light gets dimmer.** Quantum electrodynamics "resolves" this wave-particle duality by saying that light is made of particles, but the price of this great advancement of science is retreat by physics to the position of being able to calculate only the probability that a photon will hit a detector, **without offering a good model of how it actually happens**."
- Our proposed theory shows exactly how it happens.

15. As we will discuss in the upcoming posts, we point out that Feynman's idea of a photon exploring all possible paths is none other than the enforcement of nonlocality; *Feynman's QED implicitly assumed nonlocality.*

- A wave function is instantaneously set up over all space taking into account the phases for all possible paths; there is no spatial limitation. This is why two particles across the universe could be still entangled; see, "Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected."
- In the next post we will show that in the above case, a photon will actually "explore ALL possible paths", an infinite number of them! However, only those two paths actually came into play in the above discussion, because all others cancel out at ALL TIMES.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation."

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1. Richard Feynman, "QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter", Princeton University Press (1985).

2. The above book is based on a set of simple lectures delivered to non-physicists, and could be useful especially if one does not have access to the book:

WebLink: YOUTUBE: QED: Photons — Corpuscles of Light — Richard Feynman (1/4)

19.3.3.2 Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"

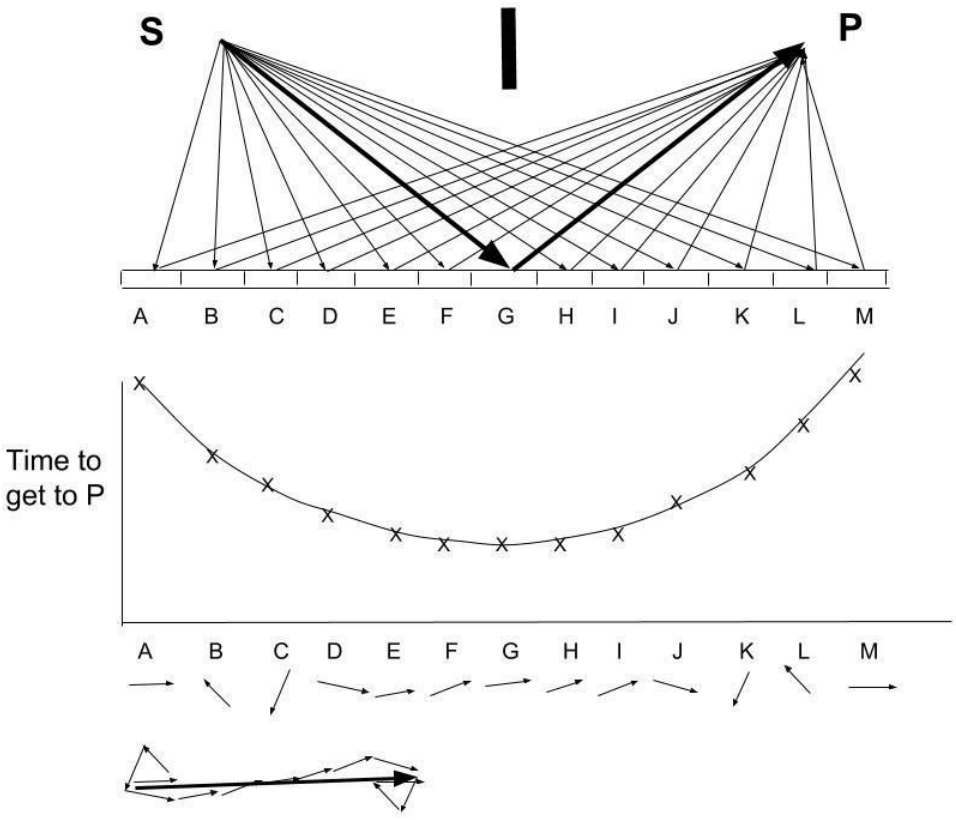
March 29, 2018

1. In the previous post we discussed Professor Feynman's illustration of how **two wave functions (not waves)** corresponding to two possible paths for a photon interfere (constructively and destructively) to produce an oscillating signal; see, "Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment."

- It was pointed out that this experimental result is not explainable if light is treated as an electromagnetic wave.
- More importantly, it showed that a path for a photon is mapped out instantaneously by Nature, as soon as the photon takes off.
- In this post, we will discuss his argument that the Nature actually takes into account **ALL possible paths, an infinite number of them!** This is our key idea behind "nonlocality", so we will proceed step-by-step to make our case crystal clear.

2. This discussion is also based on the following figure from Feynman's book (p 43); see the reference below. Light received at point P due to source S is considered; direct path from S to P is blocked by a screen placed in between them.

- Everyone is familiar with the "law of light reflection" where the light from from A goes to a Point B in a path that is defined by the angle incident being equal to the angle of reflection.



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- Of course, the time for a photon to get from S to D is minimum close to the center of the mirror.
- However, Feynman showed that a better picture with more explanatory power is available with the concept of "a photon exploring all paths". He showed that most possible paths are cancelled out and only those paths that lie close to the expected path stated by the Law of Reflection contribute to the final detection probability.

3. In order to illustrate the concept of a photon "exploring all possible paths", the mirror is divided into sections A through M, and reflection from each section of the mirror is indicated (see the above figure).

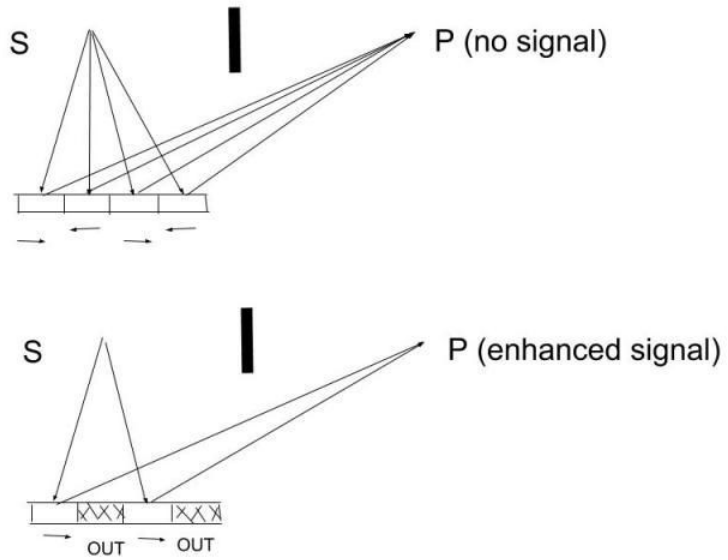
- Due to different distances of travel, the time taken for each path varies as shown in the middle figure, and correspondingly the phase varies as shown below that. The final amplitude is given by adding those arrows, and is indicated at the bottom of the figure.

4. Just like in adding the contributions from two "waves", adding the contributions from "wave functions" requires one to take into account the difference in phase angle. Feynman has described this in simple terms, how to add contributions due to many wave functions using vector addition (see pp. 24-35).

- It is evident that the major contribution to the final arrow's length is made by arrows E through I (from the central part of the mirror), whose directions are nearly the same because the timing of their paths is nearly the same. **This also happens to be where the total time is the least indicated by the heavy arrow, which is the expected path from the law of reflection.**
- The law of reflection, that we learn at high school, is a simple rule that works. But actually reflections from **each point in the mirror** contribute to the signal at P. It is just that most of those contributions cancel out (as shown by the bottom part of the above figure).

5. **To prove that even the edge of the mirror does contribute to the signal at P**, we chop off most of the mirror, leaving only the sections A, B, C on the left. From the above figure, if we add the three arrows due to those those three sections, they nearly cancel out. This is why we do not see significant contributions from parts of the away from the center.

- If we now divide that section (of A,B,C in the above figure) into **four equal sections**, they of course again cancel out as shown in the top section of the figure below.



- **But if we now carefully scrape two alternating sections of those four sections (as shown in the bottom figure)**, then the signals due to the two reflecting sections **add up to give an intense signal**; see the bottom part of the above figure.

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6. This conclusively proves that during normal reflection, parts of the mirror away from the center also contribute to the signal. It is just that most of that signal is cancelled out. Thus, for all practical purposes, it is sufficient to just take the reflection from the center part of the mirror (i.e., to use the law of reflection in geometrical optics).

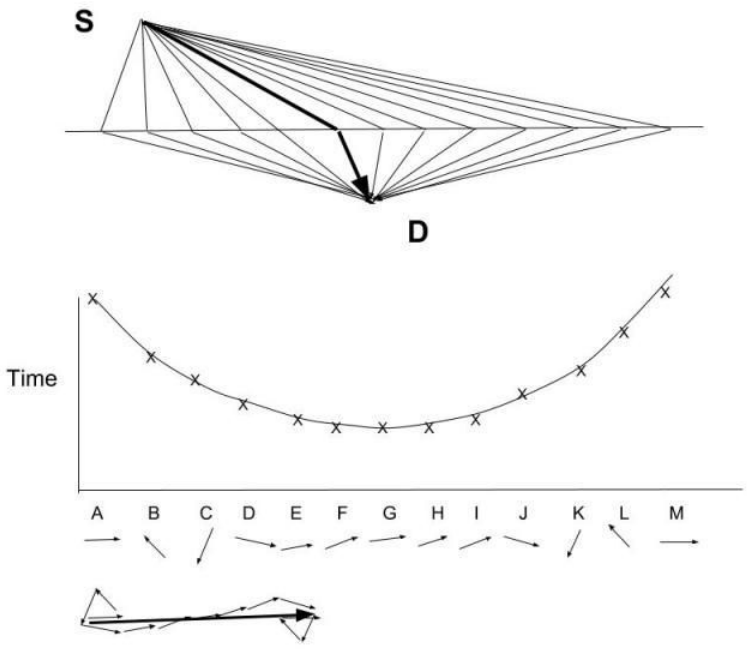
- However, If only the arrows in a particular direction are kept, while the others in opposite direction are removed (by etching the mirror in those places), then a substantial amount of light reflects from a piece of mirror located away from the center, as shown in #5 above.
- **That modified section of the mirror is of course now a diffraction grating.**

7. Feynman discusses several examples in his book, but let us discuss just one more example to illustrate the point that this method is consistent with the Principle of Causation.

- **Here we consider the case of refraction, which had led to causal issues with the "photon as a particle" idea of Newton and Fermat.**
- Those who are really interested can read in detail the historical evolution of ideas from Newton through Fermat to Feynman, in the book by Ivar Ekeland (see References below).

8. Figure below shows the refraction of light from a source (S) in the air to a detector (D) placed in water. As in the case of the mirror, we consider all possible paths from S to D, and map out the time taken for a photon to reach point D via "different sections" of the water surface.

- The observation of light taking the "time of least time" to reach a detector in the water by changing its path (called "refraction") was explained by Fermat back in 1657, by taking into the account that light travels slower in water than in air; we will discuss this in the next post, ""Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time".
- However, until Feynman came up with his method of "a particle exploring all possible paths", this phenomenon could not be explained within the "particle picture".



- Once again, most paths away from the optimum path are CANCELLED OUT. The major contributions come from those paths close to the expected arrow indicated by the heavy arrow, and the Fermat's Principle of Least Time is recovered with this "particle representation".

9. What bothered everyone (including Feynman) about Fermat's idea is that it seemed to require agency. How could light *choose* a path? How could it possibly *know* which path was the fastest?

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Here's how Feynman puts it (Feynman Lectures, Vol. 1, Chapter 26):

"*The principle of least time is a completely different philosophical principle about the way nature works. Instead of saying it is a causal thing, that when we do one thing, something else happens, and so on, it says this: we set up the situation, and light decides which is the shortest time, or the extreme one, and chooses that path. But what does it do, how does it find out? Does it smell the nearby paths, and check them against each other? The answer is, yes, it does, in a way.*"

- **The explanation is that Feynman method works because the Nature is nonlocal**. We will discuss this in detail in future posts.
- A link to Feynman Lectures is given in the References.

An Electron Will Also Explore All Possible Paths

As Feynman pointed out, everything we have discussed so far can be applied to the propagation and detection of electrons: Electrons also "explore all possible paths", and these paths are determined by the experimental configuration.

- If the experimental configuration changes, those paths reconfigure instantaneously. Of course, quantum electrodynamics (QED) incorporates the possible trajectories of both electrons and photons.
- It is amazing to realize that physicists used Feynman's version of QED for 70 years without realizing that the same needs to be applied to quantum phenomena like the "double-slit experiment".

Conclusion

The key philosophical problem that existed for Newton to Fermat to Feynman with their "particle representation of light" was to explain how a photon would know in advance how to determine the path of least time.

- But that problem goes away when we realize that a photon (or any particle) takes into account "all possible paths" **dictated by the nonlocality of Nature.**
- We will discuss the nonlocality in detail in upcoming posts. I just wanted to provide the experimental evidence from the work of Professor Feynman first.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation."

References

I. Ekeland, "The Best of All Possible Worlds: Mathematics and Destiny", (University of Chicago Press, 2006).

R. P. Feynman, "QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter" (Princeton University Press, 1985).

WebLink: Online Book: The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Volume I

WebLink: Online Book: The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Volume II

WebLink: Online Book: The Feynman Lectures on Physics, Volume III

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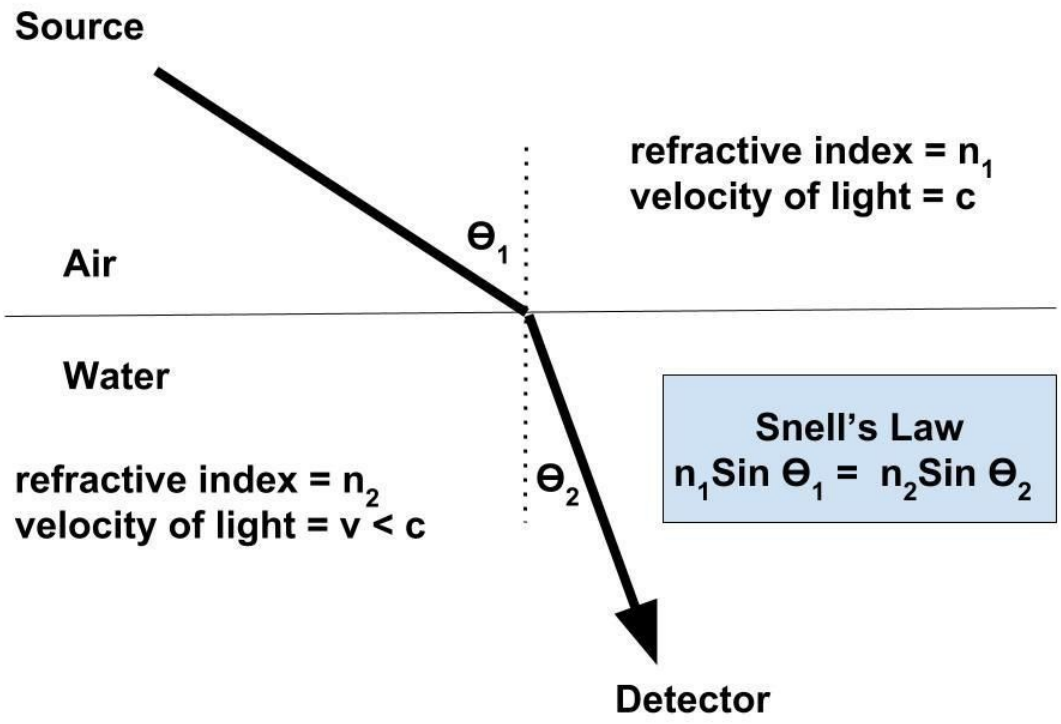
19.3.3.3 "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time

April 1, 2018

1. In 1657 the French lawyer and mathematician Pierre De Fermat (behind Fermat's Last Theorem) worked out that when light travels from one place to another, it always takes the path of least time. The path of a ray of light going from air to water shown below.



- There's a formula called Snell's law (shown in the figure) that correctly predicts the exact angle by which the light bends, depending on the materials it's traveling through and the angle at which it hits the surface.
- Fermat explained this observation of light taking the "time of least time" to reach a detector in the water by changing its path (called "refraction") by taking into account that light travels slower in water than in air.
- But the question of WHY it does that has not been answered up to now. Furthermore, how would a photon know there is an interface coming up ahead? **As we saw in the post, "Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths," the wave theory of light cannot explain it.**
- As we also saw in that post, Feynman came up with a technique called "a photon exploring all possible paths," but admitted that he did not know WHY it worked. In future posts, we will show that it is due to the nonlocality of Nature and the instantaneous establishment of quantum fields for "all possible paths" for the photon.

2. That is precisely the same procedure followed by a lifeguard (instinctively) in reaching a drowning swimmer in water. The figure below illustrates the situation.

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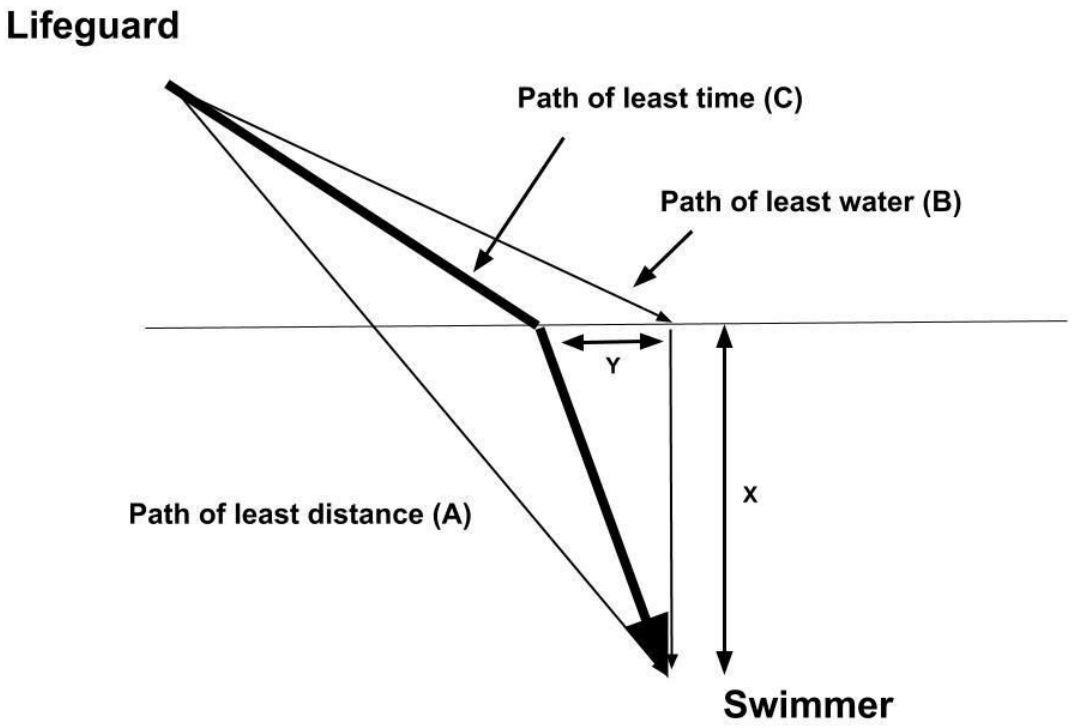

3. When we look at the above figure, at the first glance, one may wonder whether a straight line (path A) is the fastest path. That is indeed the shortest one, but it isn't the quickest. Because one can run faster along the beach, and cover more distance on land than in water.

- However, if one runs on path B, make the distance in water to be minimum, that is not the quickest either. This route is too long, and it slows you down.
- The quickest path is C, a very specific path that lies somewhere between A and B, where the lifeguard jumps in at a distance x before the shortest path in water.
- **Of course, a lifeguard would not even think about all this. He/she would instinctively choose a path that turns out to be close to this optimum path C.**

4. I have not come across anyone experimenting on lifeguards, and seeing how close they get to the "optimum path." But I came across a paper by a math professor who studied on his dog fetching a ball thrown into Lake Michigan.

- He found out that his dog's path (over many measurements) came close to the "optimum path" predicted by Snell's law: "WebLink: PDF File: Do Dogs Know Calculus- Pennings-2003."

5. After collecting 35 data points (the x and y values in the figure above, in meters), Professor Pennings plotted them. Along with these data points, he also drew the optimal trajectory predicted by the Snell's law, shown by the straight line below (figure from the above paper).

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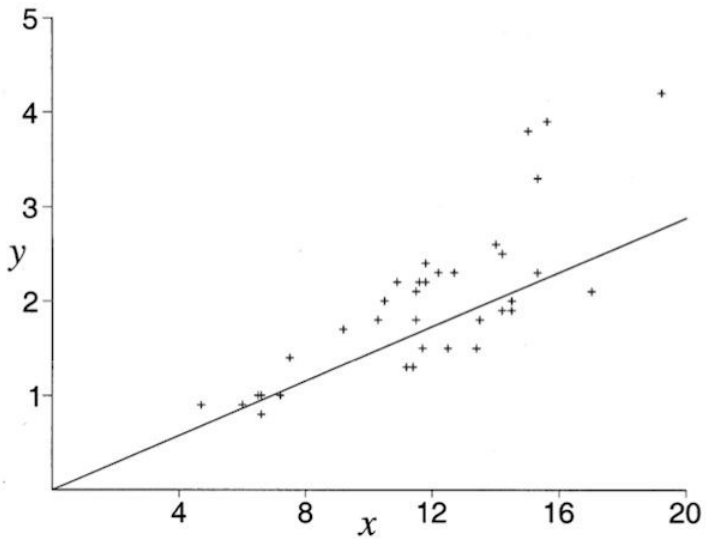

- **Therefore, just like a photon "would know" how to take the "path of least time," a dog would too!**

6. Even more interestingly, even ants seem to be able to find the "optimum path" that takes the least time to get to their food.

- A group of researchers used a glass surface and a rough green felt surface — analogous to air and water or sand and water in above cases – to separate a colony of ants. They placed ant-food some distance into the rough green felt surface.
- They found that the ant trails were far closer to the quickest path than to the direct routh. Like light and lifeguards, these ants seemed to minimize time and not distance. The following figure showing the trail of the ants is from their paper: "WebLink: PDF File: Fermat's Principle of Least Time Predicts Refraction of Ant Trails at Substrate Borders."

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Conclusion

The critical philosophical problem that existed for Newton to Fermat to Feynman with their "particle representation of light" was to explain "how a photon would know" in advance how to determine the path of least time; see the book by Ivar Ekeland in the References.

- But that problem goes away when we realize that a photon (or any particle) takes into account "all possible paths" instantaneously due to the nonlocality of Nature. That is the basis of our new interpretation of quantum mechanics. We will discuss this in detail in upcoming posts.
- Even more interestingly, the observations of humans, dogs, and ants also taking the "path of least time" just instinctively, illustrate that this is how Nature works. **Even living beings are guided by this "nonlocality of Nature."** This example illustrates that there is so much that we DO NOT KNOW about how Nature works.
- That is closely related to how Nature AUTOMATICALLY executes *kamma vipāka*. That will become more clear as we proceed.

Any questions on these QM posts can be discussed at the discussion forum: "Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation."

References

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I. Ekeland, "WebLink: PDF File: The Best of All Possible Worlds: Mathematics and Destiny" (University of Chicago Press, 2006).

R. P. Feynman, "WebLink: PDF File: QED: The Strange Theory of Light and Matter" (Princeton University Press, 1985).

J. Oettler et al., "WebLink: PDF File: Fermat's Principle of Least Time Predicts Refraction of Ant Trails at Substrate Borders," PLOS ONE, vol. 8, issue 3, e59739 (2013).

T. J. Pennings, "WebLink: PDF File: Do Dogs Know Calculus?", The College Mathematics Journal, vol. 34, No. 3, pp. 178-182 (2003); link to pdf in #4 above.

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xx About Author

Revised March 9, 2017; April 14, 2018; November 10, 2018; August 13, 2019

My name is Lal Ariyaratna Pinnaduwage. I loved physics from the school days and became a physicist, and became a Senior Scientist at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory and a Research Professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. I was elected a Fellow of the American Physical Society in 2004. Since retiring in 2009 at age 55, I have been on a quest to uncover the pure Dhamma of the Buddha.

Even though I am a Buddhist by birth, I did not really "practice" until I retired. Initially, it was to find out what "Buddhism" really was, and how it compared with other world religions.

- I provided the above description in keeping with my intention to be fully open. Also, I intend to make the website "as experienced" by myself. I will specifically mention what I have not experienced as such. I will record my progress in these web pages as much as advisable. (Not everybody will have the same kind of experiences related to *samādhi, jhāna*, or *magga phala*).
- What I have found is that Buddha Dhamma is different from not only other religions but also many forms of "Buddhism" that we have today. Other religious and cultural influences have contaminated even the Theravāda version.

In July 2013, I accidentally came to know about new interpretations of *anicca, dukkha, anatta* (true Nature of existence). It was "the main missing piece" for me. I will never forget the ecstatic feeling while listening to that fateful *desanā* from one *Thero* on July 30, 2013, on the internet. I made a trip to Sri Lanka and was able to get more information, even though I was not able to meet Venerable Waharaka Abhayaratanalankara *Thero*, who had uncovered the actual teachings. What I present here is this complete picture, with my input from my science background.

- Waharaka Thero passed away on February 9, 2017; see, "Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thero." A large number of his *desanās* available at "waharaka.com" (explore the top menu!). Unfortunately, those *desanās* are available only in the Sinhala language.
- As in science, here, I am going to treat Buddha Dhamma as a theory and explore whether it provides a consistent picture of our world. Buddha Dhamma is a complete worldview and its principles are the laws of Nature. Scientists have uncovered only a fraction of these laws, and only those about inert matter. But mind precedes matter.

I hope is that I can give you a taste of the exhilarating experience that I have enjoyed over the past several years in uncovering the pure Dhamma. Buddha Dhamma is indeed for those who seek to broaden their horizons. You will truly gain benefit from this site if you leave behind any preconceived ideas about "Buddhism."

- Above all, I wanted to convey the truth of the fact that one CAN experience the "cooling down" or "*Nivana*" or "*Nibbāna*" at various levels as one LEARNS AND LIVES the pure Dhamma. That is not something to be attained in future lives but is something that one CAN experience in this very life by cleansing one's mind. What I describe here is what I have experienced, to a large extend.
- Most people do not like to talk about their "spiritual experiences," and that is understandable. But I think it could be beneficial to others if I describe my progress to get an idea of what to expect. A brief description of my progress is given in, "10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Ditthasava" and the posts mentioned there. This will also provide a context for the material presented at this website. Please be aware that each person's experience is different.
- Please ask your questions at the discussion forum; see below. If you have a questions of personal Nature, you can send it to me at: lal@puredhamma.net.

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- Buddha Dhamma is a self-consistent description of the Nature's laws, and if there are any inconsistencies in these pages, they are due to my own mistakes and I should be able to correct them. I do revise these posts on a continuously as my own understanding improves.

The Buddha said, "*Sabba dānaṃ Dhamma dānaṃ jināti*", or "Gift of Dhamma excels all other gifts." Please inform others about this site if you benefit from it.

December of 2017: Discussion forum initiated: "Forum."

Updates and new posts at "2- General Information and Updates."

March 2018: A new section on "Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma."

November 10, 2018: There are over 500 posts at the site as of today. There are two ways to find relevant posts on a given concept/ topic.

- All posts are under sections and subsections; see "Pure Dhamma – Sitemap." One could scan through it to locate relevant posts.
- The "Search" button at the top right is also good at extracting relevant posts for a given keyword or keywords.

July 2019: New sub-section on "Origin of Life."

April 2020: Re-writing of the section on "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

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XXI Sitemap

I have arranged the sections roughly in increasing complexity. However, you may want to scan through each section to get an idea of what is in each section. People have backgrounds at very different levels. Furthermore, even those who have been exposed to Buddhism for many years may not have a good understanding of the fundamentals.

Welcome!

About

Parinibbāna of Waharaka Thēro

Pure Dhamma Essays in Book Format

New / Revised Posts

- Pure Dhamma – Sinhala Translation
- Pure Dhamma – German Website
- Pure Dhamma – Korean Website

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The Basics

- "The Pale Blue Dot……."
- "The Law of Attraction, Habits, Character (Gati), and Cravings (Āsavā)"
- "Habits, Goals, and Character (Gati)"
- Wrong Views (Micchā Diṭṭhi) – A Simpler Analysis
- Four Noble Truths: Recipe for Problem Solving
- First Noble Truth – A Simple Explanation of One Aspect
- Difference between a Wish and a Determination (Paramita)

Calming the Mind

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- "Solution to a Wandering Mind – Abandon Everything?"
- "Right Speech – How to avoid Accumulating Bad Kamma"
- "Three Kinds of Happiness – What is Nirāmisa Sukha?"
- "How to Taste Nibbāna"
- Learning Buddha Dhamma Leads to Nirāmisa Sukha
- "Need to Experience Suffering in Order to Understand It?"
- "Does Impermanence Lead to Suffering?"

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- "Where to Start on the Path?"
- "What Reincarnates? – Concept of a Life-stream"
- "A Buddhist or a Bhouddhaya?"
- "What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?"
- Recent Evidence for Unbroken Memory Records (HSAM)
- "Buddhism without Rebirth and Nibbāna?"

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- "Kusala and Akusala Kamma, Puñña and Pāpa Kamma"
- "Ten Immoral Actions (Dasa Akusala)"
- "Puñña Kamma – Dāna, Sīla, Bhāvanā"

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- "The Five Precepts – What the Buddha Meant by Them"
- "How to Evaluate Weights of Different Kamma"
- "What is Kamma? – Is Everything Determined by Kamma?"
- "The Four Bases of Mental Power (Satara Iddhipada)"
- "Why is it Necessary to Learn Key Pāli Words?"

Buddha Dhamma and Morality

- Origin of Morality (and Immorality) in Buddhism
- Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception
- Is Eating Meat an Akusala Kamma (Immoral Deed)?
- Do Things Just Happen? – The Hidden Causes

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- Sabba Pāpassa Akaranan….
- Appamado Amata Padam..
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- Arogya Parama Labha..
- Anicca vata Saṅkhāra..
- Atta Hi Attano Natho

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- Paṭisandhi Citta – How the Next Life is Determined According to Gathi

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- Viññāṇa – Consciousness Together With Future Expectations
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- Ānāpānasati Eliminates Mental Stress Permanently
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- Living Dhamma – Introduction

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- Peace of Mind to Nibbāna – The Key Step
- Starting on the Path Even without Belief in Rebirth (with first *Desana* "The Hidden Suffering that We All Can Understand"; *desana* title different from post title)

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- Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Relevance to Suffering in This Life (with Desana 3)
- How Are Gathi and Kilesa Incorporated into Thoughts? (with Desana 4)
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- Suffering in This Life and Paṭicca Samuppāda II (with *Desana* 9)

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- Gandhabba State – Evidence from Tipiṭaka
- Antarabhava and Gandhabba
- Ānantariya Kamma – Connection to Gandhabba
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- Abnormal Births Due to Gandhabba Transformations
- Satara Āhāra for Mental Body or Gandhabba
- Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage
- Working of Kammā – Critical Role of Conditions

Nāma* & *Rūpa* to *Nāmarūpa

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In this important subsection, we will discuss the link between mind (nāma) and matter (rūpa). These are deeper analyses. For simpler analyses, see, "The Five Aggregates (Pañcakkhandha)."

- ***Rūpa* Aggregate**
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  - Bhūta and Yathābhūta – What Do They Really Mean
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  - Mind Is Not in the Brain
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  - Patient H.M. – Different Roles of Brain in Memory
  - Memory Recall for Gandhabba in a Human Body
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  - Autobiographical Memory – Preserved in Nāma Loka
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  - Response to a Sensory Stimulus – Role of Gati/Anusaya
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  - Nāma Loka and Rūpa Loka – Two Parts of Our World
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  - Tipitaka – The Uniqueness of Buddha Dhamma

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- Pāli Canon Is Self-Contained but Requires Detailed Explanation
- Vinaya Pitaka – More Than Disciplinary Rules
- Abhidhamma Piṭaka – Deeper Analyses of Concepts

○ Antarābhava and Gandhabba

- Antarābhava – No Connection to Gandhabba
- Antarābhava Discussion in Kathāvatthu – Not Relevant to Gandhabba
- How Do We See? – Role of the Gandhabba
- Interpretation of the Tipiṭaka – Gandhabba Example

Buddhahood Associated Controversies

- Buddhahood Controversies – Introduction
- Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part I
- Pāṭihāriya (Supernormal Abilities) of a Buddha – Part II

What is Buddha Dhamma?

Foundation of Dhamma

The Importance of Purifying the Mind

The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma

- The Grand Unified Theory of Dhamma – Introduction
- Our Two Worlds: Material and Immaterial
- 31 Realms Associated with the Earth
- Gandhabba – Only in Human and Animal Realms
- Body Types in 31 Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kāya
- Gandhabba Sensing the World – With and Without a Physical Body
- Nibbāna in the Big Picture

Buddha Dhamma: Non-Perceivability and Self-Consistency

Saṃsāric Time Scale, Buddhist Cosmology, and the Big Bang Theory

Evidence for Rebirth

Power of the Human Mind

- Power of the Human Mind – Introduction
- Difference Between Jhāna and Stages of Nibbāna
- Power of the Human Mind – Anāriya or Mundane Jhānā
- Power of the Human Mind – Ariya Jhānā
- Are There Procedures for Attaining Magga Phala, Jhāna and Abhiññā?

Transfer of Merits (Pattidāna) – How Does it Happen?

First Noble Truth is Suffering? Myths about Suffering

Vinaya – The Nature Likes to be in Equilibrium

Buddhist Chanting

- Buddhist Chanting – Introduction
- Sadhu – Symbolizes Purified Hadaya Vatthu (Mind)
- Namaskāraya – Homage to the Buddha
- Supreme Qualities of Buddha, Dhamma, Saṅgha
- The Five Precepts – Pañca Sīla

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- Sutta Chanting (with Pāli Text)

Myths or Realities?

- Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojawa – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude
- Paramita and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?
- Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gathi
- Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?
- Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?
- Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years
- Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping?

Also see, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" in the subsection, "Origin of Life"

Also see, "Myths about Meditation" in the subsection, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)"

Key Dhamma Concepts

- **Concept of "*San*"**
  - What is "San"? Meaning of Sansara (or Samsara)
  - Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka
  - Saṅkhāra – Life is a Bundle of Saṅkhāra
  - Difference Between Dhamma and Saṅkhāra
  - Kamma are Done with Saṅkhāra – Types of Saṅkhāra
- ***Nibbāna***
  - How to Taste Nibbāna
  - Nirāmisa Sukha
  - Nibbāna – Is it Difficult to Understand?
  - The Four Stages in Attaining Nibbāna
  - What Are Rūpa? (Relation to Nibbāna)
  - Does the First Noble Truth Describe only Suffering?
  - Nirodha and Vaya – Two Different Concepts
  - Nibbāna "Exists", but Not in This World

Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta

Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – Wrong Interpretations

The Way to Nibbāna – Transcription of a Discourse by Waharaka Thero

- **Anicca – True Meaning**
  - Anicca – Inability to Keep What We Like
  - Anicca – Repeated Arising/Destruction
  - Anicca – Worthlessness of Worldly Things
  - Anicca – The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")
  - How to Cultivate Anicca Saññā
  - How to Cultivate the Anicca Saññā – II
  - If Everything is Anicca Should We Just give up Everything?
- **Anattā – A Systematic Analysis**
  - Anattā in Anattalakkahana Sutta – No Soul or an Ātma
  - Anatta – No Refuge in This World
  - Dasa Akusala and Anatta – The Critical Link
  - Anatta – the Opposite of Which Atta?
  - Anattā (Mundane Interpretation) – No "Unchanging Self"

Anatta and Dukkha – True Meanings

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Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta – According to Some Key Suttā

Three Marks of Existence – English Discourses

- ***Sotāpanna* Stage and *Tilakkhaṇa***
  - Sakkāya Diṭṭhi and Tilakkhaṇa
  - Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – Getting Rid of Deeper Wrong Views
  - Associations (Sevana)- A Root Cause of Wrong Views

Why are Tilakkhaṇa not Included in 37 Factors of Enlightenment?

Two Versions of 37 Factors of Enlightenment

Types of Bodies in 31 Realms – Connection to Jhāna

Finest Manomaya Kāya of an Arūpāvacara Brahma

Gati, Bhava,* and *Jāti

- Nāmagotta, Bhava, Kamma Bīja, and Mano Loka (Mind Plane)
- Gati and Bhava – Many Varieties
- Gati to Bhava to Jāti – Ours to Control
- Memory, Brain, Mind, Nāma Loka, Kamma Bhava, Kamma Vipāka
- Bhava and Jāti – States of Existence and Births Therein
- Difference Between Taṇhā and Upādāna
- Pāpa Kamma Versus Akusala Kamma

Sorting out Some Key Pāli Terms (*Taṇhā*, *Lobha*, *Dosa*, *Moha*, etc)

- Kāma Taṇhā, Bhava Taṇhā, Vibhava Taṇhā
- Lobha, Raga and Kāmachanda, Kāmarāga
- Lobha, Dosa, Moha versus Rāga, Paṭigha, Avijjā
- What Are Kilesa (Mental Impurities)? – Connection to Cetasika
- Diṭṭhi (Wrong Views), Sammā Diṭṭhi (Good/Correct Views)
- Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā
- What is Avijjā (Ignorance)?
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Indriya and Āyatana – Big Difference
- Hetu-Phala, Paccuppanna, and Paṭicca Samuppāda
- Correct Meaning of Vacī Saṅkhāra
- Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala – Five Faculties and Five Powers
- Kāmaccandha and Icca – Being Blinded by Cravings

The Five Aggregates (*Pañcakkhandha*)

- Five Aggregates – Introduction
- Difference Between Rūpa and Rūpakkhandha
- Rūpakkhandha and Rūpa Upādānakkhandha
- Arising of Five Aggregates Based on an Ārammaṇa
- Memory Records – Critical Part of Five Aggregates
- Pañca Upādānakkhandhā – Introduction
- Five Aggregates – Connection to Tilakkhaṇa
  - Five Aggregates and Tilakkhaṇa – Introduction
  - Icca, Nicca, Anicca – Important Connections
  - "Me" and "Mine" – The Root Cause of Suffering
  - Difference Between "Me and Mine" and Sakkāya Diṭṭhi
  - Sakkāya Diṭṭhi – "Me and Mine" View
  - Atta – Two Very Different Meanings
- "Saññā (Perception)"

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- "Vedanā (Feelings)"
- Saṅkhāra is discussed at, "Saṅkhāra, Kamma, Kamma Bīja, Kamma Vipāka."
- "Viññāṇa (Consciousness)"
- "Rūpa (Material Form)"

Deeper Analyses:

- Pañcakkhandha or Five Aggregates – A Misinterpreted Concept
- Pañcupādānakkhandha – It is All Mental

Paṭicca Samuppāda

Paṭicca Samuppāda – "Pati+ichcha" + "Sama+uppāda"

Understanding the Terms in Paṭicca Samuppāda

- Citta Vīthi – Fundamental Sensory Unit
- Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?
- Phassa (Contact) – Contact With Pasāda Rūpa
- Arising of the Five Aggregates With an Ārammaṇa

Paṭicca Samuppāda – Overview

How Are Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles Initiated?

What Does "Paccayā" Mean in Paṭicca Samuppāda?

Paṭicca Samuppāda Cycles

- Avyākata Paṭicca Samuppāda for Vipāka Viññāṇa
- Akusala-Mūla Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda
- Kusala-Mūla Paṭicca Samuppāda
- Idappaccayatā Paṭicca Samuppāda
- Uppatti Paṭicca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)

Paṭicca Samuppāda in Plain English

- Introduction – What is Suffering?
- Introduction -2 – The Three Characteristics of Nature
- Avijjā paccayā Saṅkhāra
- Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 1
- Saṅkhāra paccayā Viññāṇa – 2
- Viññāṇa paccayā Nāmarūpa
- Nāmarūpa paccayā Saḷāyatana
- Difference between Phassa and Samphassa
- Phassa paccayā Vedanā….to Bhava
- Bhava paccayā Jāti….Jarā, Maraṇa,…

Imasmiṃ Sati Idaṃ Hoti – What Does It Really Mean?

Uppatti Paticca Samuppāda (How We Create Our Own Rebirths)

Patiloma Paticca Samuppāda – Key to Nibbāna

Paṭṭhāna Dhamma

- Paṭṭhāna Dhamma – Connection to Cause and Effect (Hetu Phala)

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- Anantara and Samanantara Paccayā
- Āsevana and Annamanna Paccayā

Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa

- Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa – Introduction
- How Perceived Pleasures (Assāda) lead to Dukkha
- Kāma Guna, Kāma, Kāma Rāga, Kāmacchanda
- Vedanā (Feelings) Arise in Two Ways
- Feelings: Sukha, Dukha, Somanassa, and Domanassa
- What is "Kāma"? It is not Just Sex
- Kāma Assāda Start with Phassa Paccayā Vedanā or Samphassa Jā Vedanā

Origin of Life

- Origin of Life – There is No Traceable Origin
- Human Life – A Mental Base (Gandhabba) and a Material Base (Cell)
- Clarification of "Mental Body" and "Physical Body" – Different Types of "Kāya"
- Buddhist Explanations of Conception, Abortion, and Contraception
- Cloning and Gandhabba
- Living Cell – How Did the First Cell Come to Existence?
- Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?

Views on Life

- Views on Life – Wrong View of Materialism
- Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 1
- Wrong View of Creationism (and Eternal Future Life) – Part 2
- **Worldview of the Buddha**
  - Buddhist Worldview – Introduction
  - Contact Between Āyatana Leads to Vipāka Viññāṇa
  - How Do Sense Faculties Become Internal Āyatana?
  - Indriya Make Phassa and Āyatana Make Samphassa
  - **Is There a "Self"?**
    - Citta – Basis of Our Experience and Actions
    - Vipāka Vedanā and "Samphassa jā Vedanā" in a Sensory Event
    - Kāma Guṇa – Origin of Attachment (Taṇhā)
    - Vision Is a Series of "Snapshots" – Movie Analogy
    - Chachakka Sutta – No "Self" in Initial Sensory Experience
    - Sakkāya Diṭṭhi in Terms of Attā or "Self" or "Ātma"
    - An Apparent "Self" Is Involved in Kamma Generation
  - ***Paṭicca Samuppāda* – Not "Self" or "No-Self"**
    - Taṇhā – The Origin of Suffering
    - Paṭicca Samuppāda – A "Self" Exists Due to Avijjā
    - Kamma, Saṅkhāra, and Abhisaṅkhāra
    - Vacī Saṅkhāra – Saṅkappa (Conscious Thoughts) and Vācā (Speech)
    - Taṇhā Paccayā Upādāna – Critical Step in Paṭicca Samuppāda
    - Moha/Avijjā and Vipāka Viññāṇa/Kamma Viññāṇa
    - Icchā (Cravings) Lead to Upādāna and to Eventual Suffering
    - Dhammā, Kamma, Saṅkhāra, Mind – Critical Connections
    - Paṭicca Samuppāda – From Mind to Matter
    - Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda
      - Kamma and Paticca Samuppāda – Introduction

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- Kāma Assāda – A Root Cause of Suffering
- Gati (Habits/Character) Determine Births – Saṃsappanīya Sutta

- **Wider Worldview of the Buddha**
  - The Framework of Buddha Dhamma
  - The Suffering (Dukkha) in the First Noble Truth
  - Dangers of Ten Types of Wrong Views and Four Possible Paths
  - Sammā Diṭṭhī – Only One Leads to the Noble Path
  - Fear of Nibbāna (Enlightenment)
- **Worldview of the Buddha – Explanatory Material**
  - Ghost 1990 Movie – Good Depiction of Gandhabba Concept
  - Mental Body Versus the Physical Body
  - "Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1
  - "Tipiṭaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2
- Origin of Life – One Creates One's Own Future Lives

Bhāvanā (Meditation)

The numbered posts are to be read in that order. Even for those who are practicing Buddhists, I recommend starting at the Introduction (#1), and going down the list of topics at least the first time.

- It would be a good idea to read the posts in the following subsection at some point, in order to get an idea about the reasoning behind this approach: "Essential Buddhism."
- 1. Introduction to Buddhist Meditation
- 2. The Basics in Meditation
- 3. The Second Level – Key to Purify the Mind
- 4. What do all these Different Meditation Techniques Mean?
- 5. Ariya Mettā Bhāvanā (Loving Kindness Meditation)
- 6. Ānāpānasati Bhāvanā (Introduction)
- 7. What is Ānāpāna?
- Is Ānāpānasati Breath Meditation?
- 8. The Basic Formal Ānāpānasati Meditation
- Possible Effects in Meditation – Kundalini Awakening
- 9. Key to Ānāpānasati – How to Change Habits and Character (Gathi)
- Karaniya Mettā Sutta – Mettā Bhāvanā
- 10. Attaining the Sotāpanna Stage via Removing Diṭṭhāsava
- 11. Magga Phala and Ariya Jhānā via Cultivation of Saptha Bojjanga
- 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage
- 13. Kammattana (Recitations) for the Sotāpanna Stage

Important Related Posts

- Anussati and Anupassanā – Being Mindful and Removing Defilements
- Myths about Meditation
- A Simple Way to Enhance Merits (Kusala) and Avoid Demerits (Akusala)
- Anicca – The Incessant Distress ("Pīlana")
- Pañca Indriya and Pañca Bala – Five Faculties and Five Powers
- Possible Outcomes of Meditation – Samādhi, Jhāna, Magga Phala
- What is Samādhi? – Three Kinds of Mindfulness
- Getting to Samādhi via Formal Mediation Sessions
- Are you not getting expected results from meditation?

Sutta Interpretations

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Sutta – Introduction

Pāli Dictionaries – Are They Reliable?

Nikāya in the Sutta Piṭaka

Sutta Learning Sequence for the Present Day

Mahā Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta

- Satipaṭṭhāna Sutta – Structure
- Satipaṭṭhāna – Introduction
- Kāyānupassanā – Section on Postures (Iriyapathapabba)
- Kāyānupassanā – The Section on Habits (Sampajanapabba)
- Prerequisites for the Satipaṭṭhāna Bhāvanā
- What is "Kāya" in Kāyānupassanā?

Mahā Cattārīsaka Sutta (Discourse on the Great Forty)

Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta

- Dhammacakkappavattana Sutta – Introduction
- Essence of Buddhism – In the First Sutta
- Majjima Patipada – Way to Relinquish Attachments to this World
- Tiparivaṭṭaya and Twelve Types of Ñāṇa (Knowledge)
- Relinquishing Defilements via Three Rounds and Four Stages

***Aṅguttara Nikāya – Suttā* on Key Concepts**

- Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma
- Dasa Akusala/Dasa Kusala – Basis of Buddha Dhamma -2

Na Cetanākaranīya Sutta

Pathama Mettā Sutta

Kukkuravatika Sutta (Majjhima Nikaya 57) – Kammakkhaya

Buddhism and Evolution – Aggañña Sutta (DN 27)

Tapussa Sutta (AN 9.41)– Akuppā Cetovimutti

Yamaka Sutta (SN 22.85) – Arahanthood Is Not Annihilation but End of Suffering

Seeking *Nibbāna*

- Attha Purisa Puggalā- Eight Noble Persons
- Āsava, Anusaya, and Gati (Gathi)
- "The Way to Nibbāna – Removal of Āsavas"
- Kanha (Dark) and Sukka (Bright) Kamma and Kammakkhaya
- Dasa Samyojana – Bonds in Rebirth Process
- The Cooling Down Process (Nibbāna) – How Root Causes are Removed
- "Why is Correct Interpretation of Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta so Important?"
- "How to Cultivate the Noble Eightfold Path Starting with Anicca, Dukkha, Anatta"
- "Akusala Citta – How a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmī Citta"
- Difference Between Giving Up Valuables and Losing Interest in Worthless
-

Sotāpanna Stage of *Nibbāna*

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The first stage of *Nibbāna* — the *Sotāpanna* stage — is also called the Stream Enterer in English and *Sovān* in Sinhala.

- The Sotāpanna Stage
- Why a Sotāpanna is Better off than any King, Emperor, or a Billionaire
- Myths about the Sotāpanna Stage
- Anuloma Paṭiloma Paṭicca Samuppāda – Key to Sotāpanna Stage
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi and a Sotāpanna
- Sotāpanna Anugāmi – No More Births in the Apāyās
- Four Conditions for Attaining Sotāpanna Magga/Phala
- Sotāpatti Anga – The Four Qualities of a Sotāpanna
- Sammā Diṭṭhi – Realization, Not Memorization
- Assāda, Ādīnava, Nissaraṇa
- Sakkāya Diṭṭhi is Personality (Me) View?
- How Does One Know whether the Sotāpanna Stage is Reached?
- Akusala Citta – How Does a Sotāpanna Avoids Apāyagāmī Citta
- What is the only Akusala Removed by a Sotāpanna?
- Uadayavaya Ñāṇa
- Micchā Diṭṭhi, Gandhabba, and Sotāpanna Stage – (in the "Mental Body – Gandhabba" section).
- 12. Key Factors to be Considered when "Meditating" for the Sotāpanna Stage (in the Meditation section).

Also, see the following posts in the Abhidhamma section for more details (these could be helpful even if you have not studied Abhidhamma):

- Why do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi is Key
- Key to Sotāpanna Stage – Diṭṭhi and Vicikicchā

Discussion Forum

- Forums
- Pure Dhamma Discussion Forum Guidelines

Abhidhamma

- Abhidhamma – Introduction

Essential *Abhidhamma* – The Basics

- Amazingly Fast Time Evolution of a Thought (Citta)
- The Amazing Mind – Critical Role of Nāmagotta (Memories)
- Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises
- State of Mind in the Absence of Citta Vīthi – Bhavaṅga
- Bhava and Bhavaṅga – Simply Explained!
- Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs
- Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power
- Cetasika – Connection to Gati

Mind and Consciousness

- What is Mind? How do we Experience the Outside World?
- What is a Thought?
- What is in a Thought? Why Gati are so Important?
- What is Consciousness?
- 1. Thoughts (Citta), Consciousness (Viññāṇa), and Mind (Hadaya Vatthu) – Introduction
- 2. Viññāṇa (Consciousness) can be of Many Different Types and Forms

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- 3. Viññāṇa, Thoughts, and the Subconscious

Citta* and *Cetasika

- Citta and Cetasika – How Viññāṇa (Consciousness) Arises
- What is a Thought?
- What is in a Thought? Why Gathi are so Important?
- Citta Vīthi – Processing of Sense Inputs
- Javana of a Citta – The Root of Mental Power

***Gandhabba* (*Manomaya Kāya*)**

- Gandhabba (Manomaya Kāya)- Introduction
- Does any Object (Rūpa) Last only 17 Thought Moments?
- Hidden World of the Gandhabba: Netherworld (Para Loka)
- Ghost in the Machine – Synonym for the Manomaya Kāya?
- Manomaya Kāya (Gandhabba) and the Physical Body
- Brain – Interface between Mind and Body
- Manomaya Kāya and Out-of-Body Experience (OBE)
- Cuti-Paṭisandhi – An Abhidhamma Description
- These posts complement some of the posts in the "Udayavaya Ñāṇa" section, which is important for the *Sotāpanna* stage of *Nibbāna*. All these are pieces of a complex puzzle, but they are all inter-consistent. So, don't worry if you do not understand it all; with time it will all make sense and will lead to unbreakable faith in Buddha Dhamma even through future lives. Faith comes via true understanding.

Role of the Brain in Human Consciousness

- Body Types in Different Realms – Importance of Manomaya Kaya
- Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?

Why Do People Enjoy Immoral Deeds? – Diṭṭhi Is Key

Key to Sotāpanna Stage – Diṭṭhi and Vicikicchā

Deeper Analyses

- The Origin of Matter – Suddhaṭṭhaka
- What are Dhamma? – A Deeper Analysis
- Pabhassara Citta, Radiant Mind, and Bhavaṅga

Comments/Reviews

- **Discussion of Comments** (These are based on questions sent to me via email by readers prior to 2018. In late 2017, a discussion forum was launched: "Forums.")
  - What is Intention in Kamma?
  - Would Nibbāna be Possible if Impermanence is the Cause of Suffering?
  - Logical Proof that Impermanence is Incorrect Translation of Anicca
  - "Self" and "no-self": A Simple Analysis
  - Craving for Pornography – How to Reduce the Tendency
- **Book Reviews**
  - "Why Does the World Exist?" by Jim Holt
  - "Waking Up" by Sam Harris
  - "The Language of God" by Francis Collins
  - "Spark" by John Ratey
  - "The Life of the Buddha" by Bhikkhu Nāṇamoli

Myths or Realities?

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- Animisa Locana Bodhi Poojawa – A Prelude to Acts of Gratitude
- Paramita and Niyata Vivarana – Myths or Realities?
- Tisarana Vandana and Its Effects on One's Gathi
- Does the Hell (Niraya) Exist?
- Can Buddhist Meditation be Dangerous?
- Boy Who Remembered Pāli Suttā for 1500 Years
- Do Buddhists Pray and Engage in Idol Worshipping?
- Also see, "Mystical Phenomena in Buddhism?" in the subsection, "Origin of Life"
- Also see, "Myths about Meditation" in the subsection, "Bhāvanā (Meditation)"

Tables and Summaries

- Pāli Glossary – (A-K)
- Pāli Glossary – (L-Z)
- List of "San" Words and Other Pāli Roots
- The 89 Cittas
- Cetasika (Mental Factors)
- Rūpa (Material Form)
- Rūpa – Generation Mechanisms
- Rūpa Kalāpa (Grouping of Matter)
- Akusala Citta and Akusala Vipāka Citta
- 37 Factors of Enlightenment
- Conditions for the Four Stages of Nibbāna
- Ultimate Realities – Table
- 31 Realms of Existence

Historical Background

- Historical Background – Introduction
- Methods of Delivery of Dhamma by the Buddha
- Misconceptions on the Topics the Buddha "Refused to Answer"
- Misinterpretations of Buddha Dhamma
- Preservation of the Dhamma
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 1
- "Tipitaka English" Convention Adopted by Early European Scholars – Part 2
- Historical Time-line of Edward Conze
- Why is it Critical to Find the Pure Buddha Dhamma?
- Key Problems with Mahayana Teachings
- Saddharma Pundarika Sutra (Lotus Sutra) – A Focused Analysis
- What is Suñyata or Suññata (Emptiness)?
- Incorrect Theravada Interpretations – Historical Time-line
- Buddhaghosa and Visuddhimagga – Historical Background
- Buddhaghosa's Visuddhimagga – A Focused Analysis
- Background on the Current Revival of Buddha Dhamma
- Misinterpretation of Anicca and Anatta by Early European Scholars
- Tipitaka Commentaries – Helpful or Misleading?

Dhamma and Science

- Dhamma and Science – Introduction

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- Good Explanations – Key to Weed Out Bad Interpretations

Subsection: Origin of Life (see above)

Consciousness – A Dhamma Perspective

- What is Consciousness?
- What Happens in Other Dimensions? [Consciousness Dependence on Number of Dimensions]
- Six Kinds of Consciousness in Our 3-D World
- Expanding "Consciousness" by Using Technology
- Expanding "Consciousness" by Purifying the Mind

Consistencies with Science

- Second Law of Thermodynamics is Part of Anicca!
- Quantum Entanglement – We Are All Connected
- Infinity – How Big Is It?
- Gödel's Incompleteness Theorem
- Truine Brain: How the Mind Rewires the Brain via Meditation/Habits
- How Habits are Formed and Broken – A Scientific View

Inconsistencies with Science

1. We all are impressed by the scientific advances made during the past 100 years or so making our lives easier and more productive. I am actually a cheerleader for scientific and technological advances.

- Physics had been my passion since high school days, and that changed when I started learning Buddha Dhamma several years ago. I still love and work on topics of interest in physics (and science in general). Fortunately, I am finding that those two interests are not mutually exclusive, and there is significant overlap. In fact, this section is the result of my two overlapping interests.

2. The following posts discuss cases where current theories of science are not consistent with Buddha Dhamma. I believe that science will recognize the primary nature of the mind in the future, and will discard the current notion that the mind (consciousness) arises out of inert matter.

Neuroscience says there is no Free Will? – That is a Misinterpretation!

The Double Slit Experiment – Correlation between Mind and Matter?

Vision (Cakkhu Viññāṇa) is Not Just Seeing

3. Despite the advances in science and technology, there is much about the human mind that science does not understand, and has not even begun to understand. **Western science is based on the five physical senses, leaving out the most important one, the mind.**

- At the present time, in 2016, scientists have the wrong view that consciousness originates in the brain.
- All scientific theories relating to the mind are based on this wrong hypothesis. However, Buddha Dhamma says not only that mind is a sense of its own, but it is the most powerful of all six senses.

Here is a post from the Abhidhamma section that has a deeper analysis of the brain-mind connection:

Brain – Interface between Mind and Body

Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma

This section will discuss two issues:

1. **A new interpretation of quantum mechanics (QM) based on non-locality is presented based on Feynman's ideas.** Concepts like wave-particle duality, observer effect, are not needed. Furthermore, complex interpretations like the "Many-Worlds interpretation" are avoided. All existing experimental data will be shown to be consistent with this interpretation.
2. **A deeper understanding of how *kamma* automatically lead to corresponding *kamma vipāka* in Buddhism (Buddha Dhamma), becomes clear with this interpretation.**

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Quantum Mechanics and Dhamma – Introduction

Quantum Mechanics and Consciousness

Quantum Mechanics – A New Interpretation

- What Is a Wave and What Is a Particle?
- Photons Are Particles Not Waves

Basis of the Proposed Interpretation – Feynman's Technique in QED

- Feynman's Glass Plate Experiment
- Feynman's Method of "A Particle Exploring All Possible Paths"
- "Exploring All Possible Paths" Leads to Fermat's Principle of Least Time

Dhamma and Philosophy

- Dhamma and Philosophy – Introduction
- Philosophy of the Mind
- Is Buddha Dhamma (Buddhism) a Religion?
- The Infinity Problem in Buddhism
- Free Will in Buddhism – Connection to Saṅkhāra

Miscellaneous

- Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2019
- Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2018
- Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2017
- Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2016
- Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2015
- Pure Dhamma – Reflections on 2014
- Buddha Dhamma – In a Chart
- Nirāmisa Sukha – In a Chart
- Ancient teeth found in China challenge modern human migration theory
- Mars Curiosity Photos Suggest Life May Have Existed on Red Planet
- Recent Publications on Benefits of Meditation
- Laniakea: Our home supercluster
- Think Outside the Box!
- There are as many creatures on your body as there are people on Earth!
- News Article on Robin Williams and Buddhist Meditation
- World Historical Time-line
- Second Largest Religion by State in the US

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XXII Notes

Word	Details
anuloma	"***anuloma***" comes from "*anu*" + "*lo*" + "*ma*" where "***anu***" means "through the understanding of *Tilakkhaṇa*", "***lo***" means "craving for worldly things", and "***ma***" means "removal", and thus "***anuloma***" means "removal of craving for worldly things to some extent via the comprehension of *Tilakkhaṇa*" or conformity (behaviour in accordance with socially accepted conventions).
bhagavatā	"*Bhagavatā*" ("*bhaga*" + "*vata*" where "*bhaga*" means divide and "*vata*" means "the process" that looks like a "living being") means this Dhamma, by analyzing a "person" in terms of "actions", illustrates that there in no enduring entity in a "living being".
dhammānusārī	***dhamma*** + ***anusārī*** is a Dhamma-follower ***anusārī*** : （adj.）, striving after; acting in accordance with; follower. ***anusari*** :[aor. of anusarati] went after; followed.
gandhabba	*gandhabba* can only inhale odours ("*gandha*" + "*abba*") as food, and thus the name.
kāmacchanda	*kāma chanda* = "*kāma*" + "*icca*" + "*andha*" where "*kāma*" is sense pleasures, "*ichcha*" is liking and "*andha*" is becomes blind; thus *kāmacchanda* means blinded by attachment to sense pleasures.
lobha	"***lobha***" comes from "*lo*" + "*bha*" where "***lo***" means "craving for worldly things" and "***bha***" means "appear and gets established" or "immersed" and thus "***lobha***" means "immersed in craving for worldly things". *lobha* is the extreme of greed. "*lo*" + "*bha*" where "*lo*" is for the *lokaya* or world and "*bha*" is for "*bihiveema*" (arise or establish) is the main reason how the material world is created and sustained with greed.
māna	'conceit', pride, is one of the 10 fetters binding to existence (s.*saṃyojana*). It vanishes completely only at the entrance to Arahatship, or Holiness (cf.*asmi-māna*). It is further one of the proclivities (s.*anusaya*) and defilements (s.*kilesa*). "The equality-conceit (***māna***), the inferiority-conceit (***omāna***) and the superiority-conceit (***atimāna***): this threefold conceit should be overcome. For, after overcoming this threefold conceit, the monk, through the full penetration of conceit, is said to have put an end to suffering" (A. VI, 49).
moha	*Moha* comes from "*muva*" + "*hā*" which symbolizes a vessel with it mouth closed; thus one cannot see what is inside. In the same way, one acts with *moha* because one is totally unaware that such immoral acts will have very bad consequences; one's mind is totally dark.
paṭicca	"*paṭicca*" ("*paṭi*" + "*icca*," where "*paṭi*" is bind or bond and "*icca*" means desire and *paṭicca* means bond with desire willingly).
saddhānusārī	***saddha*** + ***anusārī*** is a faith-follower ***anusārī*** : （adj.）, striving after; acting in accordance with; follower. ***anusari*** :[aor. of anusarati] went after; followed.
samauppāda	"*sama uppāda*" (where "*sama*" is similar and "*uppada*" means birth).

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sammā	***sammā*** which comes from "***san***" + "***mā***," which means "to become free of ***san***."
san	"*san*" is basically the term for "good and bad things we acquire" through our moral/immoral deeds.
sandiṭṭhiko	"*Sandiṭṭhiko*" ("*san*" + "*diṭṭhiko*"). *Dhamma* explains and clarifies "*san*" that are the causes (*avijjā* and *taṇhā*) for arising of *saṅkhata* (*sankata* in Sinhala) (whether they are living or inert).
saṅgha	*saṅgha* is "*san*" + "*gha*", or those who have **either gotten rid or are successfully getting rid of "*san*"**, and by this definition, one does not have to be a *bhikkhu* to belong to the *saṅgha*
saṅkhata (***sankata*** in Sinhala)	[pp. of saṅkharoti] conditioned; prepared; produced by a cause; the 'formed', i.e. anything originated or conditioned, comprises all phenomena of existence.
saṅkhāra	*Saṅkhāra* ("*san*" + "*kara*" or actions; සන් + කර in Sinhala) are anything (thought, speech, bodily actions) done while living in "this world" of 31 realms.
saṅkhata	(*sankata* in Sinhala) [pp. of *saṅkharoti*] conditioned; prepared; produced by a cause.
svakkhata	"*Svakkhata*" ("*sva*" for "self" and "+ "*akkata*" or "*akrutha*" or "*akriya*" means putting out of action) meaning it leads to getting rid of the concept of a "me" (*asmai māna*) — which happens at the *Arahant* stage. It is not about whether a "self" exists or not; it is rather to realize that nothing in this world is worth to be considered "mine".
upādāna	*Upādāna* basically means "pulling it closer (in one's mind)" ("*upa*" + "*ādāna*", where "*upa*" means "close" and "*ādāna*" means "pull"). [***ādāna*** : （nt.），taking up；grasping.]
vinaya	*vinaya* comes from "*vi*" + "*naya*", where "*naya*" in Pāli or Sinhala means debt and *vinaya* means not in debt.
vipallāsa	'perversions' or 'distortions'. - "There are 4 perversions which may be either: ▪ of perception (*saññā-vipallāsa*), ▪ of consciousness (*citta-vipallāsa*), or ▪ of views (*diṭṭhi-vipallāsa*). And which are these four? To regard: ▪ what is *anicca* as *nicca*; ▪ what is *dukkha* as *sukha* (or happiness-yielding); ▪ what is *anattā* as *attā*; ▪ what is impure (ugly: *asubha*) as pure or (beautiful: *subha*)" (A.IV.49). - See Manual of Insight, by Ledi Sayadaw (WHEEL 31/32). p.5.

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	"Of the perversions, the following are eliminated by the **1st path-knowledge** (*sotāpatti*): the perversions of perception, consciousness and views, that the *anicca* is *nicca* and what is *anatta* is *atta*; further, the perversion of views that the *dukkha* (suffering) is *sukha* (happiness), and the *asubha* (impure) is *subha* (pure) is also eliminated. By the **3rd path-knowledge** (*anāgāmitā*) are eliminated: the perversions of perception and consciousness that the *asubha* (impure) is *subha* (pure). By the **4th path-knowledge** (*arahatta*) are eliminated the perversions of perception and consciousness that the *dukkha* (suffering) is *sukha* (happiness)" (Vis. M. XXII, 68).
vipariyesa	(a contamination form between °*pariyaya* & °*pallāsa*) reversal, contrariness, wrong state Kvu 306 (three reversals: *saññā*°, *citta*°, *diṭṭhi*°; or of perception, consciousness & views.
vyāpada	*vyāpada* comes from "*vaya*" + "*pada*", where "*vaya*" means decline and "*pada*" means walk towards; thus *vyāpada* means one is on a (morally) declining path.
yuñjati	[yuj + ṃ - a] joins with; engages in; endeavours.
yutta	[pp. of yuñjati] yoked; harnessed; **connected with**; given to; engaged in; proper.

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